



Minutes for Parish Council Meeting held on 12th April 2021

Present

Cllr Mike Booth, Chair, Cllr Steve Dyer, Vice Chair,

Cllr Rosemary Dymond, Cllr Gabriella Gabbitas, Cllr Margaret Haig,

GBC Cllr Tony Rice, Russ Nicholls - Local Traffic Group

Clerk. Charles Amis, Two Parishioners.

1. Apologies for absence – Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Robert Pryor, Cllr Ben Smith, Cllr Mat Peterson-Pearce joined halfway.
2. Cllr Dymond proposed and Cllr Dyer seconded the minutes for 8th February and 8th March.
3. There were no declarations of interest.
4. Matters Arising

War Memorial Fence - Jonathan Ireland, National Trust, has offered to replace the current post and rail fence at the back of the war memorial with Estate fencing at no cost to CPC. It was noted that Rob Wemys and Sacha Dyer are working on the war memorial green every weekend and they have made a path to discourage people from walking on the daffodils.

Bonham Hayes Trust – The clerk received nine nominations which have been given to the Trustees at GBC who will make the final decision. All of the nominations have to live within parish of Cobham.

Sports Association Lease – Cllr Mason was not at the meeting but wanted a letter to be attached to the lease to clarify the relationship of the CPC to CSA in relation to the annual Buildings Insurance premium - which the CSA pay. To be carried forward to the next meeting.

Neighbourhood Plan – No report from Cllr Mason who was not at the meeting. To be carried forward to the next meeting.

Review of Standing Orders re Social Media – Action: Clerk to speak to Terry Martin at KALC for advice.

Community Assets – Cllr Peterson-Pearce was not present at this stage of the meeting. No further information was available. To be carried forward to the next meeting.

Sole Street Station – Cllr Dyer had reported the rubbish to Jan at Sole Street Station. The rubbish has now been taken away although the grass is still very long. It looks too difficult to access the site with grass cutting equipment. No further action.

Village Sign – Cllr Booth had not heard from Cllr Smith so there nothing for the meeting. However it was noted that a considerable amount of work was done some years ago on this subject and this should be reviewed.

5. **KCC Matters** - Nothing to report since Cllr Sweetland was not at the meeting due to the forthcoming elections.

6. **GBC Matters** -Cllr Rice said there were no GBC matters to report. The KCC and Police & Crime Commissioners elections are taking place on 6th May.
Cllr Dymond thanked GBC for cleaning the St Mary’s Church Rooms before and after the elections. Cllr Rice asked GBC if the Meadow Rooms would be cleaned before and after the election and this was confirmed by GBC.

7. **KALC/NALC** – Cllr Dymond had attended the Climate Change Committee in Kent. KCC are trialling electric vans as part of Net Zero 2050. A lot of grant money has been received by KCC from the government who pass on to the councils for use in the setting up of Electric Vehicle centres.

Vision Zero in 2050 will be rolled out by 5 yearly targets. KCC were using the policies from Sweden as they have claimed to have had zero road fatalities.

School Police Officers are being appointed and trained by the police

A 20 mph speed limit will be rolled out across villages and rural areas in Kent which has received support from the police in principal but still needs government and senior police approval.

KCC have implemented an HGV no parking ban in East Kent following Brexit and were proposing to roll this out to West Kent.

Cllr Peterson-Pearce asked how many fatalities and near misses have occurred in Cobham and Sole Street. **Action:** Cllr Dymond recommended that Cllr Peterson-Pearce go on to KCC site and look for the data retrieval team who provide the figures for road fatalities.

KALC had offered 30 training courses in 2021 which are highly recommended and take place on Zoom.

8. **Planning Report**

Brymore, Sole Street – no objection

13 Manor Road – no objection

3 Scratton Fields – no objection

Copperfield, Round Street – objected because the extension to the garage at front of the property brings the build line further to the road than neighbouring properties. Also the first floor balcony needs adequate screening by trees so not to overlook the neighbour’s gardens.

