



Minutes of Cobham Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 5th September 2023 at 7.30pm

Meeting took place at the St Mary's Church Rooms

Present

Cllr Steve Dyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Rosemary Dymond, Cllr Rosemary Dymond, Cllr Zoe Gee
Cllr Ben Smith, Cllr Mat Peterson-Pearce, Cllr Russ Nichols, Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Robert Pryor

Present

Cllr Samir Jassel (GBC), Charles Amis (Clerk), 5 Parishioners

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr Mike Booth (Chair), Cllr Dakota Dibben (GBC), Cllr Bryan Sweetland (KCC)

2. Minutes - The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 4th July 2023 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Cllr Peterson-Pearce and seconded by Cllr Nichols.

3. Declarations of Interest – None

4. KCC Matters – Cllr Sweetland - Discussed later on in the meeting

5. GBC Matters – Cllr Jassel

Cllr Jassel was due to meet with Nick Brown, Deputy Chief Executive at GBC, to discuss planning enforcement. A report on the latest position of the planning enforcement issues had been produced. **Action:** Cllr Jassel to send an update to the clerk to circulate amongst the parish councillors.

6. KALC/NALC – Cllr Dymond

KALC were focusing on making the environment greener and were pushing for electric vehicle charging points. CPC had previously applied for a grant from KCC but had been turned down. Vigo Parish Council had sent their residents a newsletter which had included advice on insulating their properties and Higham and Shorne were going to send similar newsletters. The KCC traffic plan will be issued in mid-September. The next Gravesham Area KALC Meeting will be taking place on Tuesday 17th October.

7. Planning – Cllr Dyer – The planning group had met the previous week and Cllr Peterson-Pearce had put together a Terms of Reference. The Planning Group are meeting with Cllr Jassel on a monthly basis who is speaking to GBC on how to take the planning enforcement issues forward.

Norbond – With the Planning Inspectorate

Cranborne Farm – With GBC Planning Enforcement
Bluebell Barn – With GBC Planning Enforcement
White Post Farm – With GBC Planning Enforcement
The Barn, Parsonage Farm, The Street, Cobham – Permitted by GBC
Leighton House, Sole Street – The mobile home has been removed
Land north of Wildacre – With Planning Inspectorate
Hartland House, Sole Street – CPC had rejected
Trelight, Round Street – No objections
41 Scratton Fields – No objections
Scripps land east and west of Gold Street – CPC felt that the landowner should apply for planning permission. The access along Gold Street is narrow. GBC will supply further documentation.

8. Traffic Group – Cllr Nichols

Review of current traffic numbers and speeds – The Traffic Group had been working on a plan. Kent Police had set up a mobile speed van over two days. Four motorists were fined for speeding on the first day and 12 motorists on the second day.

A pavement from Round Street to Scratton Fields is likely to cost a minimum of £1million as the guidelines for new pavements say the pavement must be wider according to traffic guidelines. The most favoured option is to install some chicanes to slow vehicles down as per Longfield Hill and Cobham. The road surface at Sole Street could be lined on the side of the road for pedestrians to use and to warn motorists to slow down. Some residents had suggested that more parking may encourage the traffic to slow down.

Cllr Sweetland suggested the installation of average speed cameras but this may not slow the traffic. CPC would like a 20 mph limit to be installed along Sole Street and to reduce the speed limit to 30 mph between Sole Street and Cobham. A parishioner said that this may encourage new housing development but the fields are designated green belt and are prime agricultural land. Action: Cllr Nichols to send a response to Michelle Norris. Cllr Peterson-Pearce agreed to put together a petition for local residents

Joint Transportation Board Meeting – Cllr Sweetland had arranged for a representative from CPC and Cllr Nichols had attended the meeting. The other attendees were very supportive about the traffic issues facing Sole Street and had themselves been tailgated by other motorists when driving at the speed limit.

20mph Speed Signs – These have been removed from the bollards in The Street. The clerk has reported the missing repeater signs to KCC that were removed from the bollards. **Action:** Clerk to follow up with KCC.

Bus Stop by Round Street – It was commented that buses have been picking up school children from the corner of Round Street over 20 years. KCC have recently identified that in their view it is not a safe location for a permanent bus stop and had asked the bus companies, Red Route Buses and Brian Jones Coaches not to pick up from there.

The councillors agreed that they are not in a position to ask the bus companies to stop there as this could make CPC liable if an incident did take place. It was suggested that some of the current bus stops may not meet the current health and safety standards. KCC Highways had suggested that the buses could be routed via Manor Road, Sallows Shaw, White Post Lane and Round Street or footpath NS192 could be used to access Sole Street. It was agreed that this is not a practical suggestion.

