



Minutes of Cobham Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 5th July 2022 at 7.30pm

Meeting took place at the St Mary's Church Rooms

Present

Cllr Steve Dyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Margaret Haig, Cllr Gabriella Gabbitas,

Cllr Mat Peterson-Pearce

Present

PCSOs Kirsty Lowe and Simon Mummery, Charles Amis (Clerk), 9 Parishioners

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr Mike Booth, Cllr Rosemary Dymond (Holiday), Cllr Ben Smith, Cllr Robert Pryor, Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Tony Rice (GBC), Cllr Bryan Sweetland (KCC)

2. Minutes – The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 7th June 2022 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Cllr Peterson-Pearce and seconded by Cllr Dyer.

3. Declarations of Interest – None

4. PCSOs – The PCSOs received 208 calls from the general public over the past three months from within the Shorne, Cobham and Luddesdown ward. 17 calls were due to nuisance vehicles, 16 were due to traffic collisions, 3 calls were due to burglaries and 4 calls were due to car incidents. The police have been tackling anti-social motor bikes at Thong Lane and Park Pale using high visibility patrolling. Police Officers are not allowed to chase after motorbikes unless they have been trained.

The PCSOs warned that rogue traders are on the increase and that people should use a reputable company with vehicle liveries, business cards and ID. The attendees were encouraged to use the internet to report crime although the PCSOs left some business cards for the St Mary's Church Rooms and the Meadow Rooms. Simon Mummery works closely with Tim Harris at GBC to catch the fly tippers. GBC have been pulling over and running checks on vehicles suspected of fly tipping including checking the owner's waste carrier licence. Everyone was encouraged to report fly tipping to GBC.

Kent Police have just started to carry out a Neighbourhood Policing Review. The PCSO position will remain but the current duties could change. One plan is for a Police Constable to accompany a PCSO when carrying out their duties. At present Simon and Kirsty cover all of the rural parts of Gravesham.

Action: Clerk to send details of the Rural Kent Coffee & Information Point to the PCSOs. The PCSOs left at 8.10pm

5. Matters arising from the previous meeting of 7th June 2022 –

Water leak in Round Street – Southern Water and Kent County Council have yet to both carry out a joint site visit and neither party appear to be taking any responsibility. The clerk has written to Russ Nicholls asking him how he would like this issue to be taken forward.

6. KCC Matters – Cllr Sweetland

Sole Street Bus Stop – CPC are still waiting for KCC to carry out an assessment for the bus stop at the corner of Sole Street and Round Street. Cllr Booth had sent an email to Cllr Sweetland requesting an update.

Cobham Church Bus Stop – The Clerk had contacted KCC several times to arrange a site visit. KCC had promised a site visit for the beginning of July. **Action:** Clerk to continue chasing KCC Bus Stop team to carry out a site visit for both of the bus stops.

7. GBC Matters – Cllr Rice

Batts Road – KCC have stopped using Batts Road as a diversion route when The Street at Cobham is closed and traffic should now be diverted via the A2 Watling Street. There was a recent road closure at The Street and traffic had been diverted via Cobhambury Road, Henley Street and Gold Street.

8. KALC/NALC – Cllr Dymond was not at the meeting. The next Gravesham Area KALC Meeting is taking place at 3.30pm on Thursday 22nd September.

9. Planning Group – Cllr Dyer/Cllr Rice

Norbond Site – The site owners have appealed against the planning enforcement notice issued by GBC Planning Enforcement. The planning appeal will be passed on to the Planning Inspectorate.

Action: Cllr Mason offered to draft a letter to send to GBC Planning Department.

White Post Farm – This has been with the Planning Inspectorate since 15th September 2020. **Action:** Clerk to write a letter to Adam Holloway.

Orchard Cottage, Round Street – GBC have approved this planning application with conditions.

Cobhambury Barn, Cobhambury Road – CPC had objected to this planning application

Beech House, Beech Place – CPC had objected to this planning application.

Lack of response by GBC Planning Enforcement – Already covered.

Black Horse Cottage, Round Street – still with CPC Planning Group

10. Traffic Group – Cllr Mason

The Street – Traffic Calming Scheme - Outstanding Issues – Three new bollards have been installed outside Wisteria Cottage. The pavement outside the Darnley Arms still needs to be re-profiled. The one remaining plastic bollard has been removed. KCC has said the speed repeater signs and reflectors are currently out of stock. Cllr Booth is due to meet Chris Koningen and Ian Grigor from KCC Highways to discuss the installation of bollards outside 41, 45 and 46 The Street. It was felt that the bollards restrict access to the car park for the community shop. A parishioner asked why the

bollards were needed. Cllr Dyer said it was stop vehicles from mounting the pavements and had improved pedestrian safety.

Replace the Wooden Bollard opposite the Ship PH - CPC are still chasing KCC to take action on this.

