



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

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 8pm**

**Meeting took place at the Meadow Rooms**

### **Present**

Cllr Steve Dyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Ben Smith

Cllr Robert Pryor, Cllr Matt Peterson-Pearce,

### **Present**

Cllr Tony Rice (GBC), Charles Amis (Clerk), 3 Parishioners

**1. Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Mike Booth (Chair), Cllr Rosemary Dymond, Cllr Gabriella Gabbitas, Cllr Margaret Haig, Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Bryan Sweetland (KCC)

**2. Minutes** - The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 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. KCC Matters – Cllr Sweetland**

- **Bus Stops outside the Church and Round Street** - KCC had carried out a site visit as part of the Highway Improvement Plan which had been useful for everyone. KCC have said that the pavement opposite the Leatherbottle PH is not wide enough for the bus stop to be moved to. KCC had told the bus company not to pick up and drop off at the junction of Round Street and Sole Street as there were safety issues.
- **Bollard – outside 46, The Street** – CPC have asked KCC if they will take this on.
- **Village Gateways Features** – CPC are still waiting to hear the plans and prices for the village gateways.
- **Weight Restrictions for Halfpence Lane** – An articulated lorry had been seen using Gold Street. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce to check the current signage at the junction of Gold Street and Sole Street. Clerk to ask KCC to install weight restriction signs on Gold Street.

**5. GBC Matters** – Cllr Rice had been working with a resident regarding the breach of planning conditions on Round Street. A meeting with the planning enforcement team at GBC had been arranged. The owners at Bluebell Barn have been asked to remove the stables and one of the static caravans. The plots of land along Round Street had for sale signs.

The control boxes by the mast at Batts Road had been forced open. A resident had reported this Cllr Dyer.

Cllr Rice had received an email for a pre planning application for the upgrade to the mast by the Inn on the Lake. Cllr Rice had asked the organisation for specific data particularly if this will improve mobile coverage for local people.

Cllr Rice will be stepping down at the local elections on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May. The new ward of Istead Rise, Cobham and Sole Street will be a two councillor ward. The new councillors standing will be Cllr Dakota Dibben and Cllr Samir Jassal.

**6. KALC/NALC** – There will be a Gravesham Area KALC meeting on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

### **7. Planning – Cllr Dyer**

- **Norbond Site** – GBC issued an enforcement notice and the site owners have appealed. This is now with the Planning Inspectorate.
- **White Post Farm** – The Planning Inspectorate visited in November. The owner has installed new lighting and another mobile home on the site.
- **Orchard Cottage, Round Street** – Additional planning for planting. Remove from future agenda items.
- **St Mary's Church Rooms** – No objections
- **Land adjoining Wildacre** – GBC had rejected the planning application for building a house. The owner wishes to set up a dog training centre with associated buildings. CPC have objected.
- **Corner Cottage, Round Street** – The size of the building will increase in an area of green belt and could be considered infill. This is also an area of archaeological interest. No objections
- **19, The Street, Cobham** – The owner wants to remove the current conservatory and build a new extension. No objections
- **Cascades Leisure Centre, Thong Lane** – The proposed building's footprint is smaller than the current building. There is still a long way to go before the current leisure centre is replaced by a new structure. No objections.

### **8. Traffic Group – Cllr Mason**

- Review of current traffic numbers and speeds
- **Speed Indicator Device** – The SID is currently located at Sole Street by Scratton Fields. The battery still needs to be changed. **Action:** The statistics from the SID need to be forwarded to the LTC Team.
- **Sole Street – Traffic Feasibility Study**
- **Highways Improvement Plan** – During the site visit the KCC officers walked along Sole Street. **Action:** CPC to send Traffic Feasibility Study.

**9. Lower Thames Crossing** – Cllr Booth and Cllr Dyer had met with the LTC Team. There are still 15 items from the Statement of Common Ground that still need to be agreed. Cllr Rice has made a representation to the Planning Inspectorate to be registered as an interested party in the planning process for the LTC. It was important that other parishioners did the same although CPC will continue to represent the parish. The traffic modelling carried out by LTC Team did not reflect any increase of the traffic after the LTC was built and they may not understand the local traffic issues that residents would know particularly those residents who live along the route. There is likely to be extra traffic on Sole Street, Jeskyns Road and Henhurst Road to avoid using Wrotham Road. KCC

Highways had carried a traffic modelling that covered a wider area which included Green Lane, Camer Park Road and Sole Street. Construction Traffic and the 18 month temporary closure of the current Brewers Road Bridge over the A2 will have an impact.

The LTC Team have not confirmed if there is available legacy funding for a pavement along Sole Street. It has been interesting to see that other local projects have already received their funding.

**Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce to design a poster to encourage residents make a representation as an interested party.

**10. Village Crime Group** – There was nothing much to report. There had been police vehicles by the entrance to Jeskyns Country Park and outside the Little Shop at Sole Street.

## **11. Playing Fields**

- **Children's Corner Refurbishment** – Cllr Peterson-Pearce thanked Cllr Rice for his help. James Young, the Parks and Open Spaces Manager at GBC was looking to get four quotes for the work. It was decided to have wooden play equipment with accessible seating plus exercise equipment, raised flower beds, boarding and sensory garden. It will cost around £3,000 to clear the existing playground equipment. The work may be able to start at the end of February if the materials are available. GBC have offered £10,000 in grants for the playground. Cllr Peterson-Pearce had written to Greene King, who are considering the application. Cllr Peterson Pearce will be making an application to the Lower Thames Crossing Legacy Fund. It was planned that the Mayor of Gravesham should open the new playground once completed. A new path from the car park will be installed from the car park to the playground. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce to supply drawings for a new path. James Young to supply the quotes for the playground and the new path.
- **Electric Vehicles Charging Points** – nothing to report.
- **Sports Association** – The committee are waiting for all the sports clubs to submit their accounts before the application to join the Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) can be submitted.
- **Car Park Resurfacing** – Mackeldens have been chosen to resurface the section of the car park by the Bowls Club and will be carrying out the work over the February half term. There will still be access to the other part of the car park. The Sports Association, Cobham Primary School and Parent teachers Association have been approached for contributions. It was suggested that crowdfunding could also be used.

