



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

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7.30pm**

**Meeting took place at the Meadow Rooms**

### **Present**

Cllr Mike Booth (Chair), Cllr Steve Dyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Kirsty Lane, Cllr Rosemary Dymond,  
Cllr Julie Wilder, Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Robert Pryor, Cllr Bennett Smith

### **Present**

Cllr Samir Jassal, Cllr Dakota Dibben (GBC), Charles Amis (Clerk), 45 parishioners

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

**2. Declarations of Interest** – None

**3. Approval of Minutes** - The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Cllr Dyer and seconded by Cllr Dymond. The minutes for the December budget meeting need some minor amendments.

**4. GBC Matters** –

**White Post Farm** – The owner had arranged for a large mobile home to be delivered to the east site on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December. The mobile home was too wide for White Post Lane and a huge number of trees and branches were felled using chain saws. It was asked if the driver of the low loader had asked the police for permission to deliver the mobile home. GBC Planning Enforcement and Kent Police had been in attendance but had not taken any action. Kent Police have been carrying out their own investigation.

Cllr Dyer and Cllr Mason hold bi-monthly meetings with GBC Planning Department on MS Teams to discuss the latest situation on the outstanding planning enforcement. Cllr Jassal has set up a Zoom Meeting between CPC and GBC to discuss the situation with White Post Farm. It is expected that Cllr John Burden, the leader of GBC will attend and it is hoped that Stuart Bobbie, the CEO will also be there. **Action:** Cllr Jassal to ask if the Chief Inspector of Kent Police to attend the meeting.

CPC had sort independent legal advice and a letter was being prepared to send to GBC to ask them to take action following an injunction that was issued in 2009. The Planning Inspectorate held a hearing on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024 which went through all of the areas that the owner was appealing, following the enforcement notice that was issued by GBC.

KCC had been carrying out repairs to a man hole cover in White Post Lane.

A new gate has been installed on White Post Lane by the owner.

It was asked if any of the existing trees that had not been felled could be protected with Tree Preservation Orders. GBC had not issued any Tree Preservation Orders along White Post Lane. Residents were encouraged to email GBC Planning Enforcement with their comments which hopefully will pressure GBC into taking further action. Residents can also send their views to the clerk who will send to GBC Planning Department.

It was noted that there is a similar planning enforcement issue in Gravesham behind the See Ho PH at Pear Tree Lane, Shorne.

**Action:** Clerk to report the tree felling to the Forestry Commission and to check if permission had been obtained to fell the trees. Clerk to ask if an arborist could carry out a tree and wildlife study.

**6. Planning – Cobham House Vineyard** – The original deadline for the decision was in December but this has been moved back to 28<sup>th</sup> February. The owner has been taking legal advice. GBC has asked for additional evidence.

**Norbond** – GBC have submitted a revised enforcement notice and that came into effect on the 8<sup>th</sup> October but an appeal has been submitted against this enforcement notice by the owner.

**Shoulder of Mutton Shaw, Warren Road** – GBC are planning to carry out a site visit. The owner appears to live in a large motor home on the site. The owners may apply for a change of use of the land.

## **7. Traffic Group –**

**Sole Street – Update** – Nothing to report.

**Speed Watch** – The Speed Watch sessions are helping to slow the traffic down and warn drivers who are speeding. More volunteers are needed to help run the Speed Watch sessions. Speeding vehicles are recorded and fed into the Kent Police. A motorist who is caught speeding once receives a letter from the police. **Action:** Prospective volunteers are encouraged to contact the Parish Clerk via the details below.

**Speed Indicator Device (SID)** – The fixed Speed Indicator Device is now working and appeared to help slow the traffic down. Cllr Ben Smith has been helping Steve Holden, the Speed Watch Co-ordinator, look after the SID.

**Village Gateways** – Nothing further to report.

**8. Lower Thames Crossing** – The Secretary of State for Transport has deferred their decision on whether the LTC may be given approval to the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025.