War Memorial Roundabout – KCC have said that it is not their responsibility to paint traffic line markings on Lodge Lane as this is a private road. A resident has offered paint lines along Lodge Lane.

Action: CPC to ask the owner's permission.

Village Gateways Features – Halfpence Lane – The original village gateways for Cobham and Sole Street have disappeared over time. The design needs to be re-visited by the parish councillors.

Speed Indicator Device – Cllr Mason changes the battery at the same time as downloading the data. Cllr Mason is also responsible for moving the SID to different speeding hotspots around the parish. Cllr Smith will provide back up when Cllr Mason is away.

Weight Restriction on Halfpence Lane – There is a 7.5 tonne weight limit on Halfpence Lane from the Cobham Hall Roundabout which can discourage grain lorries accessing Lodge Lane from the A2. The alternative route is via Henhurst Road and The Street where there is no weight limit.

Flooding on Halfpence Lane – KCC Highways have said they will install concrete sandbags during the second half of 2022.

Jeskyns Road – The surface water run-off from Jeskyns Road into the pond at Jeskyns Court has been happening since Jeskyns Road had been resurfaced. KCC Highways have been working on a solution with the owner of Jeskyns Court.

Sole Street – Traffic Feasibility Study – KCC have made a grant available for the feasibility study. CPC would need to use KCC's preferred contractor. Cllr Mason was leading on this area of work. CPC had not supported KCC's proposals on making Sole Street one-way.

11. Lower Thames Crossing – Cllr Dyer – The recent consultation has finished. Cllr Booth and Cllr Dyer hold regular meetings with Eva Simunovic at the LTC Team. CPC are concerned about any extra traffic using Cobham and Sole Street as a through route. The exit from the westbound A2 at Cobham Hall Roundabout will be closed. The LTC Team will be submitting a Development Consent Order in the autumn which includes the completed Statement of Common Ground. The Southern Valley Golf Club has been sold to Lower Thames Crossing but the Cascades Leisure Centre is not affected.

12. Village Crime Group – Cllr Dymond/Cllr Pryor

Neighbourhood Watch – A meeting with the Sole Street Neighbourhood Watch group will be arranged for July.

Lack of feedback from PCSOs – Already covered in the meeting

13. Playing Fields

Children's Corner Refurbishment – CPC had received a grant of £10,000 from the National Lottery towards the children's corner refurbishment. Cllr Peterson-Pearce continues to apply for other grants towards the work. A plan will be put on the website to include a play area, a sensory garden plus outdoor fitness equipment. This should fit within the existing play area footprint. Hopefully this would make the play area more popular than it currently is. There may be less play equipment

then there is currently. It was uncertain if the playground area could be extended and the only direction would be towards The Ship PH.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points – There were no updates from KCC.

14. Public Toilets – It was suggested that the future of the public toilets be discussed at the September or October meetings. CPC are paying for the toilets to be opened and cleaned and a volunteer from the bowls club closes them. The toilets are expensive to run but their importance was proved when they were closed during Covid. It was suggested by a parishioner that users be charged but CPC had investigated installing a donation box or a contactless payments but this was found to be too expensive to install and it was uncertain how quickly CPC would recover the costs. The public houses in Cobham are part of the community toilet scheme. A parishioner suggested that the toilets could be cleaned less frequently. Previously a parishioner had cleaned the toilets on a voluntary basis but it was felt themselves at risk to Covid. A parishioner suggested charging motorists for parking in the sports ground car park but this would encourage visitors to park elsewhere in the village.

Night Locking – No decision taken.

Southern Water – **Action:** Clerk to arrange for a Southern Water engineer to carry out a site visit to check the water meters.

Repairs to Roof & Gutters – It was uncertain if this had been carried out. **Action:** Clerk to speak to Cllr Smith.

Floor Painting – This still needs to be completed.

15. St Mary's Church Rooms

Refurbishment – The Local Funding Group had applied for a grant from All Churches Cornerstone who specialise in refurbishing church exteriors. Cobham PCC had appointed a cleaner for two hours per month which they are funding. The Local Funding Group are considering sponsoring the cleaner to increase their hours. The work to refurbish the Church Rooms is due to start in October as the planning permission ends on 28th October. The Local Funding Group have written to GBC Planning Department and asked if CPC could write as well to ask if the planning could be extended for another three years.

The garden safari raised £1,320.75 and there will be a garage sale on 28th August from 11am to 5pm. A Gilbert & Sullivan Supper Party has been organised for 7pm on 3rd September at the Meadow Rooms. There will be a series of art lectures at Owletts in September and there will be a Christmas wreath making workshop in December. The Local Funding Group currently have £33,390.26 in their account after they made another payment to the architect. An appeal for donations will be sent to Sole Street residents.

Asset of Community Value – Su Rowe thanked the clerk for completing the Asset of Community Value for the St Mary's Church Rooms which is now waiting for GBC's approval.