Action: Residents to feedback their feelings to the clerk about the buses not stopping at Round Street. A parishioner offered to take photographs of the walk to the Scratton Fields bus stop. Cllr Jassel offered to raise the issue with KCC Highways. It was suggested that CPC should ask Kent Police Traffic Division for their opinion of whether the location is suitable for a temporary stop site.

Speed Indicator Device – The new software has been obtained. It was suggested that the SID be moved to the junction with Round Street and Sole Street. **Action:** The charger for the SID needs to be found. Move SID up to the junction of Round Street and Sole Street.

Speed Watch– PC Jo Hammond was keen to restart the Speed Watch sessions and was prepared to attend with a speed gun.

Village Gateways Features – Halfpence Lane – The last design of village gateway by KCC had cost around £4,500. It was suggested that designs be sent to Cllr Peterson-Pearce to take forward. Local companies could be asked to sponsor a village gateway.

7.5t Weight Restriction for Halfpence Lane – CPC have raised this with KCC but this is unlikely to change. CPC did not object when the restriction was implemented 15 years ago. Halfpence Lane is the only feasible access to Lodge Farm from the national road network.

Sink Hole on Halfpence Lane – CPC were very grateful to KCC Highways for ensuring Southern Water repaired the sink hole at the entrance to the fete car park before the summer fete took place.

Sole Street – Traffic Feasibility Study – Nothing to report.

Vehicles parking on the grass verge on Sole Street – A local resident had complained about vehicles parking on the grass verge opposite Cherry Orchard and were restricting the sight lines along the road. Cllr Dyer had raised this with Cllr Sweetland. The vans are owned by workman who are carrying out refurbishment to a house beside Cherry Orchard and the issue is likely to be temporary.

9. Lower Thames Crossing – Cllr Dyer – The Planning Inspectorate are holding hearings every day on MS teams. The deadline for registering to speak at the hearings has now passed. The designs and traffic modelling are published on the LTC website. The Brewers Road Bridge is expected to be closed for 18 months during the construction of the LTC. **Action:** Cllr Dyer to forward objections to the clerk.

10. Village Crime Group – Cllr Dymond – Since the CPC meeting with the Police & Crime Commissioner for Kent there has been a new emphasis on tackling off road bikes and anti-social behaviour. If it is safe to do so members of the public are encouraged to take photographs. Parishioners are being encouraged to report groups of off road bikes to Kent Police. The new Crime Commissioner for Kent is focusing on rural crime. PC Jo Hammond, our local beat officer, has been patrolling around the parish.

12. Playing Fields – Cllr Booth

Children’s Corner Refurbishment – The installation of the new playground equipment has been completed and the Children’s Corner was reopened at the Cobham fete on August Bank Holiday Monday. The overall cost is £71,493.60 although CPC are waiting for grants from GBC and Tesco. New fencing is planned to be installed as the next stage and will include an all-weather access path leading to the Children’s Corner.

Sports Association – The Sports Association were looking to put a retractable structure on the front of the pavilion. The patio will be improved and the walls will be rebuilt to allow for disabled access plus a new kitchen planned to be installed. Cllr Nichols has some steps that he no longer needed which he is prepared to donate.

Car Park Resurfacing – All of the sports clubs agreed to contribute towards the cost of resurfacing the car park as well as the Cobham Primary School and Cobham Primary School Parent Teachers Association. **Action:** Clerk to send Cllr Dyer an invoice for the Parent Teacher Association.

Tennis Club – **Action:** Clerk to check with KALC regarding CPC paying for the repairs to the tennis courts.

Football Pitches – There is an issue of a lack of drainage for the football pitches. The National Football Association had provisionally agreed to support financially but required that the Sports Association Lease be reviewed because it has less than ten years left to run. The National Football Association have asked for a document to be signed by CPC indicating that the Sports Association Lease will be extended in just under ten years time. **Action:** NFA document to be signed agreeing to the lease being extended.

13. Cobham Public Toilets – Cllr Booth

Opening and cleaning the toilets – Contract Review - The contract for the opening and cleaning of the public toilets has expired. Medway Norse continue to open and clean the toilets.

Southern Water – Business Stream continue to charge CPC and the Bowls Club twice due to the confusion over the meter and sub meter.

15. St Mary's Church Rooms - Refurbishment Work – Cllr Booth and Cllr Dymond are on the Task Group which has been formed to deliver the refurbishment. The LTC legacy fund has provided £150,000 and a dedicated project manager. A grant application to Veolia is currently being prepared.

16. Social Media – The website has on average 1,535 page views. The Facebook page had eight new followers. Cllr Peterson-Pearce suggested that CPC carry out a You Said We Did using social media, notice boards, parish magazine and local shops.

