



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

**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 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 Kirsty Lane, Cllr Russ Nichols

### **Present**

Cllr Jordan Meade (KCC & GBC), Cllr Dakota Dibben (GBC), Charles Amis (Clerk), 13 parishioners

**1. Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Bennett Smith, Cllr Robert Pryor, Cllr Bryan Sweetland (KCC), Cllr Samir Jassel.

**2. Declarations of Interest** – None

**3. Minutes** - The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Cllr Dyer and seconded by Cllr Dymond. The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025 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 –**

It is three years since Russia attacked Ukraine. Roger Gough, the leader of KCC and Jordan Meade recently had a video call with the representatives at Chernihiv Oblast. The twinning relationship with Kent means so much to the residents of Chernihiv.

Cobham will be signing their twinning agreement via video conference with the representatives of Baturyn on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March at the Old Town Hall in Gravesend. It was asked if the Twinning with Ukraine would be using local media to raise awareness of the Twinning with Ukraine. A group of parish councils had been working on a press release.

Jill Beatty has been organising the knitting of scarves and hats. Chris Zgoda and Sue Rowe have been collecting clothing from around Sole Street. Cllr Dymond encouraged everyone to drop off supplies or to take them to The Old Town Hall at Gravesend. Cllr Meade had spoken with South East Coast Ambulance Service and local NHS hospital about donating surplus medical equipment. A team of dedicated drivers have been driving aid convoys to schools, hospitals and orphanages. There had been 5 aid convoys from Kent to Chernihiv. **Action:** Cllr Dymond wanted to raise the Twinning with Ukraine at the Annual Parish Assembly.

## 5. GBC Matters – White Post Farm –

GBC had put out a message on to social media and had sent a letter to local residents to update them on the situation. CPC hold bi-monthly zoom meetings with GBC Planning Enforcement.

The enforcement Notice gives the owners 12 months to clear and leave the site by January/February 2026. GBC are following strict legal procedures. The Injunction requires that the static caravans need to be moved off the site by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. The Planning Inspectorate turned down the owner's appeal to the Enforcement Notice issued by GBC and the owner cannot appeal against the Injunction. The owner does not have planning permission for a cess pit and it was asked what the owner is doing with their waste. The owner should have installed bar fencing but installed a six foot high fence around the right hand side of the site.

**Action:** Cllr Dibben to provide details of the action taken by GBC with the injunction.

There had been a problem with abandoned vehicles at The Beeches. The Clerk had reported two untaxed vehicles to the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Authority. PC Jo Hammond had put a removal notice on one of the vehicles for the vehicle to be removed in 7 days. The other abandoned vehicle was still there. **Action:** Cllr Dibben offered to raise with GBC. Clerk to raise with PC Jo Hammond

## 6. Planning –

**Cobham House Vineyard** – GBC Planning Department had moved the deadline back to the 28<sup>th</sup> March. Both the owner and local residents have put together reports on the proposed development. The agricultural building will be significant.

**Norbond** – The change of use has been reviewed and GBC are taking legal advice. 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. CPC have no objections.

**17 Greenlands, Sole Street** – The owner would like to install a pitched roof front porch. With CPC Planning Group.

**Planning Appeal – Cobham South Services** – The owner had wanted to install advertising screens. GBC had refused planning permission. It had been felt that the screens may distract passing motorists using the A2.

**Planning Appeal – Lomas, Sole Street** – GBC had refused the planning application and the owner has appealed.

## 7. Traffic Group

**Sole Street** – Cllr Nichols was trying to arrange a meeting with Michelle Norris. The next Traffic Group meeting is due to take place on 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> April. There are currently seven members in the Traffic Group and Steve Holden has been asked to join. It would be useful if an officer from KCC Highways could attend but Michelle Norris is away on those dates. **Action:** Invite Emma Tilbury to the Traffic Group Meeting.

CPC would like to see a 20mph speed limit at Sole Street. KCC have supplied data that seems to indicate that there is not a problem with speed but if the data is analysed more thoroughly then speeding at Sole Street is a problem. A chicane cannot be installed at Sole Street to slow the traffic as there is no street lighting. The installation of fixed speed cameras were not supported. It was

asked if the residents of Sole Street should be canvassed about the installation of street lighting along Sole Street.

**Speed Watch** – The Speed Watch group has been running since September 2024 and currently has 11 volunteers. Chris Zgoda is giving a Speed Watch presentation at Cobham Primary School on 21<sup>st</sup> March. One in five vehicles were found to be speeding along The Street. The Speed Watch group are running two sessions per week and will be trialling three sessions next week and are looking for other sites to hold Speed Watch sessions. These included by the chicane near the Meadow Rooms on The Street, by the White Cottage on The Street and where the Vehicle Activated sign was located at the railway bridge at Sole Street plus at the junction of Scratton Fields and Sole Street.

