



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

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.30pm**

**Meeting took place at the Meadow Rooms**

### **Present**

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

Cllr Robert Pryor, Cllr Matt Mason

### **Present**

PC Joanne Hammond, Charles Amis (Clerk), 6 parishioners

**1. Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Mat Peterson-Pearce, Cllr Bennett Smith, Cllr Russ Nichols, Cllr Bryan Sweetland (KCC), Cllr Samir Jassel (GBC)

**2. Minutes** - The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Cllr Dyer and seconded by Cllr Pryor.

**3. Declarations of Interest** – None

### **4. Village Crime Group -**

**PC Jo Hammond – an update** – PC Jo Hammond had sent a monthly report which was circulated to all of the parish councillors prior to the meeting. The police are aware of the safety issues at the junction of Henhurst Road and Jeskyns Road. Kent police had found several number plates nearby which are believed to be stolen and will be monitoring the situation. An abandoned vehicle had been recovered from Cobham Woods with help from the National Trust and West Kent Downs Countryside Trust.

**Speed Watch** – Alan Watson, the Kent Speed Watch Co-ordinator, had sent the joining instructions for Speed Watch. The joining instructions include a list of previous Speed Watch sites plus designated locations where speeding is a potential concern as well as being safe for volunteers. These designated sites are the only places that can be used for Speed Watch sessions. A co-ordinator for the Speed Watch sessions still needs to be recruited. The volunteers need submit the readings to Alan Watson. **Action:** Clerk to circulate the Speed Watch registration details to the residents and Cllr Dymond and Cllr Pryor who have volunteered for Speed Watch.

**Other Speed Controls:** At some stage PC Jo Hammond will be setting up a speed trap using a speed gun. There needs to be sufficient space at the site for pulling in speeding vehicles.

PC Jo Hammond agreed to ask about Kent Police and KCC enforcement for 20mph designated zones.

**Neighbourhood Watch** - There are currently six scams being carried out by criminals in the area and residents who have been approached are encouraged to report to the police. Kent Police will not know if the scams have been reported to Action Fraud as this information is not passed on to the police.

**5. GBC Matters** – Nothing to report.

**6. KALC/NALC** – There will be a Gravesham KALC Area Meeting on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March at the St John's Centre in Meopham. The meeting agenda will include the volume and speed of traffic, biodiversity and planning.

## **7. Planning**

**1 Bridge Cottages, Sole Street** – with CPC Planning Group.  
The owner is proposing to build a single storey rear extension.

**Gold Street Vineyard** – GBC Planning Department had approved the planning application for an agricultural building at the Gold Street Vineyard under permitted development rights. The planning for agricultural development is not as strict as for a residential planning application.

GBC had consulted CPC on whether they needed to be a planning application for the agricultural buildings and CPC had responded by suggesting the application should follow the normal process for development, but this was disregarded by the planning department in Gravesham. GBC had not consulted with the residents or the normal consultees and interested parties.

A group of local residents set up to oppose the GBC decision had a meeting recently with the land owner plus Cllr Dyer, CPC, Adam Holloway MP and the CEO of Silverhand

The owner requires the agricultural building for storage and bottling and the planning permission had suggested that this should be located next to the existing residential properties. The owner is open to moving the building further from the properties. The current planning guidance confirms the building needs to be 25 meters from the road and 20 meters from the railway. Additionally the access road to the building must only be of a certain length.

The residents' group are concerned about the potential traffic by workers and visitors as Gold Street is a single-track road with few passing places. There are also concerns regarding the noise from a proposed bottling plant although the owner has said this will only operate for a limited period.

The owner has said that they are willing to stop the current planning application and resubmit a new application following the meeting with the residents. The owner is using a planning specialist. The local residents group are planning to submit a judicial review against the decision.

Concerns were expressed about the future of the orchards that are on Scripps's land and questions were asked if any new agricultural buildings were being planned in this area as well.

**Update from GBC Planning Department** – Cllr Dyer and Cllr Mason recently had a Zoom meeting with Nick Brown, Deputy CEO at GBC and Shazad Ghani, Head of Planning. GBC and the Planning Inspectorate are carrying out a site visit to Norbond.

The owner at White Post Farm has been asked to remove a caravan from the site. There are five caravans in total at White Post Farm.

The owner has cut a groove through the road surface at White Post Lane and dug a trench in the nearby woods to lay electricity cables. UKPN and KCC had been made aware of this action taking place. **Action:** Clerk to send photographs to PC Jo Hammond to follow up with the owner.

**8. Traffic Group** – Cllr Nichols continues to work with KCC Highways. It was suggested that a roundabout could be installed at the junction of Sole Street and Round Street to encourage traffic to slow down and give way at the junction. CPC continue to support the introduction of 20mph through Sole Street and the installation of a speed camera. KCC has said that buses will not be allowed to stop at the unofficial Round Street bus stop due to perceived safety risks. A pathway from Round Street to Scratton Fields would be too expensive to install and chicanes could not be installed due to the lack of street lighting. **Action:** KCC Highways to give their consent on the use of solar panels and wind turbines to provide lighting for the chicanes.

The Speed Indicator Device is still not working. It is currently located opposite Sole Street House. Cllr Smith had been charging the batteries. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce to return the computer and key.

**9. Lower Thames Crossing** – The Development Consent Order was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023. The Examining Committee at the Planning Inspectorate will feedback to the Secretary of State for Transport (SOS). The deadline for the decision by the SOS is 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024 but this may be delayed if the SOS requests further information which must be made in writing.

It is unlikely that the work on the tunnel will start until 2026. Skanska are the chosen contractor for the works in Kent and have previously been involved with the widening and realignment of the A2 and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. The tunnelling machines will start from Essex and the spoil from the tunnel will going back to Essex.

