



Minutes of Cobham Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 8th March 2022 at 8pm

Meeting took place at the Meadow Rooms

Present

Cllr Mike Booth (Chairman), Cllr Steve Dyer (Vice Chair),

Cllr Rosemary Dymond, Cllr Gabriella Gabbitas

Present

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

9 Parishioners

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr Margaret Haig, Cllr Mat Peterson-Pearce, Cllr Ben Smith, Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Robert Pryor, Cllr Bryan Sweetland (KCC)

It was noted that there were not enough councillors present to form a quorum. It was agreed to continue with the meeting but no decisions could be made.

2. Minutes – The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 8th February 2022 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Cllr Dyer and seconded by Cllr Dymond.

3. Declarations of Interest – None

4. Matters arising from previous meeting of 8th February 2022 – These were discussed in the main part of the meeting.

5. KCC Matters – Cllr Bryan Sweetland has become the community councillor for KCC.

6. GBC Matters – GBC Cllr Tony Rice

- **Batts Road Fly Tipping** – A meeting is being arranged with Tim Harris GBC Environmental Enforcement, John Jackson the landowner, plus a representative from CPC and a representative from Luddesdown Parish Council to discuss removing the fly tipping and to look at preventing fly tipping on the surrounding land. A parishioner asked if the fields could be fenced and gated and said the fly tipping had been there for a number of months. The fly tipping was being investigated by the GBC Environmental Team and there is now a significant increase in prosecutions of fly tippers. Luddesdown Parish Council have been proactive in taking photographs of fly tipping.

Action: Cllr Rice will feedback to GBC.

- Joint Transport Board – There is nothing on the agenda that affects Cobham and Sole Street.

7. KALC/NALC – The KALC Gravesham Area Committee had met online in February.

KALC attendees were concerned that the previous two Gravesham Chair's Meetings had been cancelled in the past due to insufficient agenda items. The next Gravesham Chair's Meeting is on 16th March and each parish council sent in several agenda items.

KALC had been reviewing the proposed ward boundary changes. The Boundary Commission will share their proposals at the end of March.

KALC had discussed the Climate Change Calculator and agreed that an impact system is more suitable Parish Councils.

KALC is looking at hybrid meetings for future parish council meetings where some attendees are in person and some are online.

KALC have asked Parish Councils to send videos of any success stories taking place in their parishes.

KCC have circulated a consultation of proposed closure of 58 bus routes across Kent. The Dial-a-ride service across Kent is one of the proposed closures but none of the bus routes that serve Cobham and Sole Street are under threat.

8. Planning Group

- **Norbond Site** – GBC are in the process of instructing legal for an enforcement notice which will involve the removal of the unauthorised development and use.
- **White Post Farm** – This is still with the Planning Inspectorate. No officer has been assigned to the case which has been with the Planning Inspectorate for a year and there is no determination date yet. GBC Planning Department have been asked to take this forward.
- **Orchard Cottage, Round Street** – This is still awaiting determination by GBC
- **Bluebell Farm, Copthall Road** – GBC have not received any further enquiries regarding the use of the site. Temporary approval has been given which will be reviewed on the expiry of the temporary approval in June 2023.
- **Bower Cottage** – CPC are objecting to the considerable changes to the building.
- **Homeside, Round Street** – This is still to be discussed by CPC.
- **Battle Street** – CPC objected to the original application and still object to this appeal.
- **Meadow Cottages** – CPC have no objection.
- **GBC Local Plan** – Cllr Booth had attended the meeting. The discussions repeated what had been said before and the plan showed Meopham and Sole Street being joined up with housing development and yet at the same time the officers present said this is very unlikely. It was suggested that GBC planning department send parish councils a plan showing the plots of land highlighted by those relevant landowner willing to release land for development. **Action:** GBC agreed to provide CPC a plan to review.

