



Minutes of Cobham Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 6th June 2023 at 7.30pm

Meeting took place at the St Mary's Church Rooms

Present

Cllr Mike Booth (Chair), Cllr Steve Dyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Rosemary Dymond,
Cllr Zoe Gee, Cllr Mat Peterson-Pearce, Cllr Russ Nichols,

Present

Cllr Samir Jassel (GBC), Cllr Dakota Dibben (GBC), Charles Amis (Clerk), 5 Parishioners

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Ben Smith, Cllr Robert Pryor
2. **Minutes** - The minutes for the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 9th May 2023 and the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 23rd May 2023 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Cllr Dymond and seconded by Cllr Dyer.
3. The Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23, Section 1 of the Annual Governance Accountability Return for the year ending 31 March 2023 was approved and signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.
4. The Accounting Statements for 2022/23, Section 2 of the Annual Governance Accountability Return for the year ending 31 March 2023 were signed by the Chairman.
5. **Declarations of Interest** – None
6. **KCC Matters – Cllr Sweetland**
 - **Round Street Bus Stop** – Remove from future agendas.
 - **Village Gateways Features** – Cllr Booth had spoken to Martin Coley, from KCC, regarding the replacement of the existing village gateway sign which is half hidden in the hedge. KCC had quoted £4,500 at least 3-4 years ago which CPC felt was too expensive and nothing further had happened. The clerk had written to Michelle Norris at KCC Highways for an update. **Action:** Martin Coley had agreed to follow up with KCC. Clerk to continue to follow up with KCC. Cllr Jassel agreed to follow up with GBC.
 - **Weight Restrictions for Halfpence Lane** – The signed weight restriction at the entrance to Halfpence Lane by the roundabout with the A2 and Brewers Road is affecting the access for grain lorries to Lodge Lane. Each haulier needs to apply for clearance from KCC Highways or Kent Police. There are several different grain hauliers who would need to apply. KCC had said in the past that it would be difficult to change the restriction.

7. GBC Matters – Cllr Jassel/Cllr Dibben

White Post Farm – The owner has constructed a new entrance. A notice of enforcement has been prepared by GBC. Action: Cllr Jassel (GBC) to check with Planning Enforcement if the site owner has an opportunity to appeal.

Cranbourne Farm, Round Street – GBC Planning Enforcement has said there is no breach in the conditions. GBC had set certain conditions in their planning approval seven years ago. The Indoor Equestrian Arena must be landscaped so that it is difficult to see from Round Street and the building should be made from certain materials. Sole Street councillors think that there may be breach of conditions. **Action:** Cllr Zoe Gee to check the planning approval.

Bluebell Barn, Copthall Road – GBC Planning Enforcement are sending a team to investigate. The owner has moved the stable and the owner had sent GBC a video of this taking place. The other half of the stable block is still in the original position. The temporary residence order expires in July 2023.

8. KALC/NALC – Cllr Dymond

Town and Village Councils were being encouraged to improve the greenness of their environment. This includes the insulation of village halls as well as the installation of solar panels on roofs.

KALC are hosting their Annual Councillor Day on the 6th July at Appledore Village Hall.

The Gravesham Area KALC Meeting will be taking place on Wednesday 7th June at Luddesdown Village Hall.

Cllr Nichols and Cllr Gee will be attending the online Dynamic Councillor course on 29th June.

Councillors were encouraged to attend the Planning Courses run by KALC which provide useful guidance.

9. Planning – Cllr Dyer – The planning group had met for an evening during the previous week and Cllr Peterson-Pearce had put together a Terms of Reference.

The Planning Group will be meeting again next week.

10. Traffic Group – Cllr Nichols

Review of current traffic numbers and speeds – There is a lot traffic data to download from the Speed Indicator Device which still needs to be reviewed. Cllr Mason and Cllr Smith had been asked to download the data.

Speeding traffic– PC Jo Hammond had sent an email suggesting that the Speed Watch Group at Cobham should be restarted. The previous Speed Watch group had stopped because there did not appear to be a problem with excessive speed in the village. PC Jo Hammond was happy to join the Speed Watch team if they start again. It was difficult to get residents to feed in data about speeding traffic. The issues are the volume of traffic particularly when the A2 is blocked and traffic uses Cobham and Sole Street. It was felt that delivery drivers were speeding during these times. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce agreed to develop a link on to the website where residents would be able to report speeding traffic to CPC and other relevant authorities.