Motorists are receiving letters from the police if they are driving at 30mph at Cobham and 45mph at Sole Street. 95% of motorists who receive a letter from the police do not reoffend for over a year.

**Speed Indicator Device** – Steve Holden is collecting data from the fixed SID and is changing the direction of the SID every eight weeks. A mobile SID is currently shared with Meopham Parish Council but a mobile SID has been ordered by CPC and hopefully should be ready for collection in May 2025.

**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 meant to last for only six years but had been at the same location for 20 years and was beyond economical repair. Cllr Dibben had raised the replacement of the VAS at the Joint transport Board Meeting between KCC and GBC. KCC had said they would not fund a replacement VAS and CPC were responsible for purchasing a new VAS. The cost for a new VAS is around £10,000. The VAS may have helped to slow the traffic as they pass over the railway bridge. The bridge obscures traffic turning out of Manor Road and pedestrians crossing the road. **Action:** Clerk to ask for a quote for a VAS and the servicing costs.

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

**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 deadline for a decision by the secretary of State for Transport is 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025. The Lower Thames Crossing team had circulated a video to show how the infrastructure will look when all of the works have been completed. There is a competition for the design of the carbon neutral green bridge where Thong Lane crosses the LTC approach road.

The government was looking at three funding options that were the LTC scheme would be completely funded by the government funded or partly government funded and private equity funded or completely private equity funded. A new lorry park was planned for Wrotham Heath near the junction with the A20 and M26 junction which would mean lorries would be using the A227 through Meopham to access the A2. In the past there had been lorry parking at Nell's Café at Singlewell. There are no weight restrictions on that part of the A227. It was asked if there was a weight restriction on Henhurst Road but there are no 7.5 tonne restriction signs. It was asked if there was a weight restriction for the railway bridge at Sole Street.

**9. Village Crime Group** – The abandoned car near The Forge had been removed. **Action:** Clerk to ask PC Joe Dallarda/PC Jo Hammond why they never attend the parish council meetings.

## 10. Playing Fields Group

**Planning Application for the new patio** – GBC Planning Department had been unhelpful by asking for different plans and for a biodiversity form to be completed. When they were asked for their help, the planning Officer did not know how to complete the biodiversity form. Cllr Lane will be taking the plans and other paper work to the next Sports Association Meeting to be absolutely certain that everyone supports the plans. **Action:** Cllr Booth will raise with Cllr John Burden at the next Gravesham Chairs Meeting.

**All Weather Path to the Children's Corner** – The works for the all-weather path had been completed.

**Replacement Benches** – There had been a delay in the supply of the new plastic benches by NBB Recycled Plastic Furniture. The decision for the location of the benches will be made at the next Sports Association Meeting. Two individuals had asked for memorial benches. GBC Parks and Open Spaces Department will remove the old concrete benches and install the new concrete benches when the ground has dried.

The Clerk had reported gate closing mechanism by the Children's Corner to GBC. The annual playground safety report highlighted the lack of safety signage for the playground and gym equipment. **Action:** Clerk to ask GBC if they are responsible for the provision of the safety signage for the playground and gym equipment.

**Memorial Tree & Bench Policy** – This should be confirmed at the next Sports Association Meeting.

**High level fence for Children's Corner and Bowls Club** – It was suggested that netting could be installed to protect the Bowls Club which could be pulled up and down and removed over the winter. The chain link fence by the Children's Corner would be replaced as a separate project. The access to the water tap behind the Bowls club would be left as it is. 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. **Action:** Clerk to chase one of the fencing companies for a quote following a site visit with Cllr Booth.

**11. Public Toilets** – Nothing further to report.

**12. KALC/NALC** – The next Gravesham KALC Area Meeting is due to take place on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> March at the SMCR.

**13. St Mary's Church Rooms** – The final works had been finished last week and the furniture had been moved back into the SMCR. A service was held in the SMCR today and Cobham Parochial Church Council are planning a grand opening. It would be useful if a dropped curb could be installed where the path meets the pavement.

The old defibrillator outdoor cabinet has been re-attached to the front wall of the SMCR. A new outdoor cabinet had been ordered and was waiting to be installed. Nigel Starkey has volunteered to carry weekly checks for the SMCR defibrillator.

