**COBHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 2014/15 (NO 4)**

Minutes of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held in St Mary’s Church Room, Sole Street on Monday 14th July 2014 at 7.30 pm

**PRESENT:**

**COUNCILLORS** MR AHG ROWE (CHAIRMAN)
MRS R DYMOND (VICE-CHAIRMAN)
DR ND HAIG
MRS M HAIG
MRS L ELLIS
MR B GLENISTER
MR S DYER
MRS K SMITH
MR J GILES

**IN ATTENDANCE** MRS K LANE (CLERK)
MR A MOORE (GBC)
MR B SWEETLAND (KCC)

**PARISHIONERS** 20+

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Paul Gibbons, Gravesham Borough Council
2. **Minutes: to confirm and sign the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 9th June 2014.** All agreed and signedby Chairman Cllr Alan Rowe.
3. **Declaration of Interest:** none
4. **Parishioners Comments:**

One Parishioner reported that blackberry brambles and branches need to be cut back by the station. ***Clerk to contact SE trains.***

Another Parishioner raised the issue of drivers mounting the pavement along The Street in Cobham. People are doing this even during school drop-off/pick-up times.

Cllr Rowe (AR) agreed that this has been an issue for a long time as it is such a narrow road. He said that all we could do is report the issue to the police again. ***Clerk to action***.

AR went on to say that we had requested more bollards in the past, but were told that these restrict the pathway for wheelchair users.

Cllr Dymond (RD) mentioned that the school can request for police to be present at certain times. Cllr Dyer (SD) to raise at next School Governor’s meeting.

SD reminded everyone about the voluntary Speedwatch programme that is in place.

**Manor Road Parking Issues**

Cllr Rowe welcomed Parishioners and residents of Manor Road attending the meeting to discuss ongoing parking issues. He apologised on behalf of Paul Gibbons, Gravesham Borough Council’s Parking Officer who was unable to attend.

**Cllr Glenister (BG) briefed Parishioners on the background to the parking problems:**

“When I set out to resolve the parking problems in Manor Road I was aware that it would be difficult because of the conflicting views of residents. There are some who want parking on the south side of the road stopped and others, mainly residents of Manor Road, who do not want vehicles obstructing their driveway exits and therefore object to further restriction. There is also the view of the residents who park in Manor Road because they have no off street space and wish to park close to their abode.

County Council Highways are in favour of stopping parking on both sides of the road because vehicles held up entering Manor Road could compromise safety at the Manor Road-Sole Street junction.

I have been told, but cannot confirm, that Kent Fire Brigade were recently unable to get past parked vehicles in Manor Road and had to reverse and use Round Street to access Sallows Shaw.

The Borough Council was asked in June 2013 to work with the Parish Council to solve the parking problems in Manor Road. It took until September 2013 to get the Parking Manager to a site meeting. I then had to wait until October for sight of a draft proposal.

It then took until November to initiate a public consultation. Since then nothing. No feedback and no response to e-mails.

In May when the matter was brought to the attention of the Borough Parking Manager’s line manager, the Director of Finance and Environment, I quote from his e-mail response.
“now that I'm aware of this issue I will ensure that it is pursued to a conclusion as quickly as possible - I'll follow up with Paul as soon as he returns from leave next week to make sure that this is given the appropriate priority and one of us will contact you to give you a further update on how this will be progressed. Again, no response to date.”

Cllr Moore said that he would pass on all comments to Paul Gibbons and ask that he attend the next meeting where we would hope to resolve all the issues.

Cllr Rowe confirmed that comments made and suggestions put forward during the meeting would be forwarded on to Gravesham Borough Council.

Below is a summary of the comments made during the meeting, which were later sent to GBC. Please note that the comments below were made by individuals, and are not suggestions put forward by the Parish Council.

**Paul Barnes, no. 2 Manor Road**

Mr Barnes felt that all the problems had been caused by one house receiving approval for three drop kerbs. Mr Barnes explained that he had lived in the road for 25-27 years and there had never been a problem before, and he believed that there would not be a problem in the road if these drop kerbs were removed.

Cllr Alan Rowe said that there was nothing that could be done about the drop kerbs now, so we need to find a solution.

One Parishioner questioned whether you can park in the middle of, or in front of, a drop kerb, which sparked a discussion about if and when parking in front of a drop kerb would cause an obstruction.

**William Blake, 8 Manor Road**

Mr Blake explained that he has mobility issues, and three times in the past 18mths his driveway has been blocked, preventing him from leaving the house. He questioned whether he should contact the police in such circumstances.

