



Minutes of Cobham Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 4th July 2023 at 8pm

Meeting took place at the Meadow Rooms

Present

Clr Mike Booth (Chair), Clr Matt Mason, Clr Rosemary Dymond,
Clr Ben Smith, Clr Mat Peterson-Pearce, Clr Russ Nichols,

Present

Charles Amis (Clerk), 2 Parishioners

1. Apologies for Absence – Clr Steve Dyer (Vice Chair), Clr Zoe Gee, Clr Robert Pryor, Clr Samir Jassel (GBC), Clr Dakota Dibben (GBC), Clr Bryan Sweetland (KCC)

2. Minutes - The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 6th June 2023 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Clr Booth and seconded by Clr Nichols.

3. Declarations of Interest – None

4. KCC Matters – Clr Sweetland

- **Round Street Bus Stop** – There was nothing to add.
- **Village Gateways Features** – There was nothing further to add.
- **Weight Restrictions for Halfpence Lane** – There was nothing further to add.

5. GBC Matters – Clr Jassel/Clr Dibben

Clr Jassel and Clr Dibben were not at the meeting.

6. KALC/NALC – Clr Dymond

Town and Village Councils are being encouraged to reduce their carbon emissions. Clr Dymond is due to meet the Chair of the Meadow Rooms Management Committee to discuss the installation of solar panels and new windows on the side and rear of the Meadow Rooms. Vigo Parish Council had been working on a scheme to improve the insulation of the properties. All of the councillors were invited to put forward ideas on climate change.

Action: Clr Dymond to forward the new traffic plan produced by KCC to the clerk.

7. Planning – Clr Dyer – The planning group had met the previous week and Clr Peterson-Pearce had put together a Terms of Reference. The Planning Group are meeting with Clr 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 – The owner had applied to split the barn into two properties. The access will be from Sole Street.

8. Traffic Group – Cllr Nichols

Review of current traffic numbers and speeds – Michelle Norris has sent traffic data from the recently installed tubes on The Street. The clerk has asked for the previous traffic data to compare the figures. The data needs a Highways Engineer to explain the significance of the figures. It appears that the bollards are proving to be effective as the average speed of traffic using The Street is around 18.5mph. **Action:** Share this data with parishioners on the website, put a page on the church magazine and put them on the noticeboards.

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

Speed Indicator Device – The current software needs replacing and it would be helpful if the software was easier to use. The SID is currently located on Sole Street by Scratton Fields. The current locations for the SID do not seem to give an accurate picture of traffic speeds and it would be more useful if the SID was located where speeding is an issue. The data from the SID should provide evidence for traffic calming around the parish. KCC had said that the SID should only be positioned beside straight sections of road. Cllr Nichols had written several times to Michelle Norris but had not received a response. **Action:** Cllr Nicholls to speak to Cllr Sweetland if no response is received from Michelle Norris.

Speed Watch – PC Jo Hammond was keen to restart the Speed Watch sessions. The sessions would need up to four volunteers who would need to receive the training for Speed Watch. The previous Speed Watch group had run for a few months but had stopped because there did not appear to be a problem with excessive speed in the village. Higham and Shorne have active Speed Watch groups although they sometimes struggle for a lack of volunteers. **Action:** Cllr Nichols to speak to Tony Rice and to report back at the next Traffic Meeting.

Highways Improvement Plan – The Traffic Group were planning to conduct an online and paper based survey of the residents in Sole Street. Some canvassing may also take place. It is important to get the local residents support so that KCC are aware that the local community want the traffic schemes to be installed. There appears to be a lot of traffic through Sole Street that is speeding although it is slower at school drop off and pick up times. It was asked if it was worth adding a “You Said We Did” on Facebook and the website. **Action:** Cllr Dymond offered to supply a diary of traffic data for The Street.

Sole Street – Traffic Feasibility Study – Nothing to report.

9. Lower Thames Crossing – Cllr Dyer - The statement of common ground had been signed.

10. Village Crime Group – Cllr Dymond - The panes of glass had been smashed at the telephone box by Cobham Primary School. A local resident had swept up the broken glass. Young people had appeared to have carried out the vandalism and Nitrous Oxide canisters had been found nearby. BT were not planning to remove the telephone box as it was still reasonably used. **Action:** Clerk to report the damage to PC Jo Hammond and BT.

Cllr Pryor offered to attend the meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent at the St John’s Centre at Meopham. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent has offered to hold a meeting to discuss rural crime with farmers and landowners at the Meadow Rooms at 11.30pm on Thursday 13th July at the Meadow Rooms.

