



Minutes of Cobham Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 7th November 2023 at 7.30pm

Meeting took place at the St Mary's Church Rooms

Present

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

Cllr Zoe Gee, Cllr Robert Pryor

Present

Cllr Dakota Dibben (GBC), Charles Amis (Clerk), 9 Parishioners

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr Mike Booth (Chair), Cllr Mat Peterson-Pearce, Cllr Bennet Smith, Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Russ Nichols, Cllr Bryan Sweetland (KCC), Cllr Samir Jassel (GBC)

2. Minutes - The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd October 2023 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Cllr Dymond and seconded by Cllr Gee.

3. Declarations of Interest – None

4. GBC Matters – Cllr Dibben – Cllr Dyer had a successful meeting to discuss the planning issues with Nick Brown, Deputy CEO and Director of the Environment. The aim is for CPC to meet with Nick Brown on a monthly basis. Wendy Lane has left as a Director of Planning a few weeks ago and no replacement has been recruited.

5. KALC/NALC – Cllr Dymond – The next Gravesham Area KALC Meeting will be taking place on Tuesday 14th November. The KALC AGM is taking place on Saturday 18th November. **Action:** Cllr Dymond will report back. Cllr Dymond is on the County Board for Planning and Transport.

6. Planning – Cllr Dyer –

Norbond – With the Planning Inspectorate

Cranborne Farm – With GBC Planning Enforcement

Bluebell Barn – With GBC Planning Enforcement

White Post Farm – With GBC Planning Enforcement

Finlarig, White Post Lane - Small extension to the side plus a new porch – No objections

7. Traffic Group – Cllr Nichols

Review of current traffic numbers and speeds – Cllr Nichols met with Michelle Norris at KCC Highways on Thursday 5th October to discuss all of the issues mentioned below. The Traffic Group are due to meet within the next two weeks.

The Traffic Group would like to see chicanes installed along Sole Street to slow the traffic. KCC Highways has advised that the chicanes would need street lighting to be installed. KCC has said there is no available funding for chicanes and CPC would need to find other funding options.

A parishioner said that the residents at Greenlands had a difficult journey to the Little Shop as they needed to cross Sole Street plus climb some steps and then cross Sole Street again. Another resident whose front door opens directly on to the road said they needed to use their back door and it was difficult with the children. When customers leave the Little Shop they are straight on to Sole Street. A parishioner said there were several small dents in the pavement beside the Little Shop.

Kent Police had set up a mobile speed van over two days along Sole Street. Four motorists were fined for speeding on the first day and 12 motorists on the second day. A resident raised the issue of speeding traffic coming over the railway bridge. The local residents were encouraged to take photographs and videos of any vehicle near misses as evidence. The details of the accident where a resident suffered life changing injuries has been handed to the highest level of Kent Police.

20mph Speed Signs – These have been removed from the bollards in The Street. The clerk has reported the missing repeater signs to KCC who have replaced some of the repeater signs but there are less signs than before the previous signs were stolen. **Action:** Clerk to follow up with KCC.

Bus Stop by Round Street – KCC Highways have recently identified that in their view it is not a safe location for a permanent bus stop and had asked the bus companies, Red Route Buses and Brian Jones Coaches not to pick up from there.

KCC Highways have offered alternative solutions which CPC do not feel is possible such as routing the buses via Manor Road, Sallows Shaw, White Post Lane and Round Street due to some of the road being single track. CPC are waiting for Red Route Buses and Brian Jones Coaches to provide feedback on the proposed route. KCC have suggested that school children use Footpath NS192 which meets Sole Street opposite Gold Street. The Clerk had received several emails from concerned parents had written to the clerk regarding buses stopping to pick up school children. The traffic group were asking how the Round Street and Sole Street junction could be made safer for a bus stop. A walking bus protest along Sole Street was suggested but it would be difficult to get the teenagers involved.

Action: Cllr Nichols to speak to Redroute Buses and Brian Jones Coaches about the rerouting of the bus routes via Manor Road and Sallows Shaw.

Speed Indicator Device – The speed data shows that traffic is moving at 31mph. It was felt that motorists tend to slow down by the poles for the SID by the Sole Street Railway Bridge and Sweeps Hole Pond.

CPC are not allowed to install other poles in other locations without the permission of KCC, as KCC decide what is a safe and appropriate location for a SID.

Speed Watch – PC Jo Hammond has offered to run the Speed Watch sessions at Cobham and Sole Street if they were to restart. The mobile speed camera sessions had caught 16 motorists over two days.

Village Gateways Features – Halfpence Lane – The original village gateways were white wooden picket fences that were not painted. There may not be enough space by the hedge for the gateway.

7.5t Weight Restriction for Halfpence Lane – **Action:** Clerk to circulate the KCC freight reporting email address to parish councillors. Parishioners to send Clerk photo and video evidence of lorries using inappropriate routes.

8. Lower Thames Crossing – Cllr Dyer and Cllr Booth had met with the LTC team to discuss the Statement of Common Ground. There are nine areas of disagreement on CPC’s Statement of Common Ground which are mostly focused on the amount of new traffic and the speed of the traffic. The Planning Inspectorate will review the Statement of Common Ground principle areas of disagreement are controlling speed of vehicles and volume of traffic.

LTC has said that the traffic should be improved after the LTC has been built. The Planning Inspectorate can tell the LTC Team and KCC that the mitigating issues need to be addressed before work starts on the Lower Thames Crossing.

9. Village Crime Group – Cllr Dymond – Local residents were encouraged to sign up My Community Voice and to raise items of concern with the police. The Police & Crime Commissioner was focusing on rural crime and speeding. It was important to report speeding vehicles. PC Hammond was looking to hold a drop in session for local residents. The police are expected to attend four parish council meetings per year. **Action:** Clerk to contact PC Hammond.

