**COBHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 2014/15 (NO 7)**

Minutes of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held in The Meadow Rooms, Cobham

on Monday 5th January 2015 at 7.30 pm

**PRESENT**

**COUNCILLORS:** CLLR A ROWE (CHAIR)
CLLR R DYMOND
CLLR ND HAIG
CLLR M HAIG
CLLR K SMITH
CLLR L ELLIS
CLLR B GLENISTER
CLLR S DYER
CLLR J GILES

**IN ATTENDANCE:** MRS K LANE (CLERK)
CLLR B SWEETLAND (KCC)

**Cllr Alan Rowe opened the meeting at 7.**30pm.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Alex Moore.
2. **Minutes: to confirm and sign the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 10th November 2014 and the Budget Meeting held on Monday 1st December.** All agreed and signedby the Chairman Cllr Alan Rowe.
3. **Declaration of Interest:**
* Cllr Ellis explained that she had sent a personal letter to GBC regarding the Cranbourne Farm development.
* Cllr Rowe said that 10 Scratton Fields, the subject of another planning application, was situated directly opposite his house.
* Cllr Haig said that he knows one of the residents of 10 Scratton Fields
1. **Parishioners Comments**

A few Parishioners were in attendance specifically to discuss Cranbourne Farm and the planning application relating to the property.

Cllr Rowe made it clear that the Planning Committee had not yet had an opportunity to consider the revised plans so they were unable to comment at this stage. He did however say that this was the right time for Parishioners to raise their concerns.

The resident of Blackhorse Cottage spoke first and explained that she would be directly affected if the planning application is approved. She gave an in-depth report on the situation and planning application process, as well as details about the plans for the land and subsequent issues that she feels the application would cause including eroding the openness of the greenbelt, access issues, increased traffic on narrow lanes etc. Other concerns she raised included the prospect of the land eventually being sold and the proposed building (60m x 30m x 10m) subsequently becoming redundant. She finished by making the point that if the application does go ahead then it certainly should not be in the current proposed location. She also said that the floodlights are inappropriate.

Cllr Alan Rowe said that the Planning Committee would take the comments into consideration.

Another Parishioner emphasised the point that the floodlights already throw out a huge amount of light when the land is used at night, and that the proposed arena would generate even more light. Bats and wildlife would be affected. He also raised concerns about horse boxes backing into his driveway.

Vicky Burgess, Round Street resident questioned why there was a need for two developments on the land. She said if a cover was erected on one, why the need for another? She said that she had been told by Clive Gilbert at GBC that the reason the application on the greenbelt was being considered was because the application was for ‘recreational use’ of the building. She made the point that the area is used a lot by walkers, and their enjoyment and the natural beauty would be spoilt. She said that if the proposal went ahead then if it was put between the farmhouse and hedges it would be better. She also said that the applicant has made comments about wanting Cranbourne Farm to become an “international dressage venue” which is at odds with the reassurances that no extra traffic will be generated etc. The point was also made that anyone travelling to the venue from Medway towns and beyond, using their sat navs, would be directed via the village and through The Street.

One Parishioner read a report on behalf of another resident who was unable to attend the meeting. It outlined conditions that were supposedly put in place by the previous resident of Cranbourne Farm and conditions of sale. The suggestion being that some of these conditions are already being broken, and the proposal contradicts more of them.

Cllr Glenister reiterated that the Planning Committee had yet to look at the revised proposals so it would be inappropriate to comment at this stage.

1. **Matters Arising from previous meeting**

**Parking issues:** Manor Road – Cllr Glenister reported that the yellow lines were painted in Manor Road on 29th Dec. Not quite in the right place as per the plans but they appear to be having the desired effect. Still early days so Cllr Rowe said we would review the situation at the next meeting.

**Roads:** Lodge Lane and setts re-laid by KCC. Cllr Haig said that KCC did a decent job but the stones were still being forced up by lorries so they are back to the state they were in before.

This was later raised with Cllr Sweetland who committed to look into where the boundary lies between what is considered private road and what is KCC managed as this has caused some debate recently.

Cllr Margaret Haig raised the concern that the damage was moving further back towards the bank and manhole cover which covered the water meters so there is a threat that damage could be caused here.

High ridge curbing was suggested but the concern with that is that the lorries may then mount the opposite kerb and risk damaging the walls of cottages opposite. Cllr Haig said he felt that well bedded bricks/concrete were the only solution.

One Parishioner commented that the size of the lorries and trailers is the real problem.

**Sole Street/Manor Road junction:** We had asked KCC Highways about the possibility of rounding off the edge of the pavement to make turning safer. KCC Highways said there had been no reported accidents therefore it was not a priority. Cllr Sweetland said he would look into this further for us.

