



Minutes of Cobham Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 7th September at 7.30pm

Meeting took place at the Meadow Rooms

Present

Cllr Mike Booth (Chairman), Cllr Steve Dyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Rosemary Dymond,
Cllr Mat Peterson-Pearce, Cllr Gabriella Gabbitas, Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Margaret Haig

Present

Cllr Tony Rice (GBC), Charles Amis (Clerk)

2 Parishioners

1. Apologies for absence – Cllr Bennett Smith, Cllr Robert Pryor, Cllr Bryan Sweetland (KCC).

2. Minutes – The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on 5th July were confirmed and proposed as a true record by Cllr Dyer and seconded by Cllr Gabbitas.

3. Declarations of Interest – None

4. Matters arising from previous meeting of 5th July

Youth Club – The Grand are able to provide professional youth workers on Fridays on a fortnightly basis and the Meadow Rooms are also available on that evening. There are no volunteer leaders since the previous three volunteer leaders stepped down. An advert has been placed in the parish magazine and the primary school. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce offered to put up an advert on to the notice board.

Britain in Bloom – Cllr Dymond said results would be announced next Thursday and Friday.

Cobham Primary School – 2021 intake – Cllr Dymond had spent an hour with a family whose child had not been offered a place at Meopham Academy. The family was happy to accept a place at a secondary school in Northfleet. Meopham Academy is currently oversubscribed and was refused permission to expand their premises. It was mentioned that Istead Rise and Meopham Primary Schools are seen to take priority as they are part of the same academy. The academies have their own criteria who they take and the catchment area shrinks according to popularity. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce offered to write to Meopham Academy regarding their admissions policy. Cllr Booth to investigate the situation.

5. KCC Matters

Flooding on Halfpence Lane – Earl Bourner at KCC had responded to CPC's request for action. They are proposing a concrete sandbag head wall along the open section of the pond and are waiting for a cos breakdown and a programme start date. **Action:** Cllr Booth to discuss the further options with KCC.

6. GBC Matters

Boundary Commission Review – the comments from the initial consultation are with the Boundary Commission who will produce a draft proposal which will go out to a further consultation on 2nd November until 20th January when those comments will be fed back to the Boundary Commission for a final decision on 29th March. Cobham, Luddesdown and Shorne are communities that shared commonality with Higham. The boundary commission review is primarily to give all parishioners equal representation through their borough councillors. Cllr Dyer had submitted comments on behalf of Cobham Parish Council. The overall outcome with the reduced number of councillors will be reflected in the next council elections that will be held in May 2023.

7. KALC/NALC

The KALC AGM will be taking place on 13th November and the motions need to be in by Friday 17th September. **Action:** Parish councillors to send their motions to the clerk. None of the parish councillors had undertaken any training and did not provide any feedback on the training courses needed. Cllr Dymond is attending the rural crime meeting with Matthew Scott, the Police & Crime Commissioner on 29th September. Cllr Dymond will also be attending a demonstration on Zoom on how to use a carbon footprint calculator as KCC has adopted one. There is the Vision Zero Conference on 15th September at Manston Airport which is also on Zoom. One of the agenda items will be how to adjust the shape of the road so that vehicles are more aware of vulnerable road users.

It was suggested that CPC could produce a Sustainability Report but there is very little that CPC can do to become carbon neutral.

8. Planning

Ian Brown the planning enforcement officer at GBC had provided a useful update of the current planning applications.

Norbond Site – This is still being determined by GBC who had been asked to take enforcement action against the site owner. This planning enforcement has been with GBC for over a year. A retrospective planning application for change of use of land for the stationing of up to 93 storage containers for self-storage is still under determination.

White Post Farm – This has already been determined and the site owner has appealed. This has been with the Planning Inspectorate for almost a year with no determination date.

Orchard Cottage, Round Street – GBC has conducted a site visit and there have been unauthorised development works on the land next to the cottage. A play room and outbuilding are being used for social space and an existing stable has been changed to an office space. The access onto Round Street has been altered and high boundary treatments without approval.

Bluebell Barn, Round Street – The previous temporary planning approval for continued use of the mobile home and site office expired on 31 March 2021. GBC planning department are currently chasing a new application.

6 The Street, Cobham – GBC had agreed the retrospective planning application for a shed. There had been a site visit and there was no evidence of the shed being used as a workshop.

Kirkham, Sole Street – No objections.



Telecoms Mast, Batts Road – The mast has been moved into the edge of the woods to the north of Batts Road although the mast has been made taller. CPC appreciated GBC's support in rejecting the previous two applications and has no objections to the revised application.

The Laurels, Sole Street – The owners are building a garage to the front of the property. The property was only built in 2012. This has been referred to GBC planning department.

Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Mason had nothing to report. **Action:** Cllr Mason to prepare something for the October meeting.

Dissatisfaction with responses from GBC – There had been no response to a letter sent on 28th June by CPC to Nick Brown. **Action:** Cllr Rice to speak to Nick Brown regarding the lack of response to the letter. **Action:** Clerk to prepare another letter to send to Nick Brown.

9. Traffic Group

Traffic calming in The Street – Four bollards had been removed from The Street and CPC are unaware of the reason for this. Cllr Booth had installed some replacement bollards into the existing fittings.

Lower Thames Crossing – the consultation closes on Wednesday 8th September. The LTC Team had provided many roadshows for local people to attend. The current build face is planned for 2024 and finish around 2029 subject to planning approval. There were still questions on traffic data for Henhurst Road and KCC and Highways England had not provided any further traffic data for this. CPC currently have an open question with the LTC Team regarding the diversion of the 416 bus route during the Brewers Road 19 month closures. A strip of woodland will be planted alongside the south side of Church Road.

Speedwatch Group – The Speedwatch group had a group of five volunteers which is the minimum number needed to run a session. Cllr Rice will set up training with Kent Speedwatch. **Action:** Clerk to send a Speedwatch application to Cllr Dymond.

Village gateways for Cobham – Cllr Booth had received an invoice for three village gateways for £3936.12. Despite this the village gateways have not been designed by KCC or approved by CPC. It was asked if CPC have to pay for the village gateways. The village gateways are not included in the Highways Improvement Plan and are not part of KCC and CPC's budget. **Action:** Cllr Booth is following this up with KCC as the work for the village gateways was only exploratory.

Parking & Verges – It was asked if CPC wanted to install no parking signs along Church Road. The parking issues along Church Road and the bottom of Jeskyns had improved. **Action:** Clerk to contact KCC regarding the cutting back of hedges and verges along Watling Street, Halfpence Lane and Henhurst Road.

Batts Road - CPC wanted the proposed one way scheme for Batts Road to be removed from the Highway Improvement Plan.

10. Village Crime Group

Neighbourhood Watch – There had been a useful meeting with the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for Sole Street, two PCSOs and 20 residents. A further meeting will take place with the PCSOs at the Darnley Arms on 20th September and everyone is welcome to attend.

Operation Gurkha – This needs to be removed from the agenda as the police are only carrying out Operation Gurkha as and when there is a need.

Reporting Crime - Cllr Rice had spoken to James Beautridge regarding the lack of follow ups from outcomes for reported crime.

PCSO Newsletter – This was being added to the CPC website by the clerk.

11. Playing Fields

Kissing Gate – The wooden kissing gate has been installed and looks good. The knotweed has been sprayed.

Children's Corner – The matting in the playground still needs to be repaired. A parishioner had asked if the swings could be reinstated following the lifting of the Covid restrictions. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce to speak to Home Counties playground company. **Action:** Cllr Booth to reinstall swings.

12. Public Toilets – New hand driers have been installed and a safety certificate has been issued for the next three years. CPC are looking at different alternatives for locking the public toilets. A volunteer was currently locking the toilets in the evening. One quote for timed electronic locks had been received for £2054 plus VAT. A parishioner said that some public toilets in Yorkshire had a contactless payment pad where users paid £1 to use the toilets. A voluntary contribution box has also been suggested. It was asked how much are the toilets costing the parish council and who uses the public toilets. Parents, Children who were using the playing fields were using the toilets as were walkers and cyclists. Darnley Arms was part of the Community Toilet Scheme and the Leatherbottle and the Ship had been invited. Cllr Peterson-Pearce suggested fund raising options for the public toilets. **Action:** The parishioner to supply the location of the toilet that takes the card payments. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce to look into the costs of running the toilets. **Action:** Clerk to investigate who is paying for the electricity supply to the toilets. **Action:** Clerk to investigate the installation of the contribution box.

13. St Mary's Church Rooms – The building regulations have been completed. A grant had been given from CPC to the architect but nothing more had been heard. BW May have been appointed as building contractors and have expertise in working on churches. Cobham and Luddesdown Churches and the Church Rooms were now back open. The churches were having services on alternate Sundays and are open for private prayer during the week.

14. Electric Vehicle Charging Points – Everyone at the meeting agreed that 2 or 3 electric vehicle charging points should be installed in the sports ground car park. **Action:** Clerk to take forward. It was decided not to install solar panels on to the roof of the cricket pavilion as it would take too long to recoup the money.