16. Social Media – Website & Facebook

Social Media – Strategy – It was suggested that items for the CPC website should be approved by the other parish councils before they are added. The news items on road closures could be added to the website without approval. The notice boards and in the shops could be useful places for the minutes to be read by those who did not have access to a computer.

Parish Magazine – 250 copies of the parish magazine are printed on a monthly basis. 26% of households in Sole Street receive a copy, 24% of households in Cobham receive a copy and 33% of households in Luddesdown receive a copy. 17 copies are sent by post and copies are left in the Community Shop and the Little Shop for sale. Four new households have requested a copy of the magazine which were two in Sole Street, one in Cobham and one outside the parish. CPC's help with sponsoring the magazine at Christmas and Easter is much appreciated.

17. Other Village Matters

Cobham College Defibrillator – It has not been possible to find a replacement battery for the defibrillator. It was asked if Cobham College could purchase a new defibrillator. Cllr Dymond continues to follow this up. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce offered to write a letter to the warden.

Youth Club – The Grand provide two professional youth workers and 30-40 children attend each session. CPC continue to support the youth club. The youth club needed more help from the parents.

Village Sign – Cllr Peterson-Pearce had looked at two companies who make wrought iron village signs. The cost is £5,000 - £7,000 for a village sign and two would be needed for Cobham and Sole Street. Local people could help with setting up the wooden post. **Action:** Chris Broadley offered to ask how other villages financed their village signs.

Meadow Rooms – There was no report from the Meadow Rooms Management Committee

Footpaths – The fence beside footpath NS191 still has protruding nails and pieces of wood despite reporting to KCC Rights of Way Team. The stumps of the trees were still exposed on footpath NS178 and need to be removed. A parishioner had reported that their dogs ear had been torn by some barbed wire on Footpath NS192.

Assets of Community Value – The Darnley Arms, The Leather Bottle and The Little Shop at Sole Street are still on the list to be registered as assets of community value.

Village Defibrillators – Primary Care Supplies has sent two sets of pads and batteries for the defibrillators and these are currently with Cllr Booth. A parishioner said there was a defibrillator at South Lodge Barn, Lodge Lane. **Action:** Clerk to add the details of the defibrillator at South Lodge to the CPC emergency plan.

Rural Kent Coffee & Information Project – This has been well received and more people are attending. On average there are 10-15 people attending and cyclists and walkers are also stopping. The PCSOs and other agencies have not attended. Cllr Gabbitas had attended the first session. They are not sure if the St Mary's Church Rooms can be used in October and are planning to ask the landlord at The Railway PH if they could use a room or the car park. There was a parking issue and it was difficult to drop off equipment. **Action:** Clerk to invite PCSOs and the Community Warden

Owletts and other National Trust Properties – Owletts is open on the last Sunday of the month. Owletts has been very busy and visitors have been queuing to get into the car park. There has been around 200 visitors at the open days. The National Trust are continuing to negotiate with the Baker Family but there is still uncertainty over the future. The tenants at St Johns Jerusalem are in a similar situation. The Darnley Mausoleum has received around 180 visitors and up to £80 in donations when it is open. Everyone at the meeting was encouraged to lobby the National Trust.

Proposed installation of a handrail at Cobham Church – Cllr Haig had asked if a handrail could be installed by the slope up from The Street to the churchyard path as the slope was very steep. The clerk had been speaking to a member of Cobham PCC. **Action:** Clerk to write to the church wardens

18. Parishioners Comments – Cobham and Luddesdown Churches are in a period of interregnum following the recent departure of the previous vicar, Rev Angela Walker. The diocese will be looking for a new vicar. Janet Weaver is taking calls for baptisms, weddings and funerals. Janet is also looking after the vicarage and workmen contracted by the Diocese of Rochester have been carrying out repairs.

Meeting continues in Private

19. Correspondence & Announcements – The clerk had received an email from a resident of The Street who had raised the issue of parking in Cobham and had asked if it would be possible to implement a resident permit scheme around Cobham. The Clerk had shared the email with Cllr Sweetland, Cllr Rice and Nick May, Parking & Enforcement Department at GBC to get their views. GBC has replied saying that a resident's permit scheme could not be implemented in Cobham due to the lack of parking and GBC did not wish to restrict members of the Sports Association from enjoying their hobbies and interests. Cllr Rice suggested a meeting with GBC to discuss solutions to the current parking situation.

20. Finance

Cheque Report – Cllr Dyer proposed the cheque report and Cllr Haig seconded.

21. AOB – Items from Councillors

Swale Academy has decided not renew the current lease of the Meopham Leisure Centre after the lease expires at the end of June.

Cllr Haig said Southern Water had been carrying out works on Halfpence Lane.

22. Next Meeting – Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 6th September 2022 at the St Mary's Church Rooms.