



Minutes of Cobham Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 9th January 2024 at 8pm

Meeting took place at the Meadow Rooms

Present

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

Cllr Robert Pryor, Cllr Russ Nichols

Present

Cllr Dakota Dibben (GBC), Charles Amis (Clerk), 3 Parishioners

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr Zoe Gee, Cllr Mat Peterson-Pearce, Cllr Bennet Smith, Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Bryan Sweetland (KCC), Cllr Samir Jassel (GBC)

2. Minutes - The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 7th November 2023 were confirmed and proposed as a true record of that meeting by Cllr Dyer and seconded by Cllr Booth.

3. Declarations of Interest – None

4. GBC Matters – Cllr Dibben – Cllr Dyer had a positive meeting to discuss the planning issues with Nick Brown, Deputy CEO and Director of the Environment with Cllr Mason and Cllr Dibben. It had been agreed that there would be regular meetings but GBC had not responded to Cllr Dyer's requests for further monthly meetings. The aim is for CPC to meet with Nick Brown on a monthly basis. The other parish councils within Gravesham are also holding planning meetings with Nick Brown. Wendy Lane has left as a Director of Planning and has been replaced by Shazad Ghani.

Action: Cllr Dibben will follow up with Cllr Jassell and Nick Brown. Nick Brown's PA to organise the next meeting.

KCC are running a consultation on the future of Gravesend Tilbury Ferry. KCC and Thurrock Council were both providing subsidies to keep the service running but Thurrock have been unable to continue funding and KCC are not able to subsidise the whole amount. **Action:** Clerk to complete the survey on behalf of CPC.

5. KALC/NALC – Cllr Dymond – The parish councils in Gravesham have been working on travel plans for HGVs to keep to appropriate routes. There have been several cases where HGVs had been using inappropriate routes.

Kentish Wine Vault have been installing banks and trenches around the boundary of their property which was creating a mess along the surrounding roads.

A landowner in Gold Street has removed the orchard to plant a vineyard. This is not part of the Silverhand Estate who own Kentish Wine Vault. The owner wants to build a large barn and had asked GBC if they needed planning permission.

GBC have announced an increase in fines for individuals and companies who fly tip.

6. Planning – Cllr Dyer –

Halfacre, Round Street – The owner wishes to demolish the existing conservatory and replace with an orangery.

Action: Clerk to circulate future planning applications to all of the parish councillors.

7. Traffic Group – Cllr Nichols

Report by Cllr Nichols on recent communications with Michelle Norris – The traffic data provided by KCC had indicated that was passing through Sole Street at 31mph. KCC has said there is no budget for traffic improvements at Sole Street.

CPC would like Sole Street to become a 20mph zone but KCC Highways do not support this. Cllr Sweetland is supporting the installation of a speed camera which would enforce the 20mph speed limit. KCC would need to confirm the position of the proposed speed camera. Removing road markings from the surface of the road can help to slow the traffic. The installation of a footpath beside Sole Street is likely to cost around £1 million.

KCC has suggested that through traffic along Sole Street could be discouraged by making part of the road a no entry and traffic would be able to enter Sole Street but would need to leave by the same route. CPC has considered this to be too far reaching.

Local residents have suggested the installation of chicanes to slow the traffic but this would require street lighting. It was suggested that the Street lighting could be powered with solar panel. A further suggestion was a mini roundabout at the junction of Sole Street and Round Street.

Cllr Nichols had spoken to the residents who lived in the terraced houses beside the Little Shop who accessed their houses via their back doors as it was not safe to open the front door directly on to Sole Street particularly with children.

The Lower Thames Crossing team have set aside funding for traffic calming schemes. The first tranche of funding has already been used but a second tranche of funding will be available providing a plan and associated costs have been agreed.

Highways Improvement Plan - 20mph Speed Signs – The clerk has reported the missing repeater signs to KCC who had replaced some of the repeater signs but not all of the signs. KCC have agreed to replace all of the 20mph signs that had been previously removed.

Bus Stop by Round Street – KCC had suggested the rerouting of the buses via Manor Road, Sallows Shaw, White Post Lane and Round Street. Round Street is too narrow for a bus to use so the proposed routing of the buses via Manor Road and Sallows Shaw would likely cost up to £5000 as a turning circle at Sallows Shaw would be needed. It is estimated that it would take six months to pull the plans together.

Speed Indicator Device and KCC Tube Counter – The SID is not collecting the data but Cllr Nichols said this will be resolved before the February meeting. CPC are not allowed to move the metal posts that are used to support the SID. **Action:** Cllr Nichols to report back at the next meeting.

8. Lower Thames Crossing – Cllr Dyer, Cllr Booth and Cllr Nichols had met with the LTC team to discuss the Statement of Common Ground. There are 45 areas on CPC's Statement of Common Ground of which 20 have been resolved but 25 were still outstanding. These are focused on traffic and safety concerns. The Statement of Common Ground has been sent to The Planning Inspectorate

to review over the next three months and who may ask the LTC team to address the mitigating issues.

The Development Consent Order should be passed over between March and June 2024.