The CPC Statement of Common Ground included 50 items of which 26 items had not been resolved which were most concerning traffic. Eight Parish councils had submitted their Statements of Common Ground.

The LTC Team had run several local community drop in sessions and the last session is taking place tomorrow at Cascades Leisure Centre, Thong Lane, Gravesend.

**10. Playing Fields Group** – There are plans to extend the patio in front of the pavilion and improve the disabled access to the building. The changing facilities are being upgraded, particularly for ladies and juniors. An all-weather pathway is planned to be created from the Car Park to the Children's Corner. The fencing beside the Children's Corner and the Bowls Club is also planned to be replaced.

**11. Public Toilets** – The Sports Association are looking for someone to take over the cleaning of the Cricket Pavilion and the Public Toilets.

It was proposed by the Chair that the Sports Association should take over the running of the public toilets, and the CPC will pay the Sports Association a grant towards the running of the toilets each year. The proposal was agreed by all councillors present.

**Action:** A grant application form should be sent to the Sports Association secretary

Southern Water continue to double charge for the water supply to the public toilets, cricket pavilion and bowls club. The Business Stream account is still being disputed because Southern Water are so far refusing to check the meters for the supply and to discuss the double charging problem.

**12. St Mary's Church Rooms** – The Local Funding Group are holding their AGM on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April. It was uncertain if the work would start before 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024 as GBC wanted to use the St Mary's Church Rooms as a polling station on 5<sup>th</sup> May. Some of the grants have specified that the work starts by a specified date and it was asked if GBC could find another suitable venue in Sole Street.

Su Rowe has retired and is no longer be responsible for the bookings for the St Mary's Church Rooms. Ron Chamberlain, the PCC Secretary, is taking over from Su Rowe.

**13. Social Media** – The clerk had added the LTC Community events and local road closures to the website.

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

**Defibrillators** - The battery for the St Mary's Church Room defibrillator has been returned to the supplier, Primary Care Supplies, for repair. The defibrillator that had been at Round Street is now at the St Mary's Church Rooms as the power supply has been disconnected.

It was suggested that the defibrillator could be moved to the house opposite the current location or to the corner of Round Street and Sole Street. **Action:** Cllr Mason agreed to investigate a new site.

**Youth Club** – The youth club session took place during February Half Term week and was attended by only four young people. The previous youth club sessions have been better attended.

**Footpaths** – The surface of Footpath NS190 by Gold Street has been restored by the landowner. There was an issue with gates not closing properly and dogs running into the road.

**Action:** Cllr Dymond to raise at the next Gravesham Rights of Way Committee Meeting on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March.

**Village Sign** – Nothing to report.

**Meadow Rooms** - Bookings were quiet in January and February. Cobham Primary School hired the hall for a Planetarium day and the children and teachers had a wonderful time. There was one children's party and the Friends of Cobham Church held a fundraising film night (with Fish & Chips) which was very well attended.

Current regular bookings are as follows:

Monday - Cobham Amateur Dramatic Society (Evening)

Tuesday - Brownies (Evening)

Thursday - Pilates (Morning) - CADS (Evening)

Friday - Hartbeeps (Morning) - Youth Club (Evening - once per fortnight)

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 solid level and are sufficient to maintain the operations.

**Wall around the Village Pump** – **Action:** Clerk to recirculate the three quotes to parish councillors.

**Wooden Posts around the War Memorial** – The clerk had received one quote for the work. **Action:** Clerk to obtain further quotes.

#### **15. Parishioners Comments**

A parishioner said the post outside the Darnley Arms had been hit severely. **Action:** Clerk to report the post to KCC Highways.

The same parishioner reported that a car had reversed into the Old Post Office and that traffic in The Street was tending to not give way.

A parishioner said there had been two recent accidents at the junction of Henhurst Road and Jeskyns Road and a vehicle had overturned. British Telecom have been made aware of the damaged telegraph pole and the damaged chevrons had been reported to KCC Highways. The accidents do not generally get reported to Kent Police unless there has been an injury and KCC Highways say there are no records of accidents at that junction.

**Action:** The parishioner will keep a record of accidents and report back to the Clerk.

### **Meeting continues in Private**

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

**17. Finance**

#### **Payments made since the 6<sup>th</sup> February meeting**

| Date of Invoice | Company          | Reason   | Amount  |
|-----------------|------------------|--|---------|
| 8/2/2024        | Cllr Dyer        | Reimburse for posting the defunct battery to Primary Care Supplies | £5.39   |
| 26/2/2024       | Medway Norse Ltd | Opening and cleaning toilets February                              | £675.22 |
| 29/2/2024       | Clerk            | Salary for 1 <sup>st</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup> February             | £845.10 |
| 29/2/2024       | Clerk            | Pension  | £23.71  |

#### **Payments to be made after the 5<sup>th</sup> March Meeting**

| Date of Invoice | Company        | Reason  | Amount  |
|-----------------|----------------|---|---------|
| 27/2/2024       | Matthew Lisney | Litter picking for December 2023, January and February 2024 | £541.84 |
| 5/3/2024        | Clerk          | Mileage   | £11.97  |

The payment report was proposed by Cllr Dymond and seconded by Cllr Dyer. All of the Parish Councillors had received the Cashflow Spreadsheet prior to the meeting. All of the parish councillors who were present were happy for CPC to carry on using Fastnet despite the increase in cost of CPC's domain registration.

**18. Items from Councillors** – **Action:** Clerk and Cllr Dymond to ask the Chair of the Meadow Rooms Committee if Munchies on the Meadow will be taking place in 2024.

**19. Next Meeting** – **Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April at the St Mary's Church Rooms but may move to the Meadow Rooms if the refurbishment work at the St Mary's Church Rooms has already started.**