



## **Minutes of Cobham Parish Council Meeting**

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 at 7.30pm**

**Meeting took place at the Meadow Rooms**

### **Present**

Cllr Mike Booth (Chair), Cllr Steve Dyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Margaret Haig  
Cllr Robert Pryor, Cllr Ben Smith, Cllr Matt Peterson-Pearce, Cllr Matt Mason,  
Cllr Rosemary Dymond, Cllr Gabriella Gabbitas

### **Present**

Cllr Tony Rice (GBC), Charles Amis (Clerk), 5 Parishioners

**1. Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Bryan Sweetland (KCC)

**2. Minutes** - The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Cllr Dyer and seconded by Cllr Smith.

**3. Declarations of Interest** – None

**4. Sports Association** – Kirsty Lane spoke about the Sports Association, who are applying for a grant from KCC to develop and update the existing facilities and allow for other groups to make use of the facilities. The grant would be for up to 50% costs of the work or up to £20,000 whichever is higher. The proposals include a new veranda, demolish the existing wall by the steps and to install a picket fence. The estimated cost is £40,000 although this is likely to be higher. The Sports Association has proposed to use crowdfunding to match the funding from KCC.

The Sports Association are looking to join the Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) as there are several benefits. These include providing guidance on changing the Sports Association's constitution to meet the requirements of KCC's funding, KCC will have a level of assurance with the CASC as a backer and the Sports Association would be able to reclaim 25% gift aid from any donation. The Sports Association are looking to apply for the funding by Spring 2023. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce offered to produce some CAD drawings for the proposals.

### **5. KCC Matters**

- Bus Stops outside the Church and at Round Street – Cllr Booth had a meeting with Sam Bassett on 12<sup>th</sup> August. There has been no further action from the visit.
- Bollard – outside 46 The Street – Still waiting for a response from KCC.
- Bollards outside Pilgrims – The bollards have been installed on 1<sup>st</sup> November.

- Village Gateways Features – Halfpence Lane – Still waiting for a response from KCC.
- Weight Restriction on Halfpence Lane – Still waiting for a response from KCC.
- Jeskyns Road – KCC officers are still working with the owner.

**6. GBC Matters** – Already to be discussed in the meeting.

**7. KALC/NALC** – The KALC AGM is taking place at 9.30am on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at Ditton Community Centre.

## 8. Planning

- **Norbond Site** – The site owner had appealed against the enforcement notice. The planning appeal is with the Planning Inspectorate. **Action:** Clerk to ask Stuart Bobby, CEO of GBC for a response.
- **White Post Farm** – The planning appeal has been with the Planning Inspectorate for over two years with no sign of a site visit or a decision date. The site owner has installed a mobile home with a veranda on the site. GBC Planning Enforcement had previously attempted two site visits. A site visit by GBC has been planned for 8<sup>th</sup> November. **Action:** Clerk to write to Adam Holloway to say there has been no site visit by the Planning Inspectorate since the last letter was sent. Adam could possibly take this up with Government Ministers.
- **Orchard Cottage, Round Street** – The owners have been told by GBC to plant shrubs around the entrance gates.
- **Land North of Wildacre** – The landowner spoke at the meeting to explain his plans.

## 9. Traffic Group

- **Traffic Calming Scheme** – KCC now consider this to be closed and overall the scheme has been a success.
- **Review of current traffic numbers and speeds** – KCC have refused to carry out a review of traffic levels and speeds. CPC have looked at running a survey and have been quoted £600 for this. A parishioner asked if a traffic count was taken when there is a problem with the A2. There was a spike between 6.30am and 8.30am when the climate protestors were occupying a gantry near the Dartford Crossing. Prior to Covid there was a significant amount of traffic passing through Cobham and Sole Street.
- **Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)** – The Sole Street Traffic Feasibility Study is part of this. There had been no further outcome from the LTC Legacy Fund regarding the funding of the highway improvements at Sole Street.
- **Speed Indicator Device** – The software for the SID appears to be out of date despite the SID being no more than 5 years old. **Action:** Cllr Rice to speak to Cllr Bob Lane at Shorne Parish Council who have a similar design of SID. Cllr Peterson-Pearce offered to rewrite software.
- **Google Maps Directions** – It was asked if Cobham and Sole Street could be removed from Google Maps suggested driving routes. KCC may be the only authority that could ask for this to be changed. **Action:** Cllr Dymond agreed to raise with KCC.