10. Playing Fields – Cllr Booth

Pavilion Improvements – The final drawings of the proposed improvements to the current patio area has been circulated to members of the Sports Association. Following the feedback the Committee will look to get quotes for the work which is likely to require planning permission. A new kitchen will be fitted in December.

11. Cobham Public Toilets – Cllr Booth

Opening and cleaning the toilets – The two footfall counters had been replaced. The gent’s toilet had received approx. 600 visits over the last 10 days and the ladies toilet had received 200 visits over the same period.

Action: Clerk to arrange the replacement of the wash basin foot pedals in both of the toilets

Southern Water – Business Stream

12. St Mary’s Church Rooms – Su Rowe read a report from the Local Funding Group.

The St Mary’s Church Rooms belongs to Rochester Diocese and the Parochial Church Council would need to approve any proposals of work to be carried out according to Church of England rules and this would need to agree with the building regulations. The decisions on building materials and what is put inside the building is decided by the Rector, Rev Alison Davey. The PCC were grateful for all of the fund raising carried out by the Local Funding Group.

The PCC will need to apply for charity status as over £100,000 in funding had been received. The PCC will be employing Lisa Brooks to project manage the works. This will include regular meetings with the PCC and site visits to SMCR. The work will need to start before 14th May 2024 as this is when the building regulations will expire. The St Mary’s Task Group consists of three representatives from the PCC, CPC and the Local Funding Group and will be meeting next week.

Action: Cllr Booth and Cllr Dymond to feedback from the task group to CPC

The SMCR has been neglected and should be better used by the community. Rev Pamela Davies has plans for the building.

13. Social Media – Nothing to report.

14. Other Village Matters

Defibrillators – The Round Street defibrillator has been returned to its location and the pads and the battery have been replaced. The defibrillator attached to the St Mary’s Church Rooms would need to be moved when the refurbishment works start in 2024. CPC are looking for a volunteer to check the defibrillator.

Youth Club – Only one child turned up for the session on Friday 13th October and the session was cancelled on Friday 27th October due to the unavailability of the youth workers. The Grand have been promoting the youth club and Cobham Primary School has advertised the youth club sessions. **Action:** Cllr Gee will add the youth club poster to Sole Street Hamlet Facebook Page. The poster needs to be added to the Sole Street Village Facebook page.

Footpaths – The hedgerow along Footpath NS192 needs to be cut back.

Village Sign – Cllr Peterson-Pearce is working on a design. Three village signs would be needed for Sole Street, Cobham and Ifield.

Meadow Rooms – There has been a lot of bookings over the past month including a couple of children’s parties and Big Birthday celebrations. The Gardeners Club held a talk which was well attended. Additionally the Gardeners Club and the WI meet once per month as do a circle dancing club.

The cash reserves continue to be at a solid level and are sufficient to maintain the operations despite the increased operational costs for the short to medium term. Bookings and enquiries continuing to be healthy.

Village Pump – Repairs to the flint wall – CPC has received one quote and is waiting for another company to provide a quote. The Lower Thames Crossing may be able to provide a contribution to the work. **Action:** Cllr Dymond to provide details of another company.

15. Parishioners Comments – None

Meeting continues in Private

16. Correspondence & Announcements – None

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

Payments made since the 3rd October meeting

Date of Invoice	Company	Reason	Amount
24/5/2023	St Mary’s Church Rooms Local Funding Group	Grant application towards repairs of the St Mary’s Church Rooms	£2,500
31/8/2023	Safeplay Playground Services Ltd	Installation of new playground	£71,493.60
5/10/2023	Zurich Insurance	Insurance for CPC	£1,765.39
9/10/2023	Mazars LLP	External Auditor AGAR 2022/23	£378
13/10/2023	KALC	Cllr Dymond attended the Introduction to Planning	£84
13/10/2023	Primary Care Supplies	Replacement pads and battery for Round Street defibrillator	£426
18/10/2023	Royal British Legion	Wreath for Remembrance Sunday	£27.50

18/10/2023	Ebay	Lenovo Laptop Adapter Charger for SID	£11.95
20/10/2023	Lab Tek Instruments	2 x replacement People Counters for public toilets	£199.20
23/10/2023	Cobham Parochial Church Council	Hire of St Mary's Church Rooms for 5 th September and 7 th November	£40
30/10/2023	Medway Norse Ltd	Opening and cleaning toilets in October	£675.22
31/10/2023	Clerk	Salary for 1 st – 31 st October	£845.10
3/11/2023	Satswana Ltd	Subscription renewal. Provide Data Protection	£180

Payments to be made after the 7th November Meeting

Date of Invoice	Company	Reason	Amount
7/11/2023	Clerk	Mileage	£23.94

Cllr Dyer proposed the payment report and Cllr Gee seconded.

18. Items from Councillors

Action: Clerk to circulate the note on the current planning enforcement situation to all of the parish councillors prior to the Planning Group meeting.

KCC had cleared the drains along The Street during the summer.

Cobham and Sole Street won silver gilt at the South and South East in Bloom.

Cllr Dymond had attended the recent Planning training course run by KALC which had been very useful. **Action:** Cllr Dymond to circulate the notes from the course.

Action: Cllr Dymond to ask Jonathan Pye about the cutting of the hedge by Cobham Church.

Action: Councillors to supply details of those parishioners who should receive the KALC award for 2024 to the Clerk.

Action: Clerk to chase Singlewell Printers for an invoice for the order of service booklets for Remembrance Sunday.

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