Cllr Alan Rowe explained that he had received a number of emails and letters describing similar issues.

**Nicola Carter, 10 Manor Road**

Ms Carter said she has had lots of issues with her driveway being partially blocked or visibility obstructed. She explained how she has to edge out very slowly but still narrowly missed hitting a car recently because she couldn't see it coming.

**Brian Williams, 32 Manor Road**
Mr Williams put forward two suggestions:

1. A one-way road (entering from the main road). Parking would only be permitted on one side which would mean clear access for emergency vehicles.
2. Dig out the grass bank opposite Greenlands and build a retaining wall. There would be space there for at least a dozen cars.

 **Paul Barnes, no. 2 Manor Road**

Mr Barnes suggested having double yellow lines on the right hand side, and parking on the left, so that there would be no more chicane effect.

Alan Rowe agreed that cars parked on both sides does cause a problem for emergency vehicles and refuse lorries, but explained that the ‘chicanes’ can have the effect of reducing speed.

 **Vicky Billingsley, no. 2 Baker Close**

Ms Billingsley suggested having marked parking bays similar to those that are seen in London Boroughs. Some would be on one side, some on the other, but at a safe distance apart. Ms Billingsley also questioned the use and ownership of the parking bays on the right by the Station.

**Nicola Carter, 10 Manor Road**

Ms Carter explained that parking bays had been suggested back in November but recalled that some felt they may be unsightly. She also mentioned having single and double yellow lines. Double yellow lines for where it is not safe to park. Ms Carter expressed her disappointment that comments sent to GBC in December 2013 still had not been acted upon.

**Clare Hargrove, 38 Manor Road**

Mrs Hargrove questioned who it is that is parking in Manor Road and why.

The consensus was that it was mainly all local residents from May Place, Bridge Cottages, Scratton Fields (and not Station parking).

**Comment sent in by James Scully, 16 Manor Road (unable to attend in person)**

As I have stated I do not believe matters will be resolved under the original plans and that these will only move and may aggravate the problems.

Many of the perceived problems may be resolved with the introduction of a 20mph speed limit throughout Sole Street and/or the introduction of “sleeping policemen” in Manor Road. In any event the attention of the real police to traffic matters in Sole Street I believe would be much appreciated.

AR explained that the Parish Council had been looking for an area within Sole Street for extra parking for many years. An area in Scratton Fields had been identified and GBC had received planning permission to develop this area but later said they could not develop it due to lack of funds.

1. **KCC Matters**

Bryan Sweetland (BS) began by reminding everyone present that he is always contactable if anyone has any questions/queries.

BS mentioned that there would be an announcement the following day on the Lower Thames Crossing. Many were expecting the announcement to be along the lines of waiting to see what impact the free flow toll had on traffic and queues before making a final decision.

BS said that the speed tubes had been laid in Sole Street. Cllr Rowe said that they are in the wrong place, and are too close to the parked cars (so cars are already slowing down in this particular stretch) and they need to be further along Sole Street. BS said he would do his best to move them along.

BS mentioned that the joint Transportation Board met two months before. KALC asked if Parish Councils could have voting rights. BS felt this was a good idea and very good for local democracy. He said he was hopeful that this would get the go ahead.

BS mentioned the issue of fly tipping in the Borough. He said that KCC worked with the BBC on a sting operation of someone they suspected of fly tipping. Covert cameras are now in operation as part of the County Council’s strategy to deal with this ongoing issue.

Jeskyns is now charging for parking which is pushing cars out of the car park and he is aware that this is becoming an issue. He went on to say that parking is a big problem generally and it is difficult to find solutions that please everyone. He said that there should be more attention paid to the granting of permission for drop kerbs.

Cllr Dymond (RD) mentioned that the next Neighbourhood Forum would be at St Johns School, Meopham and the subject ‘Waste disposal’. BS confirmed that KCC representatives would be there and said that there would likely be a lot of discussion around the recent implementation of the wheelie bins and recycling. Previously Gravesham had a very bad record for recycling. With the new system recycling rates typically rise by 44%.

One parishioner made the observation that the Council does not supply the bags for the small bins. BS said he had been shocked by the price of these in the supermarkets but said that he had found them in the £ shop so that is a tip worth noting!