Highways Improvement Plan – KCC installed speed tubes on The Street on the 1st June during half term week. It was felt that this could give a useful comparison on traffic levels during the school holidays and when the school term starts. The Traffic Group were planning to meet soon.

Sole Street – Traffic Feasibility Study – Nothing to report.

11. Lower Thames Crossing – Cllr Dyer

There is a final consultation that started on 17th May and will finish on 19th June. Most of the changes will be taking place in Essex and there are only very small changes in Kent.

There will now only be one boring machine being used to dig the tunnel instead of two machines and the spoil from the works will be moved to Essex.

Action: Cllr Dyer to pass on any additional dates when they are known.

12. Village Crime Group – Cllr Dymond.

A car was written off near Cobham War Memorial by a drunk driver who was later arrested. The Kent Police Community Newsletter has been excellent although the newsletter does not specify where incidents have taken place. The Kent Police & Crime Commissioner, Matthew Scott, was looking to change this.

13. Playing Fields – Cllr Booth

Children’s Corner Refurbishment – Safeplay have been chosen to build the new playground and they have already completed playgrounds at Istead Rise and Camer Park. The final quote is around £65,000 with hopefully half of the amount being received through grants.

The playground will consist of three zones for children to play, gym, and a meeting area. Interpretation boards with details of the history of Cobham will also be installed. Greene King who run The Ship PH are considering a grant application as this may increase the visitor footfall to The Ship PH.

A community day will be organised to clear the undergrowth in preparation for phase 1 of the work and another community day will be organised to remove the chain link fence. GBC are providing support through a grant of £10,000 and will project manage the work which includes removing the existing playground equipment. The aim is for the playground to be ready for the Summer Fair on the August Bank Holiday.

Action: Put the Community Day details on to the website and Face book page plus in the Cricket Pavilion and School. Cllr Jassel and Cllr Dibben agreed to approach Cllr Sweetland for a members grant.

Car Park Resurfacing – The Sports Association and Cobham Primary School had contributed towards the resurfacing of the car park. CPC were still waiting for contributions from the Bowls Club and the Parent teachers Association.

Sports Association – Nothing to report

14. Cobham Public Toilets – Cllr Booth

Opening and cleaning the toilets – The cleaning contract for the public toilets will be reviewed in June. The closing of the toilets by a local resident is working well. The roof and gutters have been repaired and the gutters cleared. A new floor has also been laid.

Southern Water – CPC are still waiting for Southern Water to send an engineer to resolve the meter supply issues. Business Stream are charging CPC and the Bowls Club twice due to the confusion over the meter and sub meter. Cllr Booth has been monitoring the meter readings.

15. St Mary’s Church Rooms

Funding Group – The LFG AGM is at 2pm on Saturday 1st July in St Mary’s Church Room.

Grant Application - The community has supported the Local Funding Group tirelessly from 2013 when the group was formed. The LFG have now raised £65,000 with the promise of £37,500 of further grants, including £2,500 from Cobham Parish Council. The LFG is grateful for CPC’s support. The LFG preferred contractor’s quotation is £200,767. 89 + VAT.

Community Coffee Mornings

- Mothers and Toddlers in June
- Local Funding Group in July
- Red Cross Appeal for Ukraine in August
- Village Garage Sale Trail on Sunday 20th August
- Local Funding Group in September
- Scrabble, card and board games morning in September

It was therefore an unbelievable bonus to be advised by Cobham Parish Council that, as a result of their support, we will be awarded a grant of £150,000 from the Benefits Lead, Lower Thames Crossing

Refurbishment Work. It is expected that the refurbishment works should be ready to start in June 2024 and be completed by the following December. It is the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council to appoint, instruct and supervise their approved contractor to start work. The previous Vicar did not renew the architect's contract to project completion. The LFG believe that an architect should now be appointed to oversee the work to ensure it meets the criteria of the grant giving trusts and sign certification for payment.

16. Social Media – There had been a great deal of traffic on the CPC Facebook page due to several road works that were not co-ordinated.

