



Minutes of Cobham Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 7th June 2022 at 7.30pm

Meeting took place at the Meadow Rooms

Present

Clr Steve Dyer (Vice Chair), Clr Margaret Haig, Clr Gabriella Gabbitas,
Clr Mat Peterson-Pearce, Clr Robert Pryor, Clr Matt Mason, Clr Rosemary Dymond,

Present

Clr Tony Rice (GBC), Charles Amis (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence – Clr Mike Booth, Clr Ben Smith, Clr Tony Rice (GBC), Clr Bryan Sweetland (KCC)

2. Minutes – The minutes for the Annual Parish Assembly held on Tuesday 19th April 2022, Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 27th April 2022 and the minutes for the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 25th May 2022 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Clr Peterson-Pearce and seconded by Clr Dyer.

3. Declarations of Interest – None

4. Matters arising from the previous meeting of 8th February 2022 –

Water leak in Round Street – Southern Water and Kent County Council have both carried out independent site visits. Southern Water did not believe it was sewage and that there wasn't a sink hole. Russ Nicholls has offered his drive for Southern Water's service Vehicles. **Action:** Russ Nicholls to decide how take this forward.

5. KCC Matters – Clr 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.

Cobham Church Bus Stop – The Clerk had contacted KCC several times to arrange a site visit. Clr Haig asked if there was still a bus stop outside the Darnley Arms as a bus driver had refused to drop off a passenger there. Despite there being no sign there is a bus stop outside the Darnley Arms. **Action:** Clerk to chase KCC Bus Stop team to carry out a site visit for both of the bus stops

6. GBC Matters – Clr Rice

Parking – Cllr Rice has continued to chase Stuart Bobbie, the Chief Executive at GBC, for the creation of a visitor's car park at West Park off Halfpence Lane. Previous Stuart Bobbie had been negative about a car park but is looking to review the situation. Cllr Rice had gone back after two months to say Cobham needs visitor parking, the parish council were opening the toilets for visitors and visitors could be encouraged to visit Gravesend Town Centre. It was still unlikely that a car park would be built. Cllr Haig said there were issues with sightlines along Halfpence Lane.

Batts Road Mast – The mast has been installed. Cllr Rice has contacted the contractor who installed the mast to ask for cellular coverage as the mast is for emergency use only. Cllr Dyer said the mast is in an unobtrusive position and it is worth the scrutiny and rejection of previous site locations.

7. KALC/NALC – Cllr Dymond said there were no updates.

8. Planning Group – Cllr Dyer/Cllr Rice

Norbond Site – GBC has served an enforcement notice to the owners asking them to remove everything within six months after 15th June. It was suggested that CPC write to GBC Planning Department to say that the parish council is unhappy with the lack of progress regarding the time taken. It has taken nearly two years for GBC Planning Department to refuse retrospective planning. Norbond have been using the site since the summer of 2019 and there had been noise from the site at all hours. The letter needs to refer to a letter that had already been written to Nick Brown, Head of Planning, which took a long time to receive a response. It was asked why it took GBC Planning Department 18 months to take action against the retrospective planning action. **Action:** Cllr Mason offered to draft a letter to send to GBC Planning Department.

White Post Farm – This planning appeal had been lodged with the Planning Inspectorate on 15th September 2019 who had only just assigned a case officer. Cllr Rice confirmed the Planning Inspectorate has still not carried out a site visit. Additional items have been added to the enclosed area and the owner has planted conifers to screen the site. **Action:** Clerk to send all of the background papers to the Clerk at Meopham Parish Council. CPC to write a letter to Adam Holloway.

Orchard Cottage, Round Street – GBC have permitted the gates and outbuildings. CPC are lead to believe that the outbuildings as living accommodation. **Action:** Cllr Dyer to follow this up with GBC.

Bower Cottage, Sole Street – GBC have permitted the new extension despite listed building status. The owners had not realised that the extension was close to the property boundary and had made some adjustments.

7 Manor Road, Sole Street – no objections

Black Horse Cottage, Round Street – no objections

9. Traffic Group – Cllr Mason

The Street – Traffic Calming Scheme – KCC have said that new posts will be installed outside Wisteria Cottage and the pavement will be re-profiled outside the Darnley Arms by the end of June.

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.

Village Gateways Features – Halfpence Lane – The village gateways for Cobham and Sole Street need to be the same as they are currently different. The cost of the gateways is £2,500. **Action:** The design needs to be re-circulated amongst the parish councillors.

Speedwatch Group – Cllr Rice said there were not enough volunteers to run the Speedwatch sessions and the Speed Indicator Device data does not indicate a speeding problem in Cobham and Sole Street. It was decided that there would be no more Speedwatch sessions for now.