## **12. Public Toilets**

- **Opening and cleaning the toilets** – The plumbing for the toilets has been repaired.
- **Southern Water** - Cllr Booth had been in contact with Business Stream with the latest water meter readings and to confirm the billing issues
- **General Maintenance** – Cllr Rice provided details of a roofer to carry out repairs to the roof and guttering and to repaint the floor of the toilets.

**13. St Mary's Church Rooms** – The Local Funding Group are running a community coffee morning at 10.30am on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March. CPC have been invited to run a coffee morning on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April. CPC could match the funding for each community coffee morning. It had been suggested that the Local Funding Group contact all of the contractors and ask for a quote for the refurbishment of the St Mary's Church Rooms.

**14. Social Media** – There had been 1,200 visits to the CPC Facebook page which was mostly due to the Santa Event in December. There had been 53 visits to the CPC website. CPC continues to fund the Easter and Christmas editions of the parish magazine which is delivered to every household in Cobham parish.

**15. Local Elections – Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May** – KALC are running two free training courses on Zoom for prospective parish council candidates from 7pm for one hour on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February and Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March. The clerk had sent an email with a link to the nomination papers on the Electoral Commission website.

#### **16. Other Village Matters**

- **Defibrillators** – The defibrillator at The St Mary’s Church Rooms needs the new pads to be installed and the clips that hold the box closed are no longer working. It was asked if parish councillors could suggest an alternative site for the defibrillator at Round Street. Cobham College now have a working defibrillator. It was asked if the defibrillator at Sole Street Railway Station was still working. **Action:** Cllr Dyer agreed to look at the Defibrillator at the St Mary’s Church Rooms.
- **Youth Club** – More children had attended the last youth club following a low attendance in January. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce to look for a bank account for the Youth Club. Clerk to ask The Grand for a new Service Level Agreement.
- **Footpaths** – nothing to report.
- **Owletts and other National Trust Properties** – The National Trust are planning to increase the rent and reduce the number of open days at Owletts. The National Trust are meeting with the volunteers who open the Mausoleum and are meeting with the volunteers who help at Owletts.
- **Village Sign** – Cllr Peterson-Pearce had received a couple of quotes for around £7,000 per village sign. The majority of the cost is the cutting of the metal work of the sign. An alternative would be to use high pressure water to cut the village sign. The clerk passed on a parish councillor’s comments on the proposals for the village sign who had concerns about the suggested design of the village sign. A parishioner offered to pass on the details of a carpenter who could work on the post for the village sign. It was suggested that old telegraph poles could be used for the village sign post. **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce to respond to Cllr Dymond. Cllr Dyer agreed to provide the photo album of village signs.
- **Meadow Rooms** - The key fob entry system has been replaced with the replacement of all the existing key fobs, now complete the current generic access code will be changed on a regular basis. The repairs to the dropped curb stones are still to be undertaken along with the refurbishment of the old noticeboard that is to be repurposed as an event sign. A general maintenance project (decoration, curtain repair etc.) is being planned for around Easter.

The electricity costs for the Meadow Rooms have risen significantly, the previous capped price deal expired in November 2022 and the new charge is around three times higher than the previous charge. The Meadow Room Management Committee reviewed this at their last meeting along with the hire rates for 2023, as a result it has been agreed to increase the base hire rates by 20%, note that any increase will be published to come into effect as of April 2023 for regular users, but is now in place for any new hires.

The discount rates for parish residents remain unchanged at 33% of the standard rates, also adjustments have been made to the regular hire rate discounts for our long term users i.e. CADS, Gardeners and Preschool, in order to minimise the impact as much as possible.

The increase in electricity charges has meant that the Meadow Room has to find an additional £7,000 p.a. in order to operate without a loss, the hire rate increases will assist, but will not cover the full shortfall. In order to meet the additional expense it is intended to increase the number of hires via improving publicity, website and social media presence, whilst also investigating 3rd party organisations that can assist in reducing the electricity costs via initiatives such as government grants and tax recovery 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.

- **King's Coronation** – Nothing to report.
- **Nominations for the Bonham Hayes Trust** – The Parish Councillors were encouraged to submit nominations.

**17. Parishioners Comments** - None

#### **Meeting continues in Private**

**18. Correspondence & Announcements** – The clerk had received a telephone call from individual who asked about the lack of parking on Lodge Lane. The clerk suggested the alternative parking spaces and that CPC were investigating alternative places to park. The clerk had received an email from an individual who had mentioned there was some fly tipping but had not provided the location. The Clerk had replied with the link to the GBC website where the fly tipping could be reported. The fly tipping had been removed from Batts Road and Tollingtrough Green.

**19. Finance** – Cllr Dyer proposed the cheque report and Cllr Peterson-Pearce seconded.

**20. AOB** – Cllr Pryor raised the issue of 15 minute communities.

**21. Next Meeting** – **Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March at the St Mary's Church Rooms**