**Verges:** The post on the verge by Lodge Lane was discussed. One of the wooden posts are down and several are loose. Cllr Rowe explained that we had some quotes for having just the one post repaired, or all seven. It would also be slightly cheaper to have concrete posts. After some discussion it was agreed that hardwood posts would be better and more in-keeping. It was also agreed that the seven loose posts should be replaced at the same time. Proposed by Cllr Glenister and seconded by Cllr Diamond. ***Clerk to action.***

**Sweepshole Pond**: It was reported that the reeds still have not been removed. ***Clerk to follow-up with Baylis.***

Cllr Ellis reminded everyone that the Parish Council received a grant for the pond and we are obliged to maintain the pond in a specific way so we need to be mindful of this.

**Station:** Cllr Rowe reported that the mess had now been cleared and that Network Rail apologised and said that the workers have been spoken to and asked to keep it clear in future.

**HGV sign at Gold Street/Sole Street junction:** Cllr Sweetland reported that this should be up any day.

**Bin at the end of Scratton Fields:** Cllr Rowe said that a new bin has appeared and it is slightly on the footpath but other than that it is okay. He requested that the old bin be removed though as it is still there. ***Clerk to action.***

**Blocked gullies:**  Sole Street main road was cleared just before Christmas. Cllr Ellis reported that the gullies are blocked along Jeskyns Road. ***Clerk to ask KCC to clear***

**Pathway leaves between Church and Meadow Rooms**: These were cleared.

Cllr Glenister questioned what action would be taken with regard to flooding in Sole Street. He had raised this at a recent KCC seminar where the lady responsible for drainage said she was aware of the problem but admitted that she was not clear on what could be done because of the high water table. Still waiting to hear from her on an update.

**Japanese knotweed:** Cllr Rowe said he had spoken to the Horticultural person at GBC and we would re-visit the issue in Spring which is the time of year to start treating knotweed. Cllr Giles said he had spoken to one of the residents of Meadow Cottage who said that they had been working on treating the knotweed on their grounds for several years.

**Refuse collection:** Cllr Rowe said residents still were not receiving black sacks from GBC, despite repeated requests. He will raise it at the next Chairman’s meeting.

**Horses in Sole Street**: The clerk looked into this and was able to find out who the horses were owned by and received assurances that they were very well cared for.

**Yeoman’s Court:** At the last meeting a Parishioner mentioned that the Mote House development was looking very tired. After some investigation, Cllr Glenister said that it was his view that the timber cladding on the building had weathered, as was the intention.

1. **Elections**

Cllr Rowe told everyone that there would likely be five Parish Councillor vacancies in May so we are looking for possible candidates. He said that if anyone was interested they should contact any of the current Councillors or the Clerk. ***Clerk to put an ad in the Parish magazine.***

1. **Speedwatch petition update**

Cllr Rowe reported that the Speedwatch team have asked to present their petition at the next Parish Council meeting. Cllr Sweetland said that KCC Highways no longer come out in the evenings so he would attend the meeting as normal and report back to KCC Highways at the next full Council meeting. ***Clerk to check that Dil Gosal, our PCSO is attending.***

1. **Neighbourhood Forum grants**

We would be looking at getting some quotes for children’s corner to repair some of the flooring material.

1. **Ongoing items**

**Playing Fields**

Cllr Dyer said that GBC had sent us their annual report on the condition of the play area. No major issues identified other than some fencing repairs needed, and some algae growth and other minor issues with the flooring material and seats of swings. Cllr Dyer said he would look into getting a price for the fencing repairs required.

Cllr Haig mentioned that there is a big gap in the hedges/fencing at the back of the playing fields – large enough for a car to fit through. Cllr Dyer said he would speak to Jon Jackson about it.

**Footpaths**

Nothing to report from Cllr Dymond although Cllr Giles mentioned that the fencing had collapsed into the pathway by Bramley Cottage. Cllr Diamond said she would look into it.

**Transport**

Nothing to report.

**Planning**

**GBC Decisions**

20140977 4 Jeskyns Cottages, Jeskyns Road, Cobham

Erection of a part two storey and part single storey rear extension to form dining room on ground floor level and bedroom at first floor level. Cobham Parish Council has no objection. Permitted

20140922 48 The Street, Cobham Kent

Erection of a single storey rear extension to form enlarged kitchen/diner and internal alterations. Cobham Parish Council has no objection. Permitted

**CPC Comments**

20141077 Cobham Service Station South, Watling Street Cobham

Display of six externally illuminated 'Wave' signs, two externally illuminated 'blade' signs, eight non-illuminated 'Koala' signs and 16 non-illuminated number signs on the forecourt. Cobham Parish Council has no objection.