One Parishioner questioned why we have to go to the bottle bank. BS said the Council had tried the once a fortnight collection but the cost was prohibitive as there is a comparatively low value in glass recycling compared with cardboard and plastic recycling healthy which generates a healthy revenue stream. BS reminded everyone that Gravesham was actually one of the last Councils to adopt wheelie bins.

One parishioner mentioned the fact that Recycling bags are no longer given out at the libraries and other areas and that this does little to incentivise people to recycle. BS said he would ask the question at the Neighbourhood Forum.

BS reminded everyone that they can still go to Pepper Hill to recycle. Their target there is 80% recycling which it meets. Pepper Hill is in fact the best out of all 18 in Kent for recycling.

1. **Matters arising from previous minutes**

The Parish Clerk was asked to ensure that all queries raised during the meeting were adding to the next agenda.

1. **Ongoing items:**

**Playing Fields Committee Rous minuteseport**

The issue that GBC have raised regarding the Seats on the playground swings has been looked into and the cost of replacing them is £120. Steve Dyer proposed and Bernard Glenister seconded the expenditure.

Steve Dyer reported that the trees have already been trimmed. Welding has been arranged for the damaged gate posts but access to the Bowls Club is needed for power and this is being arranged. There is still an issue with the gates closing too heavily. ***Clerk to follow-up with the person who installed them to see if he can adjust the closing mechanisms.***

**Footpaths Committee Report**

Nothing to report.

Julian Giles raised the issue of the Old Varnish Factory and the walkway that has been closed. He said that a right of way has to be walked continually for 20 years before it becomes a footpath. AR confirmed that it has never been a public footpath. Lots of residents had walked through there for many years but it is not an official footpath.

**Transport Committee Report**

Nothing to report.

**Planning Committee Report**

**GBC Decisions**

20140279 "Sandbanks" White Post Lane Sole Street. Erection of two-storey front extension, first floor and two storey side extension (east elevation), single storey rear and single storey side extensions (west elevation) with internal alterations and roof conversion.

This would be a very large extension in a prominent position in this rural Lane and would dominate and be out of character with nearby properties. Permitted.

During my absence on holiday the Chairman and Cllr Haig asked the Borough Councillor to request that the application be called in for determination by the Regulatory Board. That did not happen.

**Currently with the Planning Committee**

20140602 “Oldlands" Gold Street Luddesdowne. Conversion of vacant agricultural Building to Single Residential Dwelling and Garden/curtilage

**CPC Comment**

*20140446 Cranbourne Farm Copthall Road Sole Street*. Erection of an Indoor Riding Arena Although the proposed development is in the Metropolitan Green Belt, Cobham Parish Council does not object, believing this proposal would provide an opportunity to expand a rural business.

*20140460 The "Old Carpenters Shop," Lodge Lane Cobham.* Outline application for erection of a detached dwelling.

Cobham Parish Council objects this proposed development in the Metropolitan Green Belt outside the Cobham village envelope.

*20140555 "Netherfield" Round Street Sole Street.* Erection of part two storey and part single storey extension on the eastern side elevation, incorporating dormer windows in the proposed side and rear roof slopes to form garage, family room and shower room with two ensuite bathrooms and walk-in wardrobes at first floor level and two bedrooms in the roof space, and a single storey rear extension to form new kitchen.

Cobham Parish Council has no objection.

**"Leighton" Sole Street.**

Yet another planning application has been submitted to retain the Orangery at Leighton. You will recall that a fine was imposed on the applicant for failure to demolish the Orangery as directed by the Inspector who conducted the appeal against refusal of retrospective planning permission. The documents have not yet been received by the Parish Council.

**Old Factory Site Sole Street.**

I have walked through the old factory site. The situation seems similar to what happened prior to the last planning application to re-build the factory, which was dismissed on appeal. The site has been cleared and several trees felled. The site is included in the “long list” compiled by GBC as part of the Core Strategy examination. It could be that the owner is intending to submit a new application to develop the site. The only vehicular access is via the station car park and road beyond. I have no idea what the rights of access are but that was the access used when the factory was operational. Murphy, the contractor working on the railway still has a compound at the eastern end of the site.

I doubt that anything could be done to stop the access being closed. We will have to wait and see what happens.

**Meadow Room Report**

Nothing to report.

**Neighbourhood Forum Report**

Reference was made to a recent email from Will Farmer who had requested nominations for Parish Council members to join the panel. Kerry Smith would be put forward. ***Clerk to contact Will Farmer.***

**Jeskyns**

Cllr Rowe (AR) reported that Jeskyns will soon be charging for parking. The concern is that it will become like Shorne Country Park. Cllr Dymond (RD) suggested the use of logs that have been used in Halfpence Lane. AR reminded everyone that GBC had suggested double yellow lines which appeared one day and then the road was re-surfaced.