12. Playing Fields – Cllr Booth

Children’s Corner Refurbishment – The revised cost of the works is £58,000. CPC had applied for £10,000 grant from Greene King but they were only able to offer a grant of £2000. There will not be a path between The Ship PH and the new playground. There is no fixed start date for the work although it is hoped that the works will be completed in time for the Summer Fete on the August Bank Holiday Monday. The footprint of the playground will be smaller. The Posters for the shops and cricket club will be with everyone within the next two days. There will be an all-weather path from the cricket club to the playground. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce to speak to the cricket club.

Cobham Tennis Club are relining the tennis courts and have asked that CPC pay for the work and claim back the VAT. Cobham Tennis Club would pay CPC less the VAT. **Action:** Clerk to check with KALC and the Internal Auditor

Sports Association – The Sports Association are planning to redesign the interior of the cricket pavilion and to extend the current patio. It was suggested that CPC could contribute towards the cost of the proposed work. CPC would need to see the proposed plans and designs. It was asked if the Sports Association had made any grant applications and what stage the Sports Association is with their charity registration.

Car Park Resurfacing – The Bowls Club had said they were unable to pay the invoice sent by CPC as the invoice had not been addressed to them and there was no date. **Action:** Clerk to send Cllr Dyer an invoice for the Parent Teacher Association.

Treatment of Japanese Knotweed – The Japanese Knotweed on the Playing Field had recently been sprayed.

13. Cobham Public Toilets – Cllr Booth

Opening and cleaning the toilets – Contract Review - The opening and cleaning of the public toilets is working well. **Action:** Clerk to review the cleaning contract of the public toilets.

Southern Water – Two invoices have been sent by Business Stream for the Public Toilets and Bowls club. It was agreed that the invoice for the public toilets should be paid. The Bowls Club invoice would not be paid as Business Stream are charging CPC and the Bowls Club twice due to the confusion over the meter and sub meter.

15. St Mary’s Church Rooms - Refurbishment Work – The Cobham Parochial Church Council are looking at another architect and builder to carry out the work. **Action:** Cllr Dymond to circulate the minutes from the Local Funding Group AGM to the other parish councilors.

16. Social Media – There had been a great deal of traffic on the CPC Facebook page due to the pictures of the proposed playground. This was as high as the platinum jubilee. There were 312 visits to the website and 532 pages had been viewed. Overall viewings on Facebook were down by 60% and only 120 had looked at the Facebook page.

17. Other Village Matters

Defibrillators – Cllr Dyer and Cllr Mason are looking for an alternative site for the Round Street defibrillator needs to be moved to another location when Cllr Mason’s garage is demolished. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce to investigate hiring a redundant phone box to house a defibrillator. Need to find a volunteer to look after the St Mary’s Church Rooms defibrillator.

Youth Club – The Grand has decided to cancel the youth club sessions for July as no young people had attended the last session held in June. There had been a lack of consistency of dates due to

other bookings of the Meadow Rooms and some of the youth club sessions were cancelled due to a shortage of youth workers. Cllr Peterson-Pearce had sent the clerk an application form for a Charities Aid Foundation bank accounts for use by the Youth Club.

Action: Clerk to speak to The Grand on future dates for the autumn term and to make sure those dates are publicised in advance.

Footpaths – The Rights of Way Officer for KCC had sent a reply to the clerk which had been circulated amongst the parish councillors.

Owletts and other National Trust Properties – The Baker family have left Owletts. The Mausoleum had received 80 visitors last Sunday and the previous open day had seen 100 visitors and £8 had been raised overall. It was expected that £60 would be raised from when the Mausoleum is open. Bernadette Gillow from the National Trust will be attending the October Meeting.

The proposed car park at Halfpence Lane would help visitors who visit Cobham but GBC who own West Park had rejected the suggestion. It is unlikely that the National Trust will allow any parking on their land. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce agreed to speak to the National Trust about parking on their land.

Village Sign – There were not many companies who produce village signs. The forge at Yalding had been suggested and a firm at Lower Dunstall Farm between Eynsford and Shoreham. A local carpenter/builder is able to prepare a post to support a village sign.

Meadow Rooms – Bookings and utilisation has remained steady. Unfortunately after reviewing the uptake of the event for this year the organising committee has made the call to not hold Munchies on the Meadow in 2023. A difficult decision, but the right one to ensure when the Management Committee hold the event it's viable for all involved, bands, vendors and those attending etc. The Management Committee plan to continue with the event and will change the approach for 2024, to ensure take up and a full event for next year.