**9. Village Crime Group** – A resident had their chickens stolen again and several sheds had been broken into. A car had been dumped and stripped in the playing field car park and a resident who parks their car at the playing field had been broken into twice. A resident said there had been regularly instances of joy riding early in the morning and asked if there were plans for a gate to be installed at The Landway.

A car belonging to a Cobham College resident had been stolen and another car had been vandalised. The police had been notified. The existing cameras and lights did not show these incidents. The trustees of Cobham College have been speaking with a security company about installing new cameras and security lighting. It was suggested that ANPR cameras, a security gate or movable

bollards could be installed. The Cobham College residents would like the police to come and meet with them. **Action:** Cllr Dymond to feedback suggestions on securing the car park.

**Request from the other Parish Councils in Gravesham to part fund a Community Warden** - It was agreed by all of the parish councillors who were present that CPC would not contribute towards a Community Warden. Cobham Parish had not had a Community Warden since the start of Covid. There were enough residents who looked after the parish. There is an online course to become a special constable.

#### **10. Playing Fields Group –**

**Planning Permission for the patio** - Cllr Lane and Chris Broadley had submitted a planning application through the Sports Association for a patio and disabled ramp and are waiting for the application to be validated.

**Quotes for the All Weather Path and new fencing** – CPC had received four quotes for the all-weather path. It was decided to use Abacus as they offered suds based surface that was hardwearing. This was proposed by Cllr Lane and seconded by Cllr Dyer.

The Clerk had sent all of the parish councillors the quotes for the work from three potential companies. Cllr Booth had met with James Young, GBC Parks and Open Spaces, at a recent meeting and he offered to seek another quote for the work. The work for the new fencing will go ahead as soon as sufficient quotes are received and approved by CPC. It was suggested that the fencing project should include sufficient protection for the bowls green and the tennis courts. **Action:** Clerk to invite Abacus to a site visit with Cllr Lane and The Sports Association to confirm the route of the path and the cost.

**Replacement Benches** – Cllr Lane had produced a plan of the current layout of the benches. It was agreed by all of the parish councillors who were present to replace six of the concrete benches with recycled plastic benches. The three quotes were around the same price and NBB were chosen as the preferred supplier. **Action:** Clerk to order six new benches from NBB Ltd.

GBC Parks and Open Spaces Department have offered to dismantle and remove the old concrete benches and install the new benches.

**Electric Vehicle Charging Points** – A parishioner asked if there were any plans for the installation of electric vehicle charging points at the playing field car park. CPC had previously applied for a grant from KCC to install charging points at the playing field car park but had been unsuccessful. It is likely that Cobham will need charging points in the future. CPC are not allowed to make money from the electric vehicle charging. **Action:** Cllr Lane to send the contact details of the member of staff at KCC who is responsible for electric vehicle charging points.

**Memorial Tree and Bench policy** - All of the Parish Councillors present approved the policy for Memorial Trees and Benches. It was decided that the Sports Association should also review the policy at their next meeting and to give their approval. **Action:** Clerk to send the policy to the Sports Association.

**10. Public Toilets** – The dispute about the billing with Business Stream is still ongoing. **Action:** Cllr Booth to ask the plumber to complete the work for the washbasin.

**11. KALC/NALC** – The Gravesham KALC Area Committee will be meeting at the end of February.

**12. St Mary's Church Rooms** – Gransdens have installed a new roof. The refurbishment work should be finished by the end of February and the Development Task Group hopes to start taking bookings for March. Cobham PCC are planning to hold an open day when the works are completed and are looking for a volunteer to manage the bookings.

It was agreed by all of the parish councils present that the parish council notice board could be moved slightly further down Manor road to allow for the installation of a wheelchair ramp. **Action:** Clerk to pass on the permission to the Development Task Group.

**13. Social Media** – The CPC website had 468 page views over the past 30 days and there were 356 unique visits over the past 30 days. There was an average of 1.4279 average page views per visit.