15. Social Media – Website & Facebook – Janet Weaver had provided the Cllr Booth with a copy of the Cobham and Luddesdown News. Cllr Booth had been investigating different ways of printing the magazine including speaking to local printing firms. The lease was due to expire on the printer at Cobham church. The magazine had potential to be developed further and there was lots of useful local information. They are looking for volunteers to deliver the magazine. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-



Pearce to obtain figures for CPC website usage. Cllr Peterson-Pearce to write an article on behalf of CPC.

16. Other Village Matters

Village Sign – It was asked if Cobham, Sole Street and Ifield want a village sign and where the sign should be located. Also what type of village sign do the villages want. Cobham and Sole Street are the only villages in the area that do not have a village sign. It was suggested that a survey could be sent to parishioners for their views.

Meadow Rooms – The Meadow Rooms is a registered charity and would be eligible for the Covid grant. The Clerk had already sent details to the Chair of the Management Committee. **Action:** Clerk to forward the covid grant details to Cllr Gabbitas. A new cleaner for the Meadow Rooms had just started.

Asset of Community Value – The Cobham Community Store has been listed as an asset of Community Value.

Footpaths – The no cycling signs had been removed from Footpath NS192 and cyclists had been using the path. Cllr Booth said Footpath NS178 needed no cycling signs as well. The enclosed section of Footpath NS191 needed some pick up after your dog signs to be installed. The farmer had not reinstated Footpath NS191 from Sole Street to the Cock PH at Henley Street after ploughing the field. **Action:** Clerk to raise with the KCC Rights of Way Officer.

War Memorial – The centennial celebrations for Cobham War Memorial are taking place over 16th and 17th October. The invitations which include a reproduced photograph of the original unveiling of the war memorial will be sent out and invitees need to RSVP. The bell ringers will be in action from 11.30 and 12.30 and members of the Baker family will be giving talks on the Saturday afternoon in the Meadow Rooms. Pupils from Cobham Primary School and Cobham Hall School will be laying wreaths. **Action:** Cllr Haig to check if the WI are available to serve refreshments on the Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

The National Trust will be installing park fencing at the back of the war memorial at their own expense. CPC will be paying for the paint and brushes at £315.70 and Sacha Dyer and Rob Wemyss will paint the fence.

Litter Picking – It was suggested that the next litter pick will take place on Saturday 25th September. **Action:** Clerk to email the date of the next litter pick.

Dangerous Dog – A matter involving a dog being attacked in the parish by another resident's dog was brought to the attention to CPC. Advice has been given to the dog owner on the correct reporting procedure.

Community Bus – A parishioner had spoken to Phil King, Chairman of the Meopham Welfare Committee regarding the community bus. The future of the community bus is in doubt due to Phil King stepping down at the end of December, the lack of passengers using the route and the stringent

checks that are needed for the maintenance of the community bus. There had been only 3-4 bus passengers on some days although this is a result of Covid. The minibus had been used to take the Monday Club for days out and the WI had expressed an interest in using the mini bus. **Action:** Clerk to write a formal letter to Phil King to express support for the community bus service.

17. Parishioners Comments

A Parishioner asked if the bus stop outside St Mary Magdelene church could be moved to Stonehouse Yard as the pavement slopes steeply up from the edge of the road and is difficult for the elderly and infirm to alight from the bus. There could be a risk that KCC who are responsible for bus stops, may remove the bus stop completely. The Parishioner was asked if he could raise a petition for the moving of the bus stop.

18. Correspondence & Announcements

A tenant at Owletts Cottages had been given permission by the local farm manager to install a traffic mirror opposite the entrance drive to their property. The same tenant had complained about the speeding traffic on The Street and had asked if traffic calming could be installed.

Ellie Middleton, a PCSO, had recently held a surgery at the car park in Ashenbank Woods. No parish councillors had attended.

19. Finance – Cheque Reports

The Clerk said there had been some last minute additions to the cheque report. Cllr Dymond had provided an invoice for Singlewell Stationery and Print for £31.20. Cllr Dyer proposed the cheque report and Cllr Gabbitas seconded.

20. AOB – Items from Councillors

Cllr Dyer said the undergrowth had been cleared around Sweeps Hole Pond.

Cllr Haig said there were proposals to downgrade Scotland Lane from a byway to a bridleway and it was suggested that Horsepond Lane should also be downgraded to a bridleway. The knotweed has reduced alongside the path from the playing fields to the Ship PH although there was some new growth. **Action:** Cllr Haig to speak to the staff at the Ship PH regarding an overflowing litter bin.

Cllr Dymond said that the Mayor of GBC, Cllr Milner is arranging a thank you event for volunteers who had gone out of their way to help other residents during the Covid 19 pandemic. The event will involve the serving of refreshments in the gardens of Cobham Hall School. Nine volunteers from Cobham and Sole Street had been put forward and four volunteers had been chosen.

21. Next Meeting will be on Tuesday 5th October at the Meadow Rooms