17 Manor Road – no objection

Round Street – no objection

Varnish Factory, Norbond – Cllr Rice had been chasing GBC. An experienced planning officer was now dealing with the case which has been live for almost a year. Cllr Peterson-Pearce said there had been a lot of noise coming from the site over the past year.

Action: Cllr Peterson-Pearce will supply Cllr Rice with a diary kept by a neighbour.

White Post Farm – Cllr Rice said this was still with the Planning Inspectorate. Cllr Peterson-Pearce said a site visit had shown non-compliance. Cllr Rice said no enforcement would be carried out by GBC whilst the decision is pending on appeal. If the decision is approved then there will be no enforcement.

Telecoms Mast, Batts Road – This has now been refused by GBC.

9. Traffic Group Report

Parking – The clerk organised a meeting for Tony Rice which included Mike Booth, Steve Dyer and Rosemary Dymond from CPC, Denise Bird from Forestry England, Claire Venner from KCC Highways, Stuart Alford, Nick May and Joel Simons from GBC parking enforcement and environment and Ellie Middleton, the local PCSO. This was following a number of complaints received by local residents about the illegal parking and litter.

A number of suggestions were put forward including Double yellow lines could be extended along Church Road and GBC were looking to install CCTV signs. Logs and bunds could be installed alongside the road. Ellie Middleton planned to buddy up with the Civil Enforcement Officers when they were patrolling. There will be a further meeting at the end of May to discuss any progress made. Cllr Peterson-Pearce said the current parking issues had been compounded by Covid 19 and asked if CPC wanted to roll out controlled parking zones and double yellow lines across the parish. The visitors bring money to the public houses and the Cobham Community Shop and the Little Shop in Sole Street.

Cllr Rice said GBC are wanting to promote Gravesham and have plans to increase the visitor economy as this is reported the lowest in Kent and Cobham was in an AONB with several attractions. There needs to be an integrated strategy on what Cobham would welcome and not welcome. Cllr Booth said visitors should park in the right places and GBC should contribute to the facilities in Cobham. Cllr Peterson-Pearce said GBC should contribute more to the increased cost of picking up litter. The Clerk said that visitors did not follow the Country Code.

Action: Cllr Peterson-Pearce asked to be included in the future meetings.

Speeding – Cllr Rice has been talking to the police and has requested a further catch up with Acting Insp Beautridge. The PCSOs have attended a speed device training course.

Bollards – The clerk had not received any feedback about the bollards. Cllr Dymond said the volume of traffic had reduced but traffic speeds had increased. Cllr Booth had spoken to Claire Venner about putting together a survey for residents to give their feedback. Claire Venner is working on a plan to reduce the speed of traffic along The Street. Cllr Peterson-Pearce said that five families had been very pleased with the installation of the bollards and Cllr Dymond said parents appreciate the safety provided. Cllr Rice asked if a bollard could be installed by the Darnley Arms to replace the beer barrel.

Action: Cllr Booth will discuss the bollards with Claire Venner at the beginning of May. Cllr Peterson-Pearce thanked everyone who had been involved.

Lower Thames Crossing – Cllr Booth and Cllr Dyer had attended meetings with the Community Engagement Team to go through the statements of common ground. At the last meeting Rights of Way were discussed and LTC are looking to encourage people to walk and cycle more. LTC propose a cycle route, bridle way and pedestrian route from Knights Place to the Hare Bridge at Singlewell including a stretch of Scotland Lane which is a Byway. It was pointed out that this would cause a problem and perhaps Scotland Lane could be downgraded to a Bridle Way

Joint Transport Board – Cllr Dyer had attended the last meeting. There was nothing affecting Cobham and Sole Street.

10. Crime Group Report

- Operation Gurkha – Cllr Rice said the police had been more proactive and had issued 59 orders and penalties. The police were making use of social media to update local residents

on the good work being done. Despite this the riders of the nuisance motorbikes were still out most weekends.

11. Playing Fields Report

Fence alongside NS178 – Cllr Booth has had a meeting with the Chair of the Football Club to discuss moving the fence by one foot into the playing field to comply to the request received from John Pelham the KCC Rights of Way officer. The fence would match the other fence which is north of the pedestrian gate.