**14. Social Media** - The CPC website had 644 page views over the past 30 days (Up 19% from last 30 days) and there were 366 unique visits over the past 30 days (Up 9% from last 30 days). There was an average of 1.74 average page views per visit (Up 3% from last 30 days).

## 15. Other Village Matters

**Community Pay Back Team** – Cobham Parish Council need to sign their own agreement with the Community Pay Back Team. A signed agreement was already in place with the Sports Association. The Community Payback Team have their own tools and high visibility jackets and are supervised all of the time. The Co-ordinator carries out a risk assessment before commencing a task. The needs to be a pavement if they are carrying out work beside a road. Cllr Lane will check with the co-ordinator what the Community Pay Back Team will be doing. The following tasks were suggested: replanting all of the flower troughs, Litter pick the Richard Dadd Path and Halfpence Lane, cut the grass by Lawrence Drive and The Street avoiding the wild flowers.

The grass bank opposite the entrance to Battle Street was sliding down and encroaching on to the pavement. It was likely that the owner's permission would need to be sort before any work could take place. It was decided that this would be too much for the Community Pay Back team to take on. The rotting timber posts that supported the bank by The Street towards Owletts have still not been replaced.

**Youth Club** – The Grand had returned the remaining subscriptions for the Cobham Youth club to CPC which was £273.46.

**Footpaths** – John Pelham, the Rights of Way Officer at Dartford & Gravesham is moving on to another job. A new No Cycling sign has been installed on Footpath NS178. National Highways will be replacing the missing mats for the footbridge bridge over the A2 and HS1 (NS175A). KCC will be installing a no cycling sticker on to Footpath NS188. Cyclists had been using the footpath between Cobham Parish Church and Batts Road. A parishioner said the footbridge over the railway was covered in mud and needed to be weeded. **Action:** Clerk to report to KCC Rights of Way Team.

**Village Sign** – The village signs are currently being produced and should be delivered on 13<sup>th</sup> March. The clerk had received three quotes for the purchase and installation of the wooden posts. It was agreed by all of the parish councillors present that TM Contract Services Ltd should install the oak posts for the Sole Street and Cobham village signs for the price of £1,288 plus VAT.

**Electric Vehicle Charging Points** – It was asked what the rules are for installing Electric Vehicle Charging Points. **Action:** To be raised at the next Traffic Group Meeting.

**Meadow Rooms** – Nothing to report.

**Village Pump** – Nothing to report

**16. Parishioners Comments** – None

**Meeting continues in Private**

**17. Correspondence & Announcements** – Nothing to report.

**18. Finance**

## Payment Report

### Payments made since the 4th February meeting

Date of payment	Company	Reason	Amount
10/2/2025	Clerk	Mileage 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	£13.05
27/2/2025	Intermedical UK Ltd (Primary Care Supplies)	Replacement outdoor cabinet for the SMCR defibrillator	£624
28/2/2025	Clerk	Pension	£30.03
4/3/2025	Clerk	Salary 1 <sup>st</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> February	£931.84
4/3/2025	Redwood Bank	High Interest Savings Account	£10,000
4/3/2025	Abacus Playgrounds Ltd	Laying of the all-weather path	£11,939.52

### Payments to be made after the 4<sup>th</sup> March Meeting

Date of Payment	Company	Reason	Amount
5/3/2025	Clerk	Mileage	£13.05
5/3/2025	Clerk	Pack of A4 paper	£4.15
13/2/2025	Black Fox Metalcraft	Remaining balance (80% of original price) for the Cobham and Sole Street Village Signs plus Shipping. Delivery is due on 13/3/2025.	£2,390
14/3/2025	NBB Recycled Furniture Ltd	Six new recycled plastic benches to replace the concrete benches at the playing field. Delivery is now due on 14/3/2025	£3,967.20
*	Gravesham Borough Council	Removal of the old concrete benches and installation of the new recycled plastic benches. * Work will take place when the ground has dried.	£2,092.06

### Payments received since 4<sup>th</sup> February meeting

Date of Receipt	Company	Reason	Amount
17/2/2025	Gravesham Network Development (The Grand)	Remaining subscriptions for the Cobham Youth Club	£273.46

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 another £15,000 into the Redwood Bank Account that was in addition to the £10,000 already in the 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. Cllr Wilder agreed to meet with KCC if a site visit was needed. **Action:** Clerk to chase KCC if a bench could be installed as no response had been received.

**Action:** Clerk to contact Bernadette Gillow about cutting the hedge beside the Yeoman's House at Sole Street.

**20. Next Meeting will take place at 7.30pm on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April at the St Mary's Church Rooms**