



Minutes of Cobham Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 8th February 2022 at 8pm

Meeting took place at the Meadow Rooms

Present

Cllr Mike Booth (Chairman), Cllr Rosemary Dymond, Cllr Mat Peterson-Pearce

Cllr Margaret Haig, Cllr Robert Pryor

Present

Charles Amis (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr Steve Dyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Gabriella Gabbitas, Cllr Ben Smith, Cllr Tony Rice, Cllr Bryan Sweetland.

2. Minutes – The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 18th January 2022 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Cllr Dymond and seconded by Cllr Haig.

3. Declarations of Interest – None

4. Matters arising from the previous meeting of 18th January 2022 – to be discussed in the main part of the meeting.

5. KCC Matters – The Street Closure / Batts Road - Cllr Rice had spoken to KCC Highways about the installation of temporary road closed signs for Batts Road during the forthcoming closure of The Street in Cobham. KCC responded by saying there was insufficient time to arrange this.

The diversion route during the Street closure is via Halfpence Lane, Thong Lane, Valley Drive and Henhurst.

6. GBC Matters – Nothing to report

7. KALC/NALC - Terry Martin has been replaced by Charmaine Keatley as the Chief Executive of KALC from the 1st February.

KALC are holding all of their external meetings and training courses on line.

GBC could receive powers to restrict HGVs from certain routes which could come into force from April.

KALC are meeting with Matthew Scott, the Police and Crime Commissioner, and one of the items is the future of the PCSOs.

KALC have suggested that MPs should attend the parish council meetings that take place within their constituency.

NALC have been lobbying parliament for parish councils to be given permission to hold zoom meetings again.

8. PLANNING GROUP

Norbond Site – The retrospective planning application was refused by GBC on 30th November 2021. The Planning Enforcement Manager carried out a site visit on Tuesday 1st February and met with the operator of the land and the land manager. A report of that meeting has to be written before enforcement can be enacted. It was reported that someone is living on site 24 hours per day as security.

White Post Farm – The Planning Inspectorate are still waiting for the appointment of a suitable planning inspector to determine the appeal. Once an inspector has been appointed they will conduct a site visit before making a decision.

Orchard Cottage, Round Street – The planning application is still under consideration with GBC. The owner has set up additional security lighting and a security camera.

Bluebell Farm – The development land by Cozendon Wood falls within Meopham Parish. **Action:** Clerk to check if the entrance to Bluebell Farm falls within Cobham Parish.

21 Manor Road – no objections

Bramlea, Sole Street – no objections

11 & 13 Sallows Shaw – the owner has built an extension to the chalet roof and an extension to the front of the house. There are no safety rails around the scaffolding and the site is untidy. **Action:** Clerk to write a precis on the planning report

9. TRAFFIC GROUP

The Street – Traffic Calming Scheme – The closure of The Street starts on Saturday 12th February. Cllr Peterson-Pearce had researched and found there appeared to be no financial help available for businesses in The Street affected by the road closure. Some residents were concerned whether they would be able to access their properties. KCC Highways have given assurance that they will manage access to the best of their ability.

War Memorial Roundabout – New wooden posts are to be installed by the hedge outside Pilgrims. The white lining will be refreshed around the roundabout. KCC Highways have been asked to review the siting of some of the road signs in the area.

Sole Street Bus Stop – Cllr Sweetland was chasing KCC for an official bus stop at the corner of Sole Street and Round Street. At present the school bus stops to pick up children although this is not an official bus stop.

Village Gateways Features – Cllr Booth is holding ongoing discussions with KCC.

Speedwatch Group – The Speedwatch initiative will restart in the spring.

Speed Indicator Device – Cllr Mason continues to pass the data from the SID to Ian Grigor at KCC Highways.

Lower Thames Crossing – There is a Lower Thames Crossing public information event at the Civic Centre at 4pm–8pm on 3rd March.

Cllr Dyer has written to Eva Simunovic regarding LTC legacy funding for road safety projects.

10. Village Crime Group – Ellie Middleton held a PCSO surgery on the morning of Monday 24th January outside the St Mary’s Church Rooms which was attended by Cllr Dymond, Cllr Haig, the Chair of the Sole Street Neighbourhood Watch and two Sole Street parishioners.

Ellie Middleton will be leaving her job with the police force on 2nd March and it is uncertain if there will be a replacement.

Action: Clerk to send Cllr Booth a My Community Voice poster to go on to the notice boards.

11. Playing Fields

Children’s Corner Refurbishment – Cllr Peterson-Pearce has applied to several organisations for grants to refurbish the children’s corner. Cllr Booth said that the Bowls Club had received a grant from Veolia for the new artificial surface. **Action:** Clerk to pass on the contact details for the Bowls Club.

GBC Annual Playground Inspection. – The report found that the chains for the swings were rusty and needed to be replaced. A quote for £420 had been received from Safeplay Playground Services Ltd for the replacement parts and labour costs. It was agreed to go ahead with this work.

Electric Vehicle Charging Point – Nothing to report.

12. Public Toilets – A volunteer was still locking the toilets each night. The cheapest quote for fitting an electronic locking system was £2000.

Cllr Peterson-Pearce had found that the average cost nationally of keeping public toilets open was in the region of £10,000 which was at least 30% of CPC’s total income. It was agreed that continuing to have the public toilets open should be reviewed prior to the budget meeting in the autumn.

Medway Norse will be fixing the water leak in the ladies toilet hand basin and the lighting has now been fixed.

Southern Water will be sending an engineer to look at the water meters to resolve the billing issues between CPC and the Bowls Club.