#### **14. Other Village Matters**

**Defibrillators** – New batteries, pads and first aid kits had been ordered for the defibrillators at the Bowls Club and the St Mary's Church Rooms. The St Mary's Church Rooms defibrillator is likely to need a new outdoor locked cabinet. The Round Street defibrillator, currently at Cllr Dyer's house will be returned to its original position within 2 months. **Action:** Clerk to ask the Development Task Group to confirm the new position for the defibrillator following the refurbishment of the St Mary's Church Rooms.

**Youth Club** – The Grand had said they had not replaced the youth worker who had recently left and are now unable to provide youth workers to run the Cobham Youth Club. **Action:** The Clerk was asked to prepare a set of accounts to show much how much had been received for Cobham Youth Club and the amount spent by CPC. Clerk to ask if local children can attend the only remaining youth club in the rural Gravesham area at Higham.

**Footpaths** – The flooding along Footpath NS191 has been resolved. Scotland Lane which had been previously badly rutted had been resurfaced. The No Cycling sign is still missing from Footpath NS 178 and there are more tiles missing on Footbridge over HS1 and the A2. The issue with the tiles is the responsibility of National Highways. **Action:** Cllr Dymond to raise the outstanding footpath issues with KCC Rights of Way Team.

**Village Sign** – The design for the village signs were agreed by everyone present. The suggested sites for the Sole Street village sign would be the small green by Scratton Fields at Sole Street. CPC had permission from Cobham Parochial Church Council for the village sign to be located at the flower bed below the churchyard. **Action:** Clerk to ask Black Fox Designs to start working on the signs.

**Meadow Rooms** – There was nothing to report.

**Village Pump** – One of the preferred contractors was currently working at Meadow House.

**16. Parishioners Comments** - None

#### **Meeting continues in Private**

#### **17. Correspondence & Announcements** –

All of the parish councillors decided on the nomination for the KALC Community Award for 2025.

All of the parish councillors present were in favour of employing a solicitor to write to GBC regarding White Post Farm. The amount for the work will be £2,400. The solicitor had previous experience with Cobham House Vineyard.

## 18. Finance

It was agreed that the precept for 2025-26 will be £75,000. **Action:** Clerk to confirm with GBC Corporate Services.

### Payments made since the 3rd December meeting

Date of payment	Company	Reason	Amount
4/12/2024	Clerk	Pension	£50.10
4/12/2024	Cobham PCC	Grant application for the St Mary's Church Rooms	£2500
10/12/2024	Clerk	Reimburse Clerk - Information Commissioners Office	£40
13/12/2024	Society of Local Council Clerks	Subscription for 2025	£190
13/12/2024	Sara Gray	Grant application for the Santa Event at Sole Street	£250
18/12/2024	MI Payroll & Bookkeeping Services Ltd	Payroll for October, November and December 2024	£60
18/12/2024	Clerk	Home Office Allowance	£300
31/12/2024	Clerk	Pension	£30.03
2/1/2025	Clerk	Salary 1 <sup>st</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2024	£931.84
2/1/2025	Forvar Mazars	External Auditor 2023-24 AGAR	£504
13/1/2025	Baylis Landscape Contractors Ltd	Maintenance of Sweeps Hole Pond 2024	£732
19/1/2025	HMRC	Tax & National Insurance Oct- Dec 2024	£127.99

### Payments to be made after the 14th January Meeting

Date of Payment	Company	Reason	Amount
15/1/2025	Clerk	Mileage 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	£13.05
15/1/2025	Matthew Lisney	Litter picking October, November, December 2024	£594.88
31/1/2024	Clerk	Salary 1 <sup>st</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> January	£931.84

Cllr Dyer proposed the payment report and Cllr Dymond seconded.

**Action:** Cllr Smith to ask Sara Gray for the receipts for the grant application for the Santa's sleigh at Sole Street.

It was asked if some of the money in the Reserve Account could be moved to high interest savings accounts. CPC's reserve account could be earning a higher rate of interest and Cllr Lane suggested putting some of the CPC budget into bonds. Cllr Dymond had provided details of a building society.

## 19. Items from Councillors –

**20. Next Meeting - Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at the Meadow Rooms.**