



Minutes of Cobham Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 4th February 2025 at 7.30pm

Meeting took place at the Meadow Rooms

Present

Cllr Mike Booth (Chair), Cllr Steve Dyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Rosemary Dymond,

Cllr Julie Wilder, Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Robert Pryor

Present

Cllr Jordan Meade (KCC & GBC), Cllr Dakota Dibben (GBC), Charles Amis (Clerk), 9 parishioners

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr Kirsty Lane, Cllr Russ Nichols, Cllr Bennett Smith, Cllr Bryan Sweetland (KCC), Cllr Samir Jassel.

2. Declarations of Interest – None

3. Minutes - The minutes for the Parish Council Budget Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd December 2024 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Cllr Dyer and seconded by Cllr Dymond.

4. Building links between Cobham and a village in Ukraine – Cllr Jordan Meade, a GBC and KCC Councillor spoke about the process of Cobham parish twinning with a village in Ukraine.

Kent had offered sanctuary to 4,000 refugees from Ukraine after the war had started between Russia and Ukraine and those refugees had wanted to give something back to people who were still living in Ukraine. The area around Chernihiv which is close to the border with Russia and Belarus was the hardest hit when the Russian army invaded and occupied the region for around 40-60 days.

On the 18th July 2024 all of the Councillors across all of the different political parties in KCC signed an agreement to provide friendship, support and co-operation between Kent and the Chernihiv Oblast. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Cllr Roger Gough, Leader of KCC and Cllr Jordan Meade with the Head of the Chernihiv Regional Military Administration. KCC has also pledged that no public money will be used and all support will be provided by private and community partnerships. A website, Kent for Ukraine, has been set up and is run by KCC.

Surplus medical stock that had been over ordered by the NHS had been collected and will be taken to Ukraine. The head teacher at Cobham Hall School was keen to partner with a school in Ukraine and Cobham Primary School is likely to be approached to partner a school in Ukraine. School library books for primary children have also been donated and this helps Ukrainian children to learn English.

Cobham Hall School has donated books. 12,000 individual items of warm clothing had been kindly donated by the residents of Gravesham. Residents can drop off clothing to the Old Town Hall, High Street, Gravesend, DA11 0AZ. **Action:** Cllr Dymond offered to co-ordinate donations for Ukraine. Residents can contact Cllr Dymond to arrange for the donated items to be dropped off.

Meopham Parish Council have agreed to be twinned with Yehidne, a village just outside Chernihiv. All of the parish councillors present were in favour of signing an agreement to twin with Baturyn, a village of 3,500 people to the North East of Chernihiv, in Northern Ukraine. It was proposed that the twinning would be shared with Luddesdown Parish Council. **Action:** Cllr Jordan Meade will prepare a draft agreement to be signed by himself, Cllr Mike Booth and Cllr Peter Crow, the Chair of Luddesdown Parish Council. A virtual meeting will be arranged between Cobham, Luddesdown and Baturyn.

5. GBC Matters – White Post Farm – CPC had a meeting with GBC Planning department. GBC Planning Department will not take any action until the Planning Inspectorate had responded with their decision following the appeal by the owner. The Planning Inspectorate may respond by the end of February. Both Cllr Bryan Sweetland and GBC Planning Department had carried out site visits since Christmas.

CPC had employed their own solicitor who had written to GBC Planning Department last week asking GBC to take action using the court injunction that had been issued in 2009. The Clerk had asked the Police & Crime Commissioner's Office for a timetable for when the police will be taking action.

The owner has recently put up a six foot high fence around the right hand side of the site and more trees had been removed.

An old touring caravan had been dumped in Nurstead Church Lane and GBC said the caravan would be moved within a day but the caravan was left for longer and had been set on fire. GBC had been asked to clear the remains of the caravan.

It was asked if the debris from the chopped trees and branches could be cleared from White Post Lane by KCC as it was difficult for vehicles to pass. The other nearby landowners may be responsible for clearing the debris and it was thought that they had complained to the police.

Action: Cllr Jordan Meade offered to raise the issues with Cllr Bryan Sweetland. Cllr Jordan Meade asked to be copied in to all of the correspondence. Clerk to send a letter to the Police & Crime Commissioners Office and to copy Cllr Jordan Meade. Cllr Jordan Meade offered to take up with the Police & Crime Commissioner for Kent. Cllr Dyer offered to ask the Planning Inspectorate for an expected date for the response to the planning appeal.