**10. Lower Thames Crossing** – Cllr Booth and Cllr Dyer had several meetings with Eva Simunovic and most of the issues have been agreed. Cllr Dyer had circulated the statement of common ground. Although the engagement has been good with the local communities, it was felt that the Lower Thames Crossing Team had not been forthcoming with the predictions of traffic numbers. National Highways has submitted an application for a Development Consent Order to the Planning Inspectorate. There is a 28 day cooling off period. Residents are being encouraged to give their

feedback. **Action:** Cllrs Dyer/Peterson-Pearce to put guidance on the website/Facebook page after 28 day cooling off period. Ask for a site visit.

**11. Village Crime Group** – There is not much to report. There was a high police presence over Halloween.

## **12. Playing Fields**

- **Children’s Corner Refurbishment** – Caloo have quoted £60,000 for the provision of equipment but may be able to get this down to £45,000. Cllr Peterson-Pearce is still waiting for Tesco to approve the funding application. The plans include a play area, area for meeting others and a gym area. People with restricted access would also be to access the facilities. Cllr Peterson-Pearce said that would have something more definite within a week. **Action:** Cllr Rice offered to take the proposal forward to GBC Playgrounds department to see if they could offer a better quote. It was unlikely that GBC would be able to provide any funding.
- **Electric Vehicles Charging Points** – There was no update on the electric vehicle charging points.
- **Car Park** – Mackledens had sent a quote for patching or resurfacing of the car park. **Action:** Clerk to obtain two further quotes.

**13. Public Toilets** – CPC needs to make a decision on the future of the toilets. The costs of keeping the toilets open are around £8,000 per annum. Cllr Peterson-Pearce suggested producing a survey for local residents to decide if they wanted the toilets to be open or closed. A vote was taken at the meeting by the parish councillors on the future of the public toilets and 6 parish councillors voted in favour to keep the toilets open and 3 voted against. The only other toilets in the village are at the public houses which are part of the community toilet scheme. **Action:** Cllr Dyer to order electronic counter devices to check the usage of the toilets.

- **Night Locking** – CPC are no longer pursuing night locks. The toilets are opened and cleaned by Medway Norse and a parishioner has kindly volunteered to lock them in the evening.
- **Southern Water** – CPC are still waiting for Southern Water to send an engineer to check the water supply and meters.
- **Repairs to Roof & Gutters** – **Action:** Cllr Smith offered to repair roof and gutters.
- **Floor Painting** – **Action:** Clerk to chase Medway Norse

**14. St Mary’s Church Rooms** – The Local Funding Group had raised almost £70,000 and the project cost is £240,000. A new planning application needs to be paid for (£3,000). The Local Funding Group does not have enough funds to apply for the All Churches Benefice Grant. It was suggested that CPC could guarantee to support the Local Funding Group. **Action:** The clerk to check with KALC about parish councils giving grants to churches.

**15. Social Media** – There are 490 Facebook followers who are mostly female. 172 individuals viewed are 323 views of the website and 1-2 pages were viewed per visit.

## **16. Other Village Matters**

- **Pavement outside the Darnley Arms** – KCC are not prepared to take responsibility for the water ingress at the Darnley Arms and CPC are unable to take this any further. It was asked if CPC could ask for a dropped kerb that would allow the water to drain on to The Street.

The landlady confirmed that they cannot take up the issues with their insurers. **Action:** It was suggested that the issues be put into the HIP and be raised with KCC.