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 – The Round Street defibrillator needs to be moved to another location when Cllr Mason's garage is demolished. Sallows Shaw was suggested as an alternative location but the defibrillator may look unsightly with the open gardens. The telephone box outside Cobham Primary School was suggested for housing the defibrillator in Round Street but it is still in use in Cobham as a telephone box.

Cllr Peterson-Pearce and Cllr Nichols to look for an alternative site for the Round Street defibrillator.

Action: Clerk to ask the Meadow Rooms Management Committee if they could look after the defibrillator at the Meadow Rooms

Youth Club – It was suggested that the Charities Aid Foundation specialise in bank accounts for charities.

Action: Clerk to chase The Grand for a new Service Level Agreement.

Footpaths – The footpath NS191 opposite the railway PH NS is overgrown with stinging nettles and the footpath NS192 between White Post Lane and Sole Street is also overgrown.

A parishioner asked about the status of the Restricted Byway NU33 from Church Road to Cozendon Wood. A restricted Byway is for use by walkers, horse riders, cyclists and horse drawn vehicles. It was asked if a sign could be added saying no unauthorised motorised vehicles.

Action: Clerk to write to the KCC Rights of Way Officer.

Owletts and other National Trust Properties – The Baker family will be leaving Owletts at the end of June. The National Trust have advertised that the property will be open on the first Sunday of the month until September. It was noted that recently the National Trust had spent considerable amounts of money on repairs to the main house.

Action: Clerk to invite National Trust staff to speak at the next parish council meeting.

Village Sign – Cllr Peterson-Pearce is looking for a third quote for the village sign.

Meadow Rooms – Munchies on the Meadow has been cancelled.

King's Coronation Feedback – The events were successful. Everyone enjoyed the ball at the Gilt Hall at Cobham Hall on the Saturday. The Children's Party and Garden Safari were both a success. Cllr Dymond thanked all of the volunteers who gave up their time. The head teacher plus twelve pupils had volunteered to help at the Big Help in Cobham. The Lord Leighton will present volunteer badges to each of the pupils.

18. Parishioners Comments –

A parishioner said a meeting had been arranged with the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner at 10am on 6th July at the St John's Centre at Meopham. The meeting is for local farmers and landowners and will focus on rural crime issues.

Action: Clerk and Cllr Dymond to raise at the Gravesham Area KALC Meeting.

Meeting continues in Private

19. Correspondence & Announcements – 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.

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

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

Cheques signed since last meeting

Date of Invoice	Company	Reason	Amount
26/5/2023	KALC	Dynamic Councillor training courses for Cllr Gee and Cllr Nichols	£120
26/5/2023	Martin Fielder-White	Internal Audit for 2022/23 AGAR	£80
26/5/2023	Sacha Dyer	Lawn mower repairs	£180.80
1/6/2023	Smooth & Rugged Landscapes	Cut grass in the playground area in 4 th and 26 th May 2023	£70

Cheques to be signed at the meeting

Date of Invoice	Company	Reason	Amount
5/6/2023	Clerk	A4 Jiffy Envelope at £1.69 and recorded post £4.45. Sent DPI Forms to Medway Council	£6.14
5/6/2023	Clerk	Mileage	£27.63
6/6/2023	Medway Norse Ltd	Opening and cleaning the toilets 1 st -31 st January 2023 for £652.38. Medway Norse issued a credit note for £52.38 as CPC were unhappy with the level of service.	£600

21. AOB – items from Councillors

Village Pump – The Conservation Architect for GBC who carried out a site visit agreed that the wall around the village pump is in a very poor condition. It was noted that previous repairs had been substandard and in a lot of places had used sand and cement instead of lime mortar. It was also noted that the repair work needed could take up to 10 years because of budget restrictions to fund a likely to cost of up to £100,000. The weekly rate for the repair work is likely to be £4,000 / day for specialist engineers.

Community Preparedness/Emergency Plan

Action: Clerk to circulate the current emergency plan. Clerk to raise as an agenda item at the next Gravesham KALC meeting.

Cozendon Wood – **Action:** Cllr Gee to speak to Strutt & Parker regarding the ownership/management of Cozendon Wood.

22. Next Meeting – Parish Council Meeting at 8pm on Tuesday 4th July at the Meadow Rooms