6. Planning –

Cobham House Vineyard – GBC Planning Department had given an extension until 28th February to allow the owner to gather some more documentation for the permitted development rights.

Norbond – The owners are appealing an enforcement notice that was issued by GBC. The appeal started on the 17th January 2025. With the Planning Inspectorate.

Shuesli, Sole Street – The owner is planning to put up a single storey side extension with new entrance and wheelchair access as well as a single storey rear extension. Currently with the planning group.

Cobham Sports Association – GBC have taken the planning application back to the validation team because GBC require more information.

7. Traffic Group

Sole Street – Nothing to report

Speed Watch – There were currently nine Speed Watch volunteers and regular sessions were being run at Sole Street and Cobham which are starting to make a difference. Over last three weeks 1,098 vehicles had been seen at the Speed Watch sessions. There were 63 speeding offenders of which 12 were repeat offenders and would receive a letter from the police. One motorist had a letter hand delivered by the police who will speak to them about speeding. The parked cars at Sole Street were helping to slow the traffic down. Motorists tend to slow down at the SID. At Cobham out of 88 vehicles seen there were 18 exceeding the speed limit.

Speed Indicator Device – Kent Police loan a mobile speed indicator device for the Speed Watch sessions and this is shared with Meopham. Kent Police could ask the Speed Watch team to share with other Speed Watch teams in addition to Meopham and they could also ask for the SID to be returned at any time.

It was agreed by all of the parish councillors present that CPC should purchase its own mobile SID from Unipart. Kent Police source their mobile SID from Unipart. **Action:** Clerk to order the mobile SID from Unipart. Steve Holden agreed to collect.

Vehicle Activated Sign – KCC Highways had installed the Vehicle Activated Sign at Sole Street in 2005 to warn motorists of the 30 mph speed limit. The VAS was not working and had been reported to KCC. A KCC Highways engineer had tried to repair at the road side and taken the VAS back to the depot but was unable to find replacement parts as the VAS was too old. KCC Highways said they would not replace the VAS and it would cost CPC £10,000 for a replacement VAS. It was felt that the VAS helped to slow traffic down when passing through Sole Street. It was suggested that Cllr Dibben and Cllr Jassel make a representation on behalf of CPC at the next Joint Transportation Board Meeting on 27th February between KCC and GBC. **Action:** Clerk to send an email to Cllr Dibben and Cllr Jassel to confirm the representation.

Village Gateways – It was felt that £4,500 was too much for a village gateway. **Action:** Clerk to speak to Michelle Norris/Emma Tilbury at KCC Highways.

Highways Improvement Plan – KCC Highways had sent the existing HIP to CPC and asked for CPC to update. This will be discussed at the next Traffic Group Meeting. **Action:** Clerk to send Highways Improvement Plan to Steve Holden.

8. Lower Thames Crossing – The Secretary of State for Transport working with the private sector to secure funding for the LTC amongst other large projects. The deadline for a decision is 23rd May 2025.

9. Village Crime Group – The owner who had their chickens stolen had had them returned by the police. The car that had been stolen from a resident at Cobham College had also been returned. Cobham College had installed CCTV at the gate and the car park and extra lighting had also been installed at the car park. The Clerk at Cobham College is monitoring the cameras. The police had met with the residents at Cobham College and there had been unmarked police cars patrolling.

A motorist had a side window of their vehicle smashed by a pellet gun at Henley Street and the police had been notified. **Action:** Cllr Mason to find the crime reference number for this incident.

10. Playing Fields Group

All Weather Path to the Children's Corner – It was agreed by all of the Parish Councillors present that Abacus should carry out the works to install the new All-weather path for £8,449.50 excluding VAT. **Action:** Clerk to ask Abacus to start the work.

Replacement Benches – It was agreed by all of the Parish Councillors present that GBC Parks and Open Spaces Department shall remove and dispose of the concrete benches. Repair existing pads plus collect and install the replacement recycled plastic benches for £1,743.38 excluding VAT.

Memorial Tree & Bench Policy – To be raised at the next Sports Association Meeting.

High level fence for Children's Corner and Bowls Club – **Action:** Clerk to obtain another quote for a high level fence. Cllr Booth agreed to meet the company for a site visit.

It was suggested that once all of the quotes had been received that CPC, the Sports Association and Cobham Bowls Club meet to discuss the high level fence.