- **Bollards outside # 41 The Street** – Cllr Sweetland has agreed to adopt the bollard but KCC has yet to confirm this. It was suggested that a retractable bollard be installed so that delivery lorries can turn the corner.
- **Cobham Parking** – Meopham Parish Council had suggested that the parish councils within the GBC area could fund a parking enforcement officer. All of the parish councillors agreed that parking is not a big enough problem and decided not to proceed with this. **Action:** Clerk to let Meopham Parish Council know.
- **Defibrillators** – Cobham College has a new working defibrillator at the entrance and 12 residents have attended a training course. The Round Street defibrillator will be reinstated to its current location once the new garage has been built. **Action:** Clerk to circulate the defibrillator check list.
- **Youth Club** – All of the parish councillors agreed that the youth club should continue beyond December 2022. The youth club remains well attended.
- **Footpaths** – Cllr Smith had asked the landowner to tidy up the fence alongside Footpath NS191. The owners at Leighton are repairing the fence alongside Footpath NS191. A parishioner thanked CPC for arranging for the tree stumps to be removed from Footpath NS178.
- **Owlets and other National Trust Properties** – The National Trust have suggested a new rent to the Baker Family but the NT did not want to confirm the open days before the deadline to sign a new lease. The NT are proposing to close the house to the public. The Baker family are planning to set up the Herbert Baker Society to preserve and protect the fabric of Herbert Baker's work, including furniture and fixings and to celebrate his life. Most of the volunteers at Owlets are planning to join. Anyone is welcome to join and there will be a series of talks and visits to buildings plus regular email updates. The Mausoleum had a reasonable year and visitors averaged 180 per day over 6 open days. £60 was collected from visitor's donations.
- **Cobham Church** – It was decided by all of the parish councillors that the proposed handrail from the slope to the church is not a parish council matter.
- **Grant Application - Christmas Event** – This is an evening event is for new families where Father Christmas goes around the parish to give children a sweet or toy. The total cost is £600 and CPC had been asked if they could contribute a grant for £250.
- **Village Sign** – A company in Scotland offers a reasonable design for not much money. CPC could budget for one village sign per year. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce to report back at the end of February.
- **Meadow Rooms** – There are regular bookings and there are enough finances in the reserves.
- **Assets of Community Value** – There are 5 assets of community value in the parish.
- **Rural Kent Coffee & Information Project** – These had just restarted and the last session had taken place over the past week. The café is appreciated by those who attend and has introduced them to other social clubs in the parish. The next session is on 24<sup>th</sup> November and there may be further sessions in 2023 depending on the funding received. The long term aim is for local volunteers to take on the running of the cafe.
- **Remembrance Sunday** – There is an Act of Remembrance at 10am at the War Memorial and the Rev Chris Stone is leading this. The programmes are with the printers. **Action:** Clerk to ask if there is an Act of Remembrance at Ifield Church.

## 17. Parishioners Comments - None

### **Meeting continues in Private**

**18. Correspondence & Announcements** – The clerk had received an email from a visitor who had asked about parking for Cobham Woods and Mausoleum.

### **19. Finance**

- Cheque Report – was proposed by Cllr Dyer and seconded by Cllr Haig.
- Online bank account
- New bank account for the Youth Club – Cllrs Booth and Dyer were added as signatories to the bank account. **Action:** Clerk to send form to the Co-operative Bank.

### **20. AOB – items from Councillors**

Cllr Pryor suggested that a meeting be arranged with Adam Holloway MP who could speak with the parish councillors or the residents. **Action:** Clerk to arrange.

Cllr Haig said that a post had been knocked over on The Green. **Action:** Cllr Booth said he would investigate and repair.

**21. Next Meeting – Parish Council Budget Meeting (closed to the public) at 7.30pm on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December at the St Mary's Church Rooms**

**22. Next Public Meeting Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at the St Mary's Church Rooms**