In addition to the above the Gardeners Club and the WI continue to meet once per month as do a circle dancing club. Since the last report the increase in hire rates has been rolled out to the majority of hirers and will be complete this month.

During the summer the Management Committee intend to implement a redecoration of the Meadow Room and carry out some running repairs to the grounds including small brickwork repairs, repurpose the old notice board etc.

Regardless of the increased operational costs cash reserves continue to be at a solid level and are sufficient to maintain the operations (including the increased costs for the short to medium term), with bookings and enquiries continuing to be healthy.

Wall around the Village Pump – A company who can repair the wall has been identified. The LTC Legacy Fund have been approached for funding. **Action:** Clerk to arrange for another company to quote for the work.

Tree Planting – The Tree Council had sent details on grants for planting trees in the parish. It was felt that there were no suitable sites for the new trees except for the verges were the only likely places. It was decided that CPC should not apply for the grants.

Oliver Batson – The Clerk had received an email from a teenager who has volunteered to litter pick as part of the community service for the Duke of Edinburgh Award. **Action:** Cllr Dymond offered to

speak to the church about litter picking around the church yard and agreed to provide Oliver Batson with the details.

Beams – Beams had applied for a parish council grant for £2,000. The clerk had circulated the application form plus supporting documents. **Action:** Clerk to ask Beams what the money is being used for. Is this a new project or an extension of an existing project and how many parishioners are supported by the organisation.

Permissive Path by White Post Lane – John Pelham, the KCC Rights of Way Officer had asked about the status of the path that is parallel with White Post Lane from the junction with Round Street. John Pelham had received a request from a resident who had asked if KCC could maintain the path. The path is not designated as a public right of way so it is outside KCC’s responsibility. **Action:** Clerk to speak to the resident.

18. Parishioners Comments –

A parishioner asked how often the new borough councillors had attended the parish council meetings. Cllr Jassel and Cllr Dibben had attended every meeting so far except for the July meeting.

Meeting continues in Private

19. Correspondence & Announcements – Cllr Haig had sent an email thanking CPC for the retirement presents.

Cllr Peterson-Pearce had produced Terms of Reference documents for the Planning Working Group and Traffic Working Group. Parish Councillors were encouraged to feedback their comments. The documents will be reviewed every three months. **Action:** Clerk to check the current standing orders against the Terms of Reference documents.

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

Cllr Dymond proposed the cheque report and Cllr Peterson-Pearce seconded.

Cheques signed since last meeting

Date of Invoice	Company	Reason	Amount
17/4/2023	Kimberley Hagen	Card and Craft Materials for the Children’s Party at the King’s Coronation.	£94.95
9/6/2023	Gravesham Borough Council	Uncontested Parish Council election costs	£180.48
12/6/2023	Mike Booth	Retirement present for M Haig. 2 rose bushes @ £20 each plus 1 bag of compost	£64.40
13/6/2023	NPC Tree Surgery	Spray Japanese Knotweed at Cobham Playing Fields	£240
	Clerk	Salary 1 st -30 th June	£845.10
21/6/2023	MI Payroll & Bookkeeping Services Ltd	Payroll from April to June 2023	£60
	Cobham Parochial Church Council	Use of St Mary’s Church Rooms on 10 th January 2023, 7 th March 2023 and 6 th June 2023.	£60

Cheques to be signed at the meeting

Date of Invoice	Company	Reason	Amount
28/6/2023	Medway Norse Ltd	Opening and cleaning the toilets for April, May and June @ £652.38 per month.	£2025.66
5/6/2023	Clerk	Tax & NIC payments for HMRC	£41.67
/6/2023	Mike Booth	Reimburse for laminating pouches ordered from Amazon	£16.95
1/7/2023	Smooth & Rugged Landscapes	Cut grass at playground on 15 th and 27 th June.	£70
	Clerk	Mileage	£13.05
23/6/2023	Gravesham Network Development CIC (The Grand)	Provision of Youth Workers on 28 th April and 23 rd June.	£408

21. AOB – items from Councillors

Cllr Peterson Pearce proposed and Cllr Dymond seconded that CPC should give their support to Cllr Smith during this present time. It was suggested that CPC hold a meeting with Cllr Jassel and Cllr Dibben. Additionally CPC wanted to talk to Tim Harris at GBC.

22. Next Meeting – Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 5th September at the St Mary's Church Rooms