



Cowden Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COWDEN PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2019 AT COWDEN MEMORIAL HALL

PRESENT: Councillors: Valerie Bishop, Celia Berry, Andrew Saunders, Lorraine Millgate, Stephen Boakes and Glyn Henley.

Also present: Caroline Bizios (Parish Clerk) and Councillor Matthew Dickins (Sevenoaks District Councillor). Apologies for absence received from Kent County Councillor Peter Lake.

Public Question Time:

Councillor Dickins reported that the damaged signage at the bottom of Chantler's Mead was the responsibility of West Kent Housing (WKH) and that he would be following this up with WKH.

Councillor Dickins advised that Sevenoaks District Council's (SDC) Community Grant Scheme opened this week. Application information is available on SDC's website and the deadline for the submission of applications is 22 November 2019.

In terms of planning matters, Councillor Dickins reported that the Planning Inspectorate had cancelled the Local Plan hearings. The Inspector is requesting that SDC withdraw the plan based on concerns in respect of SDC's "Duty to Co-operate" with neighbouring councils to find sites for new homes. SDC will be writing back to the Inspector shortly.

The planning application submitted in respect of Claydene Farm would be going forward to SDC's Planning Committee in December.

Councillor Dickins advised that he was pressing Southern Rail to use monies from the Passenger Benefit Fund towards the costs associated with the provision of a car park at Cowden Station. Council Dickins asked Members of the Parish Council to consider funding requirements for a car park when considering how to use Community Infrastructure Funds received from SDC.

Councillor Boakes reported that some local residents were upset that the waste disposal site in East Grinstead would be requiring identification to allow waste to be taken to this facility. Councillor Dickins advised that this was a question for Councillor Lake.

Councillor Saunders asked whether Councillor Dickins knew the reasons for the installation of speed strips along Spode Lane near to Windmill Hill. Councillor Dickins was unaware of the reasons for this and suggested that this was a question for Councillor Lake.

Finally, Councillor Dickins provided apologies for absence in respect of the Parish Council meeting in December.

Note: The above notes do not form part of the Minutes.

MINUTES:

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Berry declared an interest in agenda 10 as an allotment holder.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved: The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 9 September 2019 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting with the following amendments:

- (i) The Clerk to add a footnote to the payments table included within Agenda item 8(a) which makes clear that cheque payment to Cowden Memorial Hall was made out for £48 and not £60 as set out in the payments table.
- (ii) Page 4; paragraph 2; line 4 to read “Putman”.
- (iii) Page 4; paragraph 6; line 1 to read “*if* the Parish Council”.

4. Clerk’s Report

The Clerk’s Report was circulated and noted.

5. Highways

Highways Report circulated and noted.

The chevron signage on the bend at Gilridge had fallen from its posts. The Clerk was requested to log this onto the highways fault reporting system.

Councillor Millgate had undertaken the inspection of the highway from Cowden Cross to the top of Blowers Hill and reported that the road surface at the edges of the highway requires repair along the entire length of the road.

6. Aircraft Noise

Councillor Henley and Councillor Saunders had attended the “Gatwick Big Enough” meeting in Penshurst on 1 November 2019. Councillor Saunders provided the meeting with an update on the meeting and background information in terms of the use of the emergency runway at Gatwick.

Background:

A legal agreement which prevents the airport from using both existing runways simultaneously has now expired. Gatwick released its final Master Plan in July 2019, having put out a draft for consultation a year ago. It proposed to make use of its emergency runway for regular departures.

The plans envisage a 40% increase in flights and a 53% increase in passenger numbers from 45.7million in 2017-18 to 70million by 2032. The concern is that the proposed expansion will have serious noise, potential climate and congestion impacts.

Cowden Parish Council responded to this concern through the consultation process which was open to everyone, details were provided through the Parish Council’s website and “Cowden Matters”.

Current Status:

Gatwick is applying for a Development Consent Order to allow it to use both existing runways, but 60% of the additional traffic (the 40% growth) will come from more intensive use of the main runway. However, the use of a Development Consent Order is very different and Cowden Parish Council believes that these plans should be fully reviewed through an Independent Planning Process not through a Development Consent Order.

Concerns are related to overflight and the aircraft noise impacting a swathe of communities across the South East further impacting on the Parish of Cowden. The airport's Master Plan markets the proposal. However, the Parish Council is concerned because The Master Plan identifies that there will be more flights but emphasises that although there will be more aircraft they will be quieter. However, aircraft noise is being measured as an average, not the peak noise as the aircraft passes overhead disturbing us. Cowden is closer to Gatwick than some of our neighbouring parishes to our East. Approaching aircraft over Cowden are typically 1,200 to 1,500 feet lower than over our adjacent parishes further out from the ILS approach point and hence comparatively significantly noisier. The same rationale applies to departing aircraft.

Respite is considered a mitigation for Aircraft noise within the expansion plans. However, Cowden Parish Council is still concerned that this has introduced aircraft movements, hence noise, over a wider area and with time the increased flights will 'infill' these new areas. As a result of the proposed expansion it has been estimated that the expansion would result in one million tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year.

Concerns:

The proposed substantial growth at Gatwick through increased utilisation of the main runway and use of the emergency runway to support commercial flights will cause a very significant impact to the surrounding area through, but not limited to: Implementation of and the impact of the required supporting infrastructure and resulting environmental impacts from increased aircraft movements as well as the almost doubling of passenger movements. The further detrimental impact to the quality of life of persons already affected by aircraft noise.