With regards to parking on the verge, Cllr Moore (AM) asked the Forestry Commission to consider moving the fence line back so that people couldn’t park on the verge. If they did continue to park on the edge of the verge/on the road it would be dangerous and the police would be able to act. Another suggestion was that they planted trees along the verge.

Cllr Glenister (BG) recalled notices of a by-law that were once displayed in Meopham regarding parking on the grass verges. He questioned whether it applies across the Borough, and whether the Borough Council could request for it be actioned. AM to ask Paul Gibbons.

Parishioners were reminded that the cutting of the verges usually takes place in August.

One Parishioner questioned whether a trench could be dug. AR to speak to Forestry Commission.

**Parking problems**

BG asked about the parking area in Scratton Fields and whether the Borough Council would consider looking at this again. AM said that they would have to do the planning application again if this was to be pursued. AM to look into it again.

**Speeding problems**

Nothing to report that has not already been discussed.

**Sweep’s Hole Pond**

It was reported that Baylis need to be booked in to clear the pond again. AR to speak to Peter Baylis about maintenance plan including thinning some of the reeds in November.

1. **GBC Matters**

Cllr Moore (AM) reported that the Parish Council had not opposed the planned development at Cranbourne Farm but GBC were still reviewing the application. AM is liaising with the Planning Officer.

AM said he would speak to Paul Gibbons about the Manor Road parking issues and let him know how residents are feeling.

1. **KALC Matters**

Nothing to report.

1. **Correspondence**

Nothing to report.

1. **Matters raised by Parish Councillors**

Cllr Giles (JG) asked Cllr Moore (AM) about the roll-out of high speed broadband after seeing workman at Sweepshole pond. AM said this was part of KCC’s remit and that Luddesdown are having issues. He thought that the plan was for rollout within the next year or two but he would check.

JG mentioned the issue of Japanese knotweed around the Parish. Cllr Dymond (RD) reported that it was still visible around Meadow House, the playing field, Leather Bottle and The Ship but it seems to be contained.

JG reminded everyone that it needs to be treated for many years.

AR reported that it was still in the area around the playground footpath. Jon Jackson said he would deal with it so AR to follow-up with him.

Cllr Haig (NH) mentioned that the war memorial hedge needs to be trimmed. ***Clerk to action***.

Some Parishioners have reported paint splashed all over the pathway outside the Ship. ***Clerk to write to Manager and ask them to clean it.***

Cllr Glenister (BG) said that the Parish Council first asked for a dog bin by Manor Road/Sole Street junction 9 months ago. Cllr Moore (AM) to follow-up. AM to also follow up on the waste bin on The Street.

BG reported that a tree had pushed up the tarmac on the pavement by no. 36 Manor Road. ***Clerk to report to Kent Highways.***

Cllr Dyer (SD) reported a deep pothole to the left of the manhole cover along The Street. ***Clerk to report to Kent Highways.***

Cllr Dymond (RD) reported that orange marks have appeared along the pathway of Lawrence Drive. It was thought that this may have something to do with the Duke of Edinburgh awards being run by local schools. RD to investigate and ***Clerk to follow-up.***

AR reported that the weeds need to be cleared from around the village pump. ***Clerk to ask the Maintenance man.***

1. **Any other business**

BG said that a new computer/laptop was needed for use by the Parish Clerk. He was suggesting a maximum spend of £600 with BG committing to shop around for the best deal. This expenditure was proposed by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Diamond.

1. **Finance**

On the proposal of Cllr Glenister, seconded by Cllr Giles, the following cheques were ratified**:**

**16.06.14 EDF Electricity 562.38**

 **Jeff Howard playground Maintenance (6mths) 120.00**

**16.06.14 Matthew Lisney maintenance (June) 104.00**

 **Clerk salary (June) 250.00**

 **KALC Renewal subs (annual) 524.06**

**14.07.14 All Seasons Projects Ltd (tree removal - playground) 135.00**

 **Clerk Salary (July) 250.00**

 **Matthew Lisney maintenance (July) 104.00**

**Total £ 2049.44**

**As there was no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20pm.**

Chairman.........................................................................................................................

**The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Monday 8th September at 7.30pm in St. Mary’s Church Room, Sole Street.**