17. Other Village Matters

Defibrillators – The Round Street defibrillator has been stolen and has been reported to Kent Police and South East Coast Ambulance Service. The box for the defibrillator can remain in place for now.

Action: Clerk to check if CPC can claim a replacement defibrillator with the insurer.

Youth Club – The dates for the autumn term had been agreed with The Grand. KCC are likely to stop funding The Grand after 31st March 2024. **Action:** Everyone should complete the survey from KCC about the future of youth clubs and family hubs.

Footpaths – Cllr Dymond is attending the Gravesham Rights of Way Meeting on 21st September. Kent Police are carrying out enforcement of inappropriate use of the rights of way. The overgrown hedgerows along Scotland Lane have been reported to Forestry England. The hedgerows along Footpath NS192 need to be cut back.

Cllr Pryor said the hedgerow beside the pavement on Camer Road was overgrown and also asked if it would be possible to install a cycle way along Camer Road. There is a parallel track from Camer Road to the car park by the refreshment kiosk. **Action:** Cllr Dymond to raise at the Rights of way meeting.

Owletts and other National Trust Properties – Bernadette Gillow from the National Trust will be attending the October Meeting. **Action:** Clerk to confirm the details with Bernadette Gillow.

Village Sign – There was no further update.

Meadow Rooms – The management committee had decided not to install solar panels. A ground source heat pump was too expensive to obtain.

Wall around the Village Pump – One quote for the work had been received and two other companies had been approached but were both too busy to quote. **Action:** Cllr Smith to send the Clerk the details for another company to quote for the work.

Beams – Beams had applied for a parish council grant for £2,000. **Action:** Clerk to ask Beams how much other parish councils were due to contribute to their organisation.

17. Parishioners Comments –

A parishioner said there could be better communications between CPC and Meopham Parish Council. The Clerk is in regular contact with the clerk at Meopham.

Meeting continues in Private

19. Correspondence & Announcements – None

18. Finance – All of the parish councillors had received a copy of the Cash Flow Spreadsheet prior to the meeting.

Cllr Nichols proposed the cheque report and Cllr Dymond seconded.

Cheques signed since last meeting

Date of Invoice	Company	Reason	Amount
	Mike Booth	Retirement present for Cllr Haig. 2 Rose bushes at £20 each plus 1 bag of compost at £24.40 and 1 half standard rose at £30	£94.40
8/6/2023	Business Stream	Water supply and waste to public toilets – 6 th December 2022 to 5 th March 2023	£271.85
28/2/2023	Rosemary Dymond	Reimburse for South & South East in Bloom entry fee	£50
9/11/2022	KALC	Lunch at KALC AGM	£5
12/7/2023	Clerk	1 book of 2 nd class stamps at £6. 1 recorded 2 nd class delivery for Cllr Mason DPI form	£8.60
3/8/2023	Clerk	Salary 1 st -31 st July 2023	£845.10
28/7/2023	Medway Norse Ltd	Opening & cleaning the toilets in July 2023	£675.22
1/8/2023	Smooth & Rugged Landscapes	Cut grass at playground on 27 th July 2023	£35
16/8/2023	Clerk	Reimburse for MS Office software	£59.99
25/8/2023	Medway Norse Ltd	Opening & cleaning the toilets in August 2023	£675.22
28/8/2023	Clerk	Salary 1 st -31 st August 2023	£845.10
28/8/2023	Clerk	Tax & NIC payment	£13.89

Cheques to be signed at the meeting

Date of Invoice	Company	Reason	Amount
31/8/2023	Clerk	Mileage	£23.22
31/8/2023	Safeplay Playground Services Ltd	Installation of new playground and ancillary services	£71,493.60
1/9/2023	Fastnet International Ltd	Professional hosting annual rental renewal 2023/24	£115.06

19. Standing Orders - Cllr Peterson-Pearce had produced Terms of Reference documents for the Planning Working Group and Traffic Working Group. All of the Parish Councillors who were present were in favour of the Terms of Reference. The Working Groups will meet every three months and review Standing Orders annually. Cllr Dyer proposed the Planning Terms of Reference and Cllr Gee seconded. Cllr Nichols proposed the Traffic Terms of Reference and Cllr Smith seconded.

21. AOB – items from Councillors

Cllr Dymond proposed and Cllr Dyer seconded that CPC would support Cllr Smith. CPC acknowledge that Cllr Smith the individual and not the company was acting on behalf of the whole parish council when they took the action. CPC to write a letter Cllr Smith's solicitor.

22. Next Meeting – Parish Council Meeting at 8pm on Tuesday 3rd October at the Meadow Rooms