9. Village Crime Group – Cllr Dymond – PC Hammond had attended the Sole Street Neighbourhood Watch Group and is hoping to attend the coffee morning in Sole Street. CPC are members of My Community Voice. Everyone was encouraged to sign up to My Community Voice.

10. Playing Fields Group – Cllr Booth

Pavilion Improvements – Works continue to improve the pavilion. The new kitchen is almost finished and the storage area will be upgraded to store the archives and will be lockable and fireproof. The changing facilities are being extended in size and the patio is being extended as well. The Sports Association will be registering as a Community Amateur Sports Clubs. The concrete benches around the playing field also need to be replaced. The Sports Association should be able to fund this.

Children's Corner – An all-weather pathway will be created from the Sports Association Car Park to the Children's Corner. The fencing beside the Children's Corner and the playing field will also be replaced. It was suggested that sponsorship from local companies could be obtained.

11. Cobham Public Toilets – Cllr Booth

Opening and cleaning the toilets – CPC will continue to use Medway Norse to open and clean the toilets and have been generally happy with the level of service. The cost for cleaning the toilets will increase from April 2024.

Southern Water – Southern Water have been double charging for the water supply to the public toilets, cricket pavilion and bowls club. Cllr Booth proposed that CPC pay £2,625.92 to Business Stream and Cllr Dyer seconded. This is half of the amount owed to Southern Water and will hopefully encourage them to resolve this outstanding issue.

12. St Mary's Church Rooms – The Parochial Church Council have appointed Lisa Brook to project manage the refurbishment of the St Mary's Church Rooms. The company carrying out the work should be appointed in February and the work will hopefully start in May.

13. Social Media – Nothing to report.

14. Other Village Matters

Defibrillators – The Round Street defibrillator will need to be moved as the owner is rebuilding their garage. It may be possible to move the defibrillator back. A parishioner had offered to look after the St Mary's Church Rooms defibrillator. **Action:** Clerk to speak to Chris Antrobus regarding the checks for the Meadow Rooms.

Youth Club – The Grand had sent the dates for the youth club sessions from January to March. The attendances had been poor lately but The Grand will be promoting the sessions. CPC had taken control of the youth club funds. **Action:** Clerk to promote the youth club.

Footpaths – The hedgerow along Footpath NS192 has been cut back. A parishioner has asked if Scotland Lane could be downgraded from a byway to a bridle way or a restricted byway. Cllr Booth had written to KCC Rights of Way Team to ask what the process would be to do this.

Village Sign – Nothing to report.

Meadow Rooms – Bookings were great in December, and included a yoga workshop, 3 children's parties, a Silver wedding anniversary, a family Christmas party and a local lady held a children's story time and play event twice which was very well attended both times. 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. This new quarter is a quiet period for the ad hoc bookings and we will be pushing the venue a little harder to generate additional bookings.

Village Pump – Repairs to the flint wall – CPC has received two quotes and another company is meeting with Cllr Booth to provide a quote. Lord Darnley had the flint wall built around the pump and passed on the ownership to the parish. This is confirmed by a plaque on the wall.

Cllr Prior left the meeting at 9.15pm.

Wooden Posts around the War Memorial – Action: Clerk to obtain quotes for the repair of the wooden posts.

15. Parishioners Comments – Two parishioners volunteered to help with the Speed Watch sessions. **Action:** Clerk to ask PC Jo Hammond about restarting the Cobham Speed Watch Group.

Meeting continues in Private

16. Correspondence & Announcements – There had been a couple of emails from parishioners regarding overhanging vegetation blocking the pavements. These had all been resolved.

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

Payments made since the 5th December meeting

Date of Invoice	Company	Reason	Amount
21/12/2023	Matthew Lisney	Litter Picking: Nov 2022 – Nov 2023	£2,218.80
27/11/2023	Information Commissioner's Office	Annual Renewal	£40
31/12/2023	Medway Norse Ltd	Opening and cleaning toilets December	£675.22
31/12/2023	HMRC	Tax and National Insurance	£41.67
31/12/2023	Clerk	Salary for 1 st – 30 th November	£845.10
29/12/2023	Clerk	Pension	£23.71
4/1/2023	Society of Local Council Clerks	Subscription for 2024	£183

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 Dymond seconded.

Precept – The budget had been circulated to all of the parish councillors prior to the meeting. It was suggested that the precept for 2024/25 should be £85,000. This would include the repairs to the flint wall, benches around the playing field, the village signs for Sole Street and Cobham, village gateways and other landscape issues. The precept for the current financial year was £65,000 and was £45,000 for 2022/23. **Action:** Clerk to ask Andrew Barnett at GBC for two day extension.

18. Items from Councillors

Cllr Dymond said that the pupils at Cobham Hall School were holding a community service day. It was suggested that the edge of the playing field could be litter picked. **Action:** Cllrs to feedback their suggestions to Cllr Dymond.

Jonathan Pye had cut the hedge by Cobham Church.

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

19. Next Meeting – Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 6th February at the St Mary's Church Rooms