20141098 Woodlands Trust Ashenbank Wood Halfpence Lane Cobham

Display of a non-illuminated 'Welcome' sign beside the car park entrance to Ashenbank Wood. Cobham Parish Council has no objection.

20141137 Copperfield Round Street Sole Street Cobham.

Erection of a two storey side extension to form open car port with two bedrooms and a wet room over. Cobham Parish Council has no objection.

**Applications with the Planning Committee**

20141082 Whitepost Farm White Post Lane, Sole Street, Cobham

Use of the land for the stationing of a caravan for security purposes.

The temporary permission granted on appeal to retain the caravan was due to expire this month.

Cobham Parish Council comment on the previous application was:-

It is noted that the site is in Meopham Parish but close to the Cobham Parish Boundary and the built area of Sole Street village.

Cobham Parish Council is strongly opposed to the application for the caravan to remain on this site in the Metropolitan Green Belt. The field is adjacent to the site previously used as a camp site for caravans and mobile homes. The clearance of the illegal site took 5 years and cost the council tax payers of Gravesham a great deal of money. The grazing land remains in a seriously damaged state. If permitted to remain, the precedent created will make it difficult to stop more caravans being placed on the site.

There have been stables and horses in the field for many years and security has apparently never previously been a concern.

20141162 20 Sallows Shaw, Sole Street, Cobham

Erection of a single storey side extension to form dining room; conversion and extension of integral garage to form bedroom and ensuite shower room; single storey rear extension to form enlarged kitchen and erection of detached garage at the rear

20140446 Cranbourne Farm Copthall Road

Erection of indoor riding arena and the relocation of the existing outdoor riding arena.

This application has been amended to re-position the building. The original application was reported to the Council at the July meeting.

CPC previous comment on the application was:-

Although the proposed building is in the MGB, Cobham Parish Council does not object, believing the proposal would provide an opportunity to expand a rural business.

**Appeals with the Planning Committee**

Appeal ref 2014/00019/REF. 10 Scratton Fields Sole Street Cobham.

Erection of a detached, two storey, two bedroom dwelling in the side garden.

The appeal will be by written representation. Cobham Parish Council comment on the original application was:-

Cobham Parish Council objects to this proposal to insert another house in this very small area. It would be out of character with and detrimental to, nearby properties. If permitted, it would create a precedent for further “garden grabbing” proposals.

Appeal ref. 2014/00021/REF Leighton, Sole Street, Cobham

Retention of a single storey rear extension incorporating removal of the two lantern windows on the roof of the extension and replacement with two roof lights.

I have looked at the appeal on the Planning Inspectorate Planning Portal and there are no documents filed.

The GBC Case Officer has told me that if and when documents are submitted by the appellant they will be published on both the GBC website and the planning portal. We shall have to wait and see.

The comment submitted by CPC to GBC on the application which was refused will be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate by GBC. When we have sight of the documentation sent by the appeallant we may decide to comment further. The previous comment was:-

Cobham Parish Council continues to object strongly to this extension to Leighton, which was erected without planning permission. The Council agrees fully with the decision of Gravesham Borough Council in refusing retrospective planning permission and the decision of the Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State in dismissing the appeal. The Council has always considered the property to be an inappropriate intrusion into the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The property is visible across open countryside particularly from the Weald Way footpath, especially in winter time.

The case officer told me it is still the intention to proceed with further litigation but the submission of the appeal will delay this.

There followed some discussion about Whitepost Farm and the appeal. Cllr Rowe asked what action, if any, Meopham Parish Council had taken. Cllr Glenister said he thought very little. Despite being in Meopham Parish, it borders with Cobham and affects Cobham more. Cllr Rowe said he will speak to Meopham Parish Council about the issue.

**Meadow Rooms**

Nothing to report. Those present did however observe that the heating doesn’t appear to be working properly. Cllr Rowe said he would draw this to the attention of the Management Committee.

**Neighbourhood Forum Report**

Nothing to report.

**Jeskyns**

Cllr Rowe reported that there appears to always be lots of cars in the car park but the Forestry Commission are still not charging for the car park so we don’t know what effect charges will have. Cllr M Haig said that the café appeared to be well used too, although Cllr Ellis said that she had spoken to a lady working in the café who said that it was not generally very busy.

Cllr Ellis mentioned that some large yellow signs had just appeared around Jeskyns perimeter warning people of the overhead cabling. It’s not clear if these are permanent and they had only just appeared. ***Clerk to speak to Denise.***

**Parking problems**

Cllr Glenister said they he felt that the parking development in Scratton Fields was dragging on. Cllr Rowe said that workman had just re-started work there so hopefully it would be finished soon.