Speed Indicator Device – Cllr Mason offered to change the battery at the same time as downloading the data. 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 stops grain lorries accessing Lodge Lane from the A2. The only alternative is through The Street where there is no weight limit. **Action:** Cllr Dyer to check if the signage says access only at Cobham Hall Roundabout.

Flooding on Halfpence Lane – KCC Highways should be taking action in June. It was noted that the nearby drainage ditches had been become blocked and overgrown. There is a drain going towards Cobham Hall Roundabout. **Action:** Clerk to write to KCC to ask KCC Highways for their maintenance schedule for clearing the drains.

Jeskyns Road – KCC had been in contact with the owner of Jeskyns Court. **Action:** Clerk to ask the owner of Jeskyns if they are happy with KCC's plans/response.

Sole Street – Traffic Feasibility Study – Cllr Mason offered to meet with KCC Highways. KCC had come back with two scoping options to slow and reduce the traffic along Sole Street which included making Sole Street one way from Round Street to Scratton Fields or to purchase land alongside Sole Street to make a pavement from the same points.

All of the councillors present at the meeting was opposed to the one way option as it could cause traffic to speed along Sole Street and traffic would use Manor Road, Sallows Shaw, White Post Lane and Round Street as an alternative route. Cllr Dymond said that a survey had been carried out five years ago and had found that most residents who live along Sole Street were happy to offer up part of their front garden for a pavement. **Action:** Cllr Dymond to find email with the details.

It was suggested that a cycle lane/walking route could be painted on the road surface and for motorists to give way to walkers and cyclist. Chicanes to slow the traffic down could also be installed.

10. Lower Thames Crossing – Cllr Dyer – The current consultation finishes on 20th June 2022. There is an exhibition at Shorne Village Hall from 2pm to 8pm on Friday 10th June. There had been no change to the impact. Some plots of land have been acquired to help with the nitrogen displacement programme. Cllr Booth and Cllr Dyer are meeting with Eva Simunovic and will be raising the following items: The plans for the 416 bus route whilst the works are taking place, the downgrading of Scotland Lane from a byway open to all traffic to a bridleway and the LTC legacy fund for the footway beside Sole Street from Round Street to Scratton Fields. All of the parish councillors were encouraged to provide feedback to the consultation.

11. 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 – The PCSOs had sent an email to apologise for the there being no report in May. There had recently been issues with off road motorbikes and quad bikes. **Action:** Clerk to invite the PCSOs to the next parish council meeting on 5th July.

12. Playing Fields

Children’s Corner Refurbishment – CPC had received a grant of £10,000 from the National Lottery. The work must start within the same year. CPC are still waiting for Tesco to respond. Cllr Peterson-Pearce will complete some more funding applications. Shorne Parish Council had received £10,000 from the LTC Legacy Fund towards the cost of their new playground. Previously Cllr Booth had produced a draft improvement plan for the children’s corner. Cllr Peterson-Pearce was looking for sponsor for the proposed sensory garden. CPC could ask the Sports Club to lay a hard surface path to the playground. GBC have recently refurbished the playground at Camer Park. **Action:** Clerk to forward all of the previous correspondence from the playground companies to Cllr Peterson-Pearce. Cllr Dyer to ask Eva Simunovic for funding for the playground.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points – **Action:** Clerk to get an update from KCC Transport Innovations Department on CPC’s application for funding for the charging points. Clerk to ask Meopham Parish Council how they obtained electric vehicle charging points.

13. Public Toilets – It was suggested that the public toilets be discussed at a future meeting. The toilets are costing £10,000 per annum to run. **Action:** Clerk to speak to Meopham Parish Council about the running of their public toilets.

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.

Floor Painting – This still needs to be completed.

14. St Mary’s Church Rooms

Refurbishment – no update has been received for the St Mary’s Church Rooms. The work to refurbish the Church Rooms is due to start in October.

Meetings – CPC are meeting at the St Mary’s Church Rooms for the July and September meetings.

15. Social Media – Website & Facebook

Social Media – Strategy – **Action:** Cllr Dyer to discuss with Cllr Booth and Cllr Peterson-Pearce.

Stats of use of Facebook & CPC website - Cllr Peterson-Pearce offered to look after the website.

Parish Magazine – The parish magazine is now being printed by a printing company. Residents are able to subscribe for a year at a cost of £10.

16. Other Village Matters

Cobham College Defibrillator – Gravesham Life Saving Club are still waiting for the parts for the defibrillator to arrive from Germany. It was asked if another defibrillator could be purchased instead. **Action:** Cllr Dymond to follow this up.

Youth Club – Action: Clerk to ask Esther Dryland for an update on the closing of the youth club bank account.