13. St Marys Church Rooms – The Funding Group had made a grant application to Veolia and the Rochester Bridge Trust. A grant application for £250 has been made by Gullands solicitors in Gravesend. The Funding Group are making a grant application to Allchurches.

The church rooms now has a cleaner on a monthly basis.

A series of art lectures have been organised for three Fridays in May and there will be a garden safari on Saturday 12th June. A Gilbert & Sullivan supper and a garage sale are also planned.

14. Communication. Social Media, Website & Facebook – Cllr Booth asked if the CPC should employ someone to build and manage the website, or find a willing volunteer to look after the website and train the clerk. **Action:** Cllr Booth to meet with Cllr Peterson-Pearce, Cllr Dyer and the Clerk to discuss the future of the website.

Parish Magazine – A hard copy of the parish magazine will be produced for every household for Easter. The clerk had sent a grant application form to the secretary of the Parochial Church Council. There is a need for volunteers to collate and distribute the magazine.

15. Other village matters

Youth Club – The youth club has been very popular. Cllr Booth and Cllr Dyer had signed the Service Level Agreement with The Grand and CPC had provided funding for 3 youth workers.

Cllr Sweetland had given details of a Covid 19 Recovery Fund grant of up to £2000 that was available from KCC. The youth workers at The Grand had indicated that the funding could go towards outdoor equipment, professional workshops and various trips. **Action:** Cllr Booth to complete the grant application form.

Action: Advertise for volunteer youth leaders to help run the club and manage the finances.

New village car park – nothing to report

Village Sign – **Action:** Cllr Peterson-Pearce volunteered to take this forward.

Meadow Rooms – The Meadow Rooms are in use every day of the week. In addition to the above the WI meet once per month and the line dance club has also confirmed. Cash reserves are at a solid level and sufficient to maintain the operations, with bookings and enquiries continuing to be healthy.

Footpaths – Cllr Haig said the tree stumps between the playing fields gate and Ashenbank Wood on the side of footpath NS178 were a trip hazard. **Action:** Cllr Pryor offered to remove the stumps otherwise the clerk would ask John Pelham at KCC Rights of Way team to remove the stumps.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee – Cllr Dymond said that she wanted to plant trees on the verges at the top of Lawrence Drive as part of the Queen's Green Canopy after permission had been granted by the land owners. Other sites in Sole Street and Ifield would be looked for. A plaque that recorded this costs £119.99. A new beacon would cost £490 +VAT and gas cylinders would be needed. It was suggested that the beacon be on a site behind the war memorial and would need to be lit at 9.15pm on the Thursday. On Thursday afternoon there would be a children's party.

There will be Munchies on the Meadow for the Friday and Saturday. On Sunday there would be the Big Lunch. Residents at Sarsens Close and Cobham College are organising their own Big Lunches. KCC will confirm if The Street can be closed on Sunday. Cobham Church will be flooded in red white and blue. **Action:** Cllr Dymond to put together a list of events.

Defibrillator – The recent defibrillator training was successful but not well attended. It was suggested that another training session could be arranged for the spring at the Cricket Pavilion. The clerk at Cobham College had taken their defibrillator to Gravesham Life Saving Club for new pads and batteries to be fitted. The newer almshouses at Cobham College need their own defibrillator but finding a suitable location may be difficult. It was advised that the four defibrillators within Cobham Parish should be checked weekly and some volunteers would need to be found to run the checks. **Action:** Clerk to obtain codes for opening the defibrillators and to circulate the defibrillator check list.

Assets of Community Value – Those present discussed nominating the Little Shop at Sole Street, the Darnley Arms and Cobham College to be added to the GBC register of assets of community value. It is incumbent on the local council to protect certain areas of land or property of importance to the

local community. The greatest risk to the community is that these assets may be lost through change of use even though this would require full planning permission.

A planning application for change of use would trigger a 6 month moratorium to allow time for the local community to raise funds and submit an offer to purchase. The owner however is under no obligation to accept the offer.

The other public houses in the parish and the Community Shop are already registered as assets of community value.

It was agreed at the meeting not to take this any further for the time being because of the low number of councillors present.

Action: Cllr Peterson-Pearce to speak to the owners of the Little Shop. Cllr Dymond to speak to Cobham College.

Bus Stop – Cllr Sweetland was chasing the KCC Bus Stop Team for a response to the viability of moving the bus stop from outside Cobham Church to Stonehouse Yard to the kerb opposite the main door to the Leather Bottle

Rural Kent Coffee & Information Project – Cllr Dymond, Cllr Gabbitas, Lorraine Antrobus, Su Rowe and the Clerk had a meeting with a representative from the Rural Kent Coffee & Information Project. The project would visit the parish every four weeks and provide refreshments for local residents and are able to invite other organisations plus the PCSOs to offer advice to local residents. It was hoped that this could alternate every four weeks between the Meadow Rooms and the St Mary's Church Rooms. However both of these venues are not free on the same weekday morning so the project would use either venue every four weeks.

Textile Bank – Astra Recycling had approached CPC about siting a clothing bank within the parish. The Meadow Rooms management committee and the Sports Association had both said no the siting of the clothing bank in their car parks. **Action:** Clerk to write to Astra Recycling.

16. Parishioners Comments – There were no parishioners in attendance.

17. Correspondence & Announcements - None

18. Finance – Cllr Peterson-Pearce proposed the cheque report and Cllr Dymond seconded.

19. AOB – items from Councillors – The cobblestones had not been found and the clerk needed to email Kevin Gore at KCC Highways.

The clerk announced that he had accepted a Parish Clerk position at Trottscliffe Parish Council.

20. Meeting closed at 9.50pm

21. Next Meeting: 8pm on Tuesday 8th March at the Meadow Rooms