1. **GBC**

Cllr Moore was not present but had sent a message in advance to say that he had nothing to report.

1. **KALC**

Nothing to report.

1. **Correspondence**

A letter requesting a grant from Gravesham Citizens Advice Bureau. ***Clerk to write a response explaining that we are unable to provide grant.***

We received a letter regarding the Rural Housing Needs Survey – Cllr Rowe said we did a lot of work on this before when it was decided that Cobham needed seven new properties. This resulted in the development at Yeoman’s Court which they then struggled to fill with local people. Cllr Rowe said we should have more information on this soon.

1. **Matters raised by Parish Councillors**

Cllr Glenister said that there was graffiti on the BT cabinet in Sole Street which needs to be removed. ***Clerk to action.***

Cllr Glenister also asked that GBC be asked to clear Manor Road of the leaves. ***Clerk to action.***

Cllr Glenister also said that we had received notification from KCC Highways just before Christmas to say that re-surfacing works were scheduled for one day after 16th December but this had not happened. ***Clerk to look into this.***

Cllr Ellis said she had received a letter from ‘Streetlife’ encouraging local residents to join this neighbourhood networking site. She said it would be better if we could promote people to use our won Parish website to keep up-to-date on village information and comment on things that affect them.

Cllr Giles mentioned that lorries had damaged the pavement outside Sandbanks whilst work there has been taking place. ***Clerk to report to KCC Highways***

Cllr Dyer introduced everyone to one of the Parishioners present, Lawrence Wooton, who is also the Cobham and Sole Street correspondent for the Kent Messenger. The April Annual Parish Assembly was discussed and everyone agreed that it would be good to promote it more widely and also encourage as many local groups as possible to come along and report on their areas. ***Clerk to write letters in February.***

Cllr Diamond reported refuse being dumped in Halfpence Lane. ***Clerk to report to KCC Highways.***

Cllr Rowe mentioned the backlog of Parish Council meeting minutes, accounts and other information dating back to the first Parish Council meeting, which is currently stored in his cellar. Cllr Ellis said they we needed a long-term plan for where all this would be stored. ***Clerk to ask KALC what other Parish Councils do.***

1. **KCC Report**

Cllr Rowe asked Cllr Sweetland whether it would be possible to have a KCC Highways representative present at the next meeting. Cllr Sweetland said they did not come out to evening meetings but that he would be there and he would present the Speedwatch report and info at the following Full Council Meeting which would ensure that KCC Highways look into it.

The ‘No HGVs’ sign at Gold Street/Sole Street should be up any day.

Cllr Sweetland said that the recent spate of burglaries in the rural areas had been discussed at the recent neighbourhood Forum meeting. General advice about alarms etc was given.

Cllr Sweetland said that the KCC budget is currently in draft form and under consultation at present. He reported that KCC had decided to keep the 74 wardens following that particular consultation. He also said that KCC had to make a further £90m saving this year.

Cllr Rowe asked him about the Boundary review and Cllr Sweetland explained that currently 84 Councillors cover the whole of Kent. He represents 16,400 constituents – the largest number for one person to look after. He expected that the Boundary review would result in some boundaries being tinkered with and perhaps result in 80 Councillors in total. He thought that in our area the number of County Councillors may increase from 5 to 6. He explained that all political parties had to reach a consensus.

Cllr Rowe asked Cllr Sweetland to look further into the Lodge Lane junction and ownership of the area where we have a problem with the setts. ***Clerk to send him all the background.***

***Clerk to send Cllr Sweetland info on the Sole Street/Manor Road junction too.***

1. **Finance**

On the proposal of Cllr Glenister, seconded by Cllr Dymond, the following cheques were signed and ratified**:**

**19/11/14 Cobham PCC magazine donation £400.00**

**19/11/14 Meopham Community bus donation £250.00**

**09/12/14 J Howard Maintenance £120.00**

**09/12/14 Clerk’s salary (Dec) £250.00**

**09/12/14 M Lisney Maintenance salary (Dec) £130.00**

**09/12/14 J Beety broadband £33.00**

**09/12/14 K Lane broadband £167.00**

**09/12/14 K Lane anti-virus software re-imburse £19.99**

**09/12/14 K Lane expenses reimbursement £69.60**

**15/12/14 EDF energy £748.72**

**05/01/15 Clerk’s salary (Jan) £250.00**

**05/01/15 M Lisney Maintenance salary (Jan) £104.00**

**Total £2542.31**

**As there was no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.25pm.**

Chairman.........................................................................................................................

**The next meeting is on Monday 9th February at 7.30pm in The Meadow Rooms, Cobham.**