11. Public Toilets – Nothing further to report.

12. KALC/NALC – The next Gravesham KALC Area Meeting is due to take place at the end of February or beginning of March.

13. St Mary's Church Rooms – The SMCR had been broken into three weeks ago and the new main door, fire escape door and a window had been broken and tools were taken. Two police patrol cars had arrived quickly. The completion date has been delayed until 28th February and it is hoped that bookings will start in mid-March. The proposed open day has been postponed. The Local Funding Group had handed over all of the remaining funds to the Development Task Group.

14. Social Media - The CPC website had 537 page views over the past 30 days (Up 52% from last 30 days) and there were 332 unique visits over the past 30 days (Up 23% from last 30 days). There was an average of 1.61 average page views per visit (Up 13% from last 30 days).

15. Other Village Matters

Defibrillators – The Round Street defibrillator, currently at Cllr Dyer's house will be returned to its original position within 2 months. All of the parish councillors present agreed to order a replacement outside cabinet for the St Mary's Church Rooms defibrillator. **Action:** Clerk to order the outside cabinet.

Youth Club – The Grand said young people are welcome to attend the Higham Youth club that meets at the Memorial Hall, School Lane, Higham at 7.30pm on Wednesday evenings during the school term. **Action:** Clerk to add the details to the CPC website.

Footpaths – The next Gravesham Rights of Way Committee meeting is taking place on the 27th February. The No Cycling sign is still missing from Footpath NS178 and the mats are still missing from the bridge over the A2 and HS1 (NS175A). Cyclists had been using the footpath between Cobham Parish Church and Batts Road. **Action:** Clerk to ask KCC Rights of Way Team for a no cycling sign. Clerk to speak to National Highways regarding the missing mats. Cllr Dymond to raise at the GROWC Meeting.

Village Sign – CPC had paid a 20% deposit to Black Fox Metalcraft to start the work on making the new village signs. The clerk had received two quotes for the purchase and installation of the wooden posts and was waiting for a third quote.

Meadow Rooms – During December 2024 there were a number of private hires which included a Christmas party for adults with learning disabilities and their carers, there were a couple of children's birthday parties, a surprise birthday party and a wake, the Tin Tabernacle Fundraisers held a wreath making workshop, an evening Sound Bath class and there was even a private hire on New Year's Eve.

Current regular bookings are as follows: Monday - Cobham Amateur Dramatic Society (CADS) (Evening), Tuesday - Brownies (Evening), Thursday - Pilates (Morning) - CADS (Evening), Friday – Hartbeeps Playgroup (Morning).

In addition to the above the Gardeners Club and the WI meet once per month as do a circle dancing club. Cash reserves continue to be at a high level and are sufficient to maintain the operations.

Village Pump – Nothing to report

16. Parishioners Comments – It was asked if the dates for the parish council meeting could be added to the CPC Face Book page.

Meeting continues in Private

17. Correspondence & Announcements

KALC Community Awards Scheme 2025 - Cllr Booth signed the nomination form. **Action:** Clerk to send to KALC.

18. Finance

Payment Report

Payments made since the 14th January meeting

Date of payment	Company	Reason	Amount
15/1/2025	Clerk	Mileage 14 th January 2025	£13.05
15/1/2025	Matthew Lisney	Litter picking October, November, December 2024	£594.88
15/1/2025	Keystone Law	Legal Advice/Letter to GBC Planning department	£2,400
27/1/2025	Campaign for the Protection of Rural England	2025 Subscription	£36
29/1/2025	Black Fox Metalcraft Ltd	20% deposit to start working on village signs	£560
31/1/2024	Nest	Clerk's Pension	£30.03
3/2/2025	Clerk	Salary 1 st – 31 st January	£931.84
3/2/2025	Clerk	Reimburse for Norton Anti-Virus software for laptop	£34.99

Payments to be made after the 4th February Meeting

Date of Payment	Company	Reason	Amount
4/2/2025	Clerk	Mileage	£13.05
13/2/2025	NBB Recycled Furniture Ltd	Six new recycled plastic benches to replace the concrete benches at the playing field	£3,967.20
28/2/2025	Clerk	Salary 1 st – 28 th February	£931.84

Cllr Dyer proposed the payment report and Cllr Booth Booth seconded.

High Interest Bank Account – It was agreed by all of the parish councillors present to move £25,000 into the Redwood Bank Account.

19. Items from Councillors – It was asked if a small bench could be installed at the bus stop nearest to the War Memorial to give older people an opportunity to rest whilst waiting for the bus. **Action:** Clerk to ask KCC if a bench could be installed.

20. Next Meeting will take place at 7.30pm on Tuesday 4th March at the Meadow Rooms