Village Sign – Cllr Booth has suggested that flagpoles could be installed in Cobham and Sole Street rather than village signs as the costs are significantly less. Cllr Peterson-Pearce had circulated photographs of various designs of village signs to all of the parish councillors. The cost of a village sign would be up to £8,000.

Meadow Rooms - May saw the Meadow Room host a 70th Birthday party, a children's party and a Golden Wedding Anniversary celebration, in addition to CADS using the hall between 13 - 22 May for their show, Sherlock Holmes' Last Case & Plan B. We also held the Meadow Room management Committee AGM on Tuesday 10th May, where the management committee reported on the running and operation of the facility for the last year and the extended COVID period. Additionally the WI meet once per month as do a line dance club.

The basic works to the roadside verge and entrance are ongoing and will include replacing the wooden bollards on the grass verge by The Street, replacing the gate post to the right of the entrance and repairing the dropped curb stones.

The Munchies on the Meadow, which took place on Saturday 4th June, was attended by circa 2,000 people on the day and was a great success with total revenue raised being in excess of £5,600. A great result and comparable to previous years, considering the Meadow Rooms haven't run the event for a couple of years, what the country has been through over that time and competing with other events over the Jubilee weekend. Credit to all involved, particularly to Mat Peterson-Pearce for all he did, and the great team of volunteers, it couldn't have happened without them! Also, thanks to the sports club and Scripps farm for allowing us to use their land for car parking on the day.

Cash reserves are at a solid level and sufficient to maintain the operations, with bookings and enquiries continuing to be healthy.

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. Footpath NS192 was also overgrown. The footpaths had been cleared of undergrowth but the cuttings had not been removed. **Action:** Clerk to ask KCC Rights of Way Team for their maintenance timetable for the public rights of way. Cllr Dymond to raise the footpath issues with Cllr Sweetland.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee – All of the events had taken place. Cllr Dymond was grateful to Radu who decorated his tractor for the town crier session. 50 people attended the lighting of the beacon but there was no bugler. Cobham Church was beautifully lit in red, white and blue. On Friday the eldest and youngest residents planted trees at Ifield, Sole Street and Cobham. A photographer from the Kent Messenger had attended the tree planting. Over 50 children attended the tea party. The Munchies on the Meadow was successful. 20 people attended the Sunday lunch.

Assets of Community Value – The Asset of Community Value for the St Mary's Church Rooms needs to be renewed with GBC. The owners of the properties that were to be registered as assets of community value were not happy that they had not been consulted about the process. All of the parish councillors were in favour in principle of registering the Little Shop and the Darnley Arms as assets of community value. **Action:** Clerk to check the asset of community value list and renew the ACV for the St Mary's Church Rooms.

Village Defibrillators – The clerk has ordered two sets of pads and batteries for the defibrillators from Primary Care Supplies. There had been delays in obtaining these parts but they should arrive soon. The defibrillators need to be checked every month.

Rural Kent Coffee & Information Project – This has been well received and more people are attending. Rural Kent Coffee & Information Project are running an event for parish councillors from 10am to 1pm on Monday 13th June at the Memorial Hall at Charing Heath.

Owletts and other National Trust Properties – Owletts is open on the last Sunday of the month. The National Trust are continuing to negotiate with the Baker Family. A petition was sent to the National Trust. The Darnley Mausoleum and South Lodge Barn are also open on the first Sunday of the month.

Parishioners Comments - None

Meeting continues in Private

Correspondence & Announcements – Lyn Bettaney had sent an email regarding the recent lack of minutes on the parish council website. Denise Bird had written to say that she was leaving Forestry England after 17 years and had taken a position at the Woodland Trust. **Action:** Clerk to send a thank you to Denise Bird.

Finance

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

Online bank – **Action:** Clerk to check the details for transferring CPC's bank accounts to the City Trust Bank and to report back.

Grant Applications – Luddesdown & District Rights of Way Group had applied for a £50 grant for publicising their group and recruit new members. The group used to carry out footpath maintenance but there is now a 70 year age limit for using power tools. Munchies on the Meadow had applied for a £300 grant for the cost of running the event on the Saturday 4th June for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee event. The applications were all approved by the parish councillors who were present.

AOB – Items from Councillors

Cllr Haig said there was no handrail on the wall to help pedestrians up the slope to the church and had raised this with the Parochial Church Council. **Action:** Clerk to raise this with the Church Wardens at Cobham Church.

Cllr Dymond raised the issue of parking in front of the village pump. There is a white dotted line but no yellow lines. Cobham had entered the Britain in Bloom Best Kept Village competition which will be judged on 29th June. Cllr Dymond had written to KCC regarding cutting the grass and keeping the wilding areas clear. **Action:** Clerk to pass on the details of the Horticulture Manager at GBC to Cllr Dymond.

Next Meeting – Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 5th July 2022 at the St Mary's Church Rooms.