Action: Ask John Pelham, KCC Rights of Way Officer to mark where the new fence should go.

Children's Corner repairs – Abacus and GB Sports and Leisure had sent quotes for repairing the playground.

Action: Cllr Peterson-Pearce would send details of a company who repair playgrounds. Cllr Peterson-Pearce asked if CPC had looked at other funding sources.

Cllr Rice said CPC should get some funding from GBC. Cobham parishioners shouldn't be funding the playground which is also used by visitors.

Action: Clerk to provide GBC Cllr Rice with the details of the repairs needed, the budget for the work, details of the quotes received so far and Cllr Rice would speak to Stuart Alford at GBC about grant funding.

12. Other Village Matters

Public Toilets – Funding the re-opening of the public toilets remains a problem which Cllr Booth is attempting to resolve with the intention of re-opening as soon as possible.

The toilets had previously been cleaned by a volunteer but Covid 19 has highlighted the risks involved in continuing with this arrangement and they should be cleaned by a professional contract cleaning company in the future. May Harris who clean the toilets for Meopham Parish Council have submitted a quote.

Action: Clerk to obtain two additional quotes from other cleaning companies.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points – Clerk had registered the interest of CPC for £4000 funding from KCC as part of the Kent Smarter Travel Scheme. Cllr Peterson-Pearce suggested sponsorship from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Action: Cllr Peterson-Pearce to search for grants.

Meadow Rooms – There were no meetings. The Meadow Rooms have been working with Heartbeeps and their plans.

The Meadow Room Management Committee have agreed to hold the Munchies event on the 14th August. They want to avoid conflict with the fete and cause parking problems. The Meadow Rooms had no free Saturdays in July. Cllr Haig said the WI would help with the tea tent.

Church – Cllr Haig said both Cobham and Luddesdowne Churches were holding services on Sunday. Cobham Church was open on Wednesday for quiet prayer and reflection. Cobham Church had rung the bells 99 times and the flag was flying half-mast in memory of Duke of Edinburgh. The churchyard path has been completed but a bag of Type One stones plus some tarmac and a mound of earth had been left behind by Moody's. The removal of these articles had not been included in the contract and Moody's would need a licence to dispose of the materials. **Action:** Cllr Smith has offered to remove the materials.

St Mary's Church Rooms – Planning permission was granted for the St Mary's Church Rooms in 2020 but building regulations have not yet been applied for because of a hold up with the PCC and the architect. Tender documents should be ready to be put out to builders by the end of May.

The architect has been waiting for the building engineer to respond. Cllr Dymond thanked Cllr Booth for his support.

Footpaths – Cllr Peterson-Pearce said there needs to be several footpaths between Sole Street and Cobham and they need to be accessible. They shouldn't involve walking along the road. There is no pavement between Gold Street and Scratton Fields. Cllr Dymond said there was a footpath opposite The Railway PH but it could be muddy and was difficult for a disabled person.

South Ashenbank Wood – The homeless man has been moved on and the rubbish has been cleared.

Sole Street Notice Board –

Action: Cllr Peterson-Pearce offered to make a new notice board.

Maintenance Man – The clerk had sent an email to Matthew Lisney with a revised self-billing invoice with the new minimum wage details.

13. **Correspondence** – The clerk had received an email from a visitor who had complained about the lack of parking for Cobham Woods and asked if the parking along Lodge Lane could be reinstated. The visitor had also asked about walking from Ashenbank Wood car park beside Halfpence Lane. The clerk had replied that there was the Richard Dadd Path beside Halfpence Lane from Ashenbank Wood car park but said CPC did not have any influence regarding the removal of the parking spaces along Lodge Lane.
14. **Parishioners Comments** – A parishioner thanked the parish council for all of their hard work for the village.

Meeting continues in private

15. **Finance** – Cllr Dyer proposed and Cllr Peterson-Pearce seconded the cheque report for April.
16. **AOB** – items from Councillors. Cllr Dymond said the replacement gate to Cobham Hall at the Lime Avenue should be ready by May after the previous gate had been stolen.
17. **Next meeting will be the Annual General Meeting on 4th May.**