9. Traffic Group

- **The Street – Traffic Calming Scheme** – The work has not been completed. There appears to be less traffic using The Street and pedestrians and residents should feel safe with the changes. There are up to eight outstanding issues and some of them are:

- The last minute decision by the KCC Highways designer not to install a bollard outside #41 The Street means the resident owner now feels much less protected than was allowed for in the original plan and he is not at all happy about this.
- A heavy duty bollard planned for installation on the corner outside the Darnley Arms has not been installed. The landlady was asked if she wanted it.
- The landlady complained to the meeting that the bollards already restrict access to the public house for deliveries who have to block the road when making a delivery. Another parishioner said they could not get a trailer into the car park since the new bollards were installed.
- The heavy duty bollard proposed for the North Side of The Street along the flint wall have not been installed.
- None of the bollards have been fitted with reflectors. One of the parishioners suggested this is illegal.
- A plastic bollard on the south side of The Street needs to be removed.

The landlady of the Darnley Arms said that there had been a lack of communication from KCC regarding the works and she had experienced a loss of trade over the nine days of the works. The front of the building had been damaged when the pavement was being widened. Rain water is coming through the front door of the building.

A parishioner asked if there would be any wait hear signs as motorists may not give way to each other.

Another parishioner suggested a 'zip code' where motorists take turns to give way to each other.

A Luddesdown resident said that Luddesdown had not been consulted and that more traffic was going through Luddesdown since the changes to The Street were introduced.

Action: Cllr Booth agreed to take the issues raised to the next review meeting with KCC and will be asking KCC to install traffic monitoring tubes along The Street to measure the before and after effect.

- **War Memorial Roundabout** – KCC have agreed to fund the bollards along the hedge in front of Pilgrims and these should be installed in the next three months. The road signage is still waiting to be rearranged at the same time by KCC as well as the white lining which needs to be refreshed.

A new flower bed has appeared on the verge outside Pilgrims courtesy of Cllr Dymond.

- **Sole Street** – KCC have agreed to fund a feasibility study with KCC for improving road safety along Sole Street to include the possibility of creating a footway along Sole Street from Round Street to Scratton Fields which would mean taking a strip of land from some of the front gardens.

KCC are also looking to install a bus stop at the junction of Sole Street and Round Street.

- **Cobham Church Bus Stop** – The KCC Bus Stop Team will be carrying out a site visit. A parishioner had proposed that the bus stop be moved from outside the church to Stonehouse Yard but CPC suggested a better location would be opposite the Leather Bottle PH where the pavement is more level.
 - **Village Gateways Features** – These had been completed in Sole Street but were still outstanding at Cobham.
 - **Speedwatch Group** – The Speedwatch Group are waiting for longer daylight hours so that sessions can be run in the peak hours. Meopham Parish Council have asked if CPC want to share the costs of using a body camera when running the Speedwatch sessions.
- Action:** Clerk to forward email to all of the parish councillors for their approval.

- **Speed Indicator Device** – It was suggested to move the SID to Stonehouse Yard or the corner of Lawrence Drive.

10. Lower Thames Crossing – The LTC had held a road show on the 3rd March. The LTC Team have listened to CPC's concerns and the new plans impact far less than the original proposals. The application for the Planning Development Consent Order is expected to go forward in the autumn. The current exit from the A2 will be closed. A multi user path will be installed to the south of HS1 for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders from Singlewell to Knights Place.

11. Playing Fields - There are no further developments on the Children's Corner. The Clerk has sent a chasing email to KCC asking for an update on the grant funding

12. Public Toilets – A volunteer is still locking the toilets at dusk. A fallen tree has been removed by Cllr Smith which has led to a hole in the roof. **Action:** Cllr Booth to contact a roofer for a quote for the repairs.

13. St Mary's Church Rooms – The funding group is hoping that work will start on the church rooms in September before the planning permission expires at the end of October.

The funding group are waiting to hear back from the Rochester Bridge Trust regarding the grant application and an application has just been sent to Veolia. The funding group are working on applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund, All Churches Trust and the National Churches Trust. A donation has been received from Gullards the Solicitors. Jonathan Ireland had been asked to fell the fir tree by the Church Rooms but this had not been carried out.

The garden safari will be taking place on 12th June and there will be a garage sale on 28th August.

14. Social Media – The clerk is attending an online training course, creating a Social Media Strategy for your Council. CPC had approved a grant of £608 for the printing of a free copy of the parish magazine for every household over Easter.

15. Other Village Matters

- **Youth Club** – CPC has received a Covid Recovery Grant of £2000 from KCC which will go towards new equipment and educational trips. The Grand will advise CPC on how the grant is spent. There are currently one lead youth worker and two support youth workers and around 30 children are attending each session. The cost to CPC is £180 per session and there is enough funds to support the youth club for another year. Each child pays £2 subscription per week. CPC will form a sub-committee to decide how the Youth Club should be managed and funded.
- **New village car park** – Stuart Bobbie, Chief Executive, has ruled out using part of the West Park as a visitor's car park. GBC had acquired the land after the CTRL was built to safeguard the park as an open space and is currently leasing to a farmer for keeping sheep.
- **Village Sign** – Nothing to report
- **Meadow Rooms** – Over the next month or so the management committee will be undertaking some basic works to the roadside verge and entrance that 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. February was quiet for ad hoc bookings but bookings are strong going forward. Cash reserves are at a solid level and sufficient to maintain the operations, with bookings and enquiries continuing to be healthy
- **Footpaths** – The tree stump has been removed from footpath NS178.

- **Queen's Platinum Jubilee** – Cllr Dymond and Cllr Gabbitas are looking to plant a flowering cherry on the verge opposite Cobham Primary School as part of the Queen's Green Canopy. It has been suggested that the oldest and youngest residents could plant a tree. Cllr Rice has written to KCC, who own the verge, several times to seek permission to plant a tree on the verge. Residents at Cobham College are knitting bunting to put around the pump and flower troughs will be planted with the appropriate colours. There will be a children's party on the Thursday afternoon. A beacon and gas cylinders will be borrowed for the lighting ceremony and the cost will be £300. The beacon is 1.5 metres high. There will be Munchies on the Meadow on Friday and Saturday. The Big Sunday Lunch will take place when it is hoped to close The Street to traffic and the deadline to apply for closure is 31st March. It is hoped that live entertainment can be provided.
- **Defibrillators** –
 - The Cobham College have one defibrillator and it is currently with Gravesham Life Saving Club waiting for a new battery. The parish council do not consider this is satisfactory for the safety of the community and the residents of Cobham College. The council were informed that nothing has been done to provide a second defibrillator at Cobham College so that both residential blocks are covered.
Action: Cllr Dymond is also a Trustee of the college and will speak to the clerk at Cobham College.
 - The CPC clerk has found volunteers to be responsible for the defibrillators at the Bowls Club, the Meadow Rooms and Round Street.
Action: Clerk to find someone to look after the St Mary's Church Rooms defibrillator.
- **Assets of Community Value** – The parish council continue to discuss registering the Darnley Arms as an Asset of Community Value. The landlady at the Darnley Arms was present and commented on her disapproval of the idea.
- **Rural Kent Coffee & Information Point** – The pop-up café will be taking place every four weeks at the St Mary's Church Rooms on Thursday mornings. The refreshments are provided free of charge and it is an opportunity for residents to meet up. Local organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch or the PCSOs will often attend to provide advice.
- **Owletts & The Darnley Mausoleum** –
 - **Owletts** - The current lease with the National Trust expires in September and as part of a new National Trust policy regarding small manor houses they are proposing changes to the tenancy agreement. Sir Herbert Baker gave the estate to the National Trust in 1938.
Owletts has been removed from this year's NT Handbook and in the future the NT propose that Owletts should only be open to the public on two days per year.
Owletts currently opens 26 days per year
The Baker family have lived at Owletts for over 300 years and more recently under a concessionary arrangement with the NT in return for managing the property for the trust. There is an online petition to oppose the closure and the family are receiving a lot of support from many sources.
 - **The Darnley Mausoleum** will only be open on one weekend in September. The expenses for the Darnley Mausoleum are negligible as only volunteers are on site when the mausoleum is open. The volunteers are meeting with the NT next week. It is likely that the Lodge Farm barn and the Darnley Mausoleum will also be closed.

16. Parishioners Comments – A parishioner said it was difficult to put notices on to the parish notice boards and to remove them.

Action: To be discussed at the next parish council meeting.

Meeting continues in Private

17. Correspondence & Announcements

- **Bonham Hayes Trust** – There were 15 recipients in 2021. More information is needed.
Action: Cllr Booth to contact Christine Billington at GBC.

18. Finance – The cheque report was proposed by Cllr Dyer and seconded by Cllr Dymond

20. Next Meeting – 7.30pm on Tuesday 19th April 2022 at the Meadow Rooms