Gatwick Airport should be subject to a full assessment of all the impacts of the proposed growth plans, including public consultation covering all aspects associated with that growth. That growth on this scale without scrutiny is considered to be contrary to Government policy which requires major growth at all airports to be *judged by the relevant planning authority, taking careful account of all relevant considerations, particularly economic and environmental impacts and proposed mitigations.*

That all necessary measures to ensure that Gatwick's main runway growth plans are brought within the scope of a robust, independent planning process are taken.

What can we do?

As a minimum we need as many Parishioners as possible to raise these concerns, and any other concerns they may have to:

Secretary of State for Transport, The Rt Hon Grant Shapps-Transport.Secretary@dft.gov.uk
Kent County Council, Roger Gough- roger.gough@kent.gov.uk
Member of Parliament, Tom Tugendhat- tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk

More details can be found on Cowden Parish Council website under the 'Aircraft Noise' page.

Correspondence from Gatwick Airport:

A reply had been received from Gatwick Airport Ltd (GAL) in response to the latest letter from the Parish Council. Councillor Saunders agreed to review the response and draft further correspondence to GAL as appropriate.

7. Broadband

Councillor Saunders reported that he would contact Kent County Council again regarding the speed of broadband to Crippenden in order to understand what needs to be done to provide fibre to premises and not just the provision of fibre to the cabinet.

8. Financial Matters

(a) Accounts for Payment:

Resolved: Payments approved as set out below:

Payee	Description	Amount (£)
Mrs C Bizios	Reconciliation Payment & Expenses	829.92
HMRC	Tax & NI	803.78
Cowden Memorial Hall	Room Hire Charges	48.00
Mr L Putman	Burial Ground Maintenance	1493.00
Mr J Reddick	Play Area Maintenance	430.00
Sevenoaks District Council	Emptying Dog Bins	151.32
Sevenoaks District Council	Rent- Picketts Mead	5.00
Sevenoaks District Council	Hire of Refuse Freighter	151.20
PKF Littlejohn LLP	Audit Services	240.00
Raymac Signs Ltd	Provision of Signage	50.40
Commercial Svcs Trading Ltd	Gang Mowing Recreation Ground	520.30
Hever Countryside Services	Deer Fencing Rep and Tree Works	1118.40
TOTAL		5841.32

(b) Financial Report:

The Financial Report was circulated and noted.

(c) Budget Meeting Outcomes – 2020/2021 Financial Year:

Members had considered the Parish Council's budget for the financial year 2020/2021 at a meeting held on 7 November 2019.

Members resolved to increase the Parish Council's budget expenditure by £1,189 and to increase the Precept by £691 which represents an increase of 3.14%. The reasons for the required increase are:

- (a) An increase to the Clerk's salary to accommodate any increase in base salary or for overtime as a result of additional workload.
- (b) An increase through RPI for the Parish Council's annual insurance premium.
- (c) A small increase for the Recreation Ground to provide for any requirement for increased cuts and scope of works.
- (d) A small increase for Annual Maintenance to provide for increased costs associated with the age of assets.

Resolved: The Parish Council's Budget for the 2020/2021 agreed and unanimously approved. Precept for 2020/2021 financial year to be set at £22,700. Proposed by Councillor Boakes and seconded by Councillor Millgate.

The Clerk to advise of SDC of the Parish Council's Precept for the 2020/2021 financial year.

(d) Quotation for Approval – Burial Ground Maintenance 2020:

Quotation received from Les Putman for £1,480 in respect of burial ground maintenance for 2020.

Resolved: Quotation received from Les Putman for £1,480 in respect of burial ground maintenance for 2020 approved and accepted.

(e) Quotation for Approval – Play Area Maintenance 2020:

Quotation received from Jim Reddick for £440 in respect of play area maintenance for 2020.

Resolved: Quotation received from Jim Reddick in respect of play area maintenance for 2020 approved and accepted.

(f) Quotation for Approval – Landscape Services Ltd – Recreation Ground Boundary:

Quotation received from Landscape Services for cutting back overgrowth along the Recreation Ground boundary for £182.40 plus VAT.

Resolved: Quotation received from Landscape Services for cutting back overgrowth along the Recreation Ground boundary for £182.40 approved and accepted.

(g) Community Infrastructure Levy Payment:

The Parish Council has received a Community Infrastructure Levy payment of £1,880 from SDC.

Annual Audit:

The Clerk reported that PFK Littlejohn had issued its report for the 2018/2019 financial year and had concluded that the Parish Council's accounts and accounting procedures are in accordance with proper practice and no matters had given cause for concern.

Members expressed thanks to the Clerk for the work that had been undertaken on the Annual Audit.

9. Recreation Ground

The Clerk was requested to ask Landscape Services to consider the ground conditions on the Recreation Ground before cutting. A recent cut undertaken on wet ground had caused some ground damage.

A representative of Cowden Lawn Tennis Club had asked if the Parish Council would reconsider the decision not to allow the erection of marketing material near to the tennis courts. Members were of the same view as when this request was originally considered and were unable to agree to this request.

10. Allotments

Councillor Saunders agreed to follow-up with Beeney & Co the provision of a date for a meeting at the allotments to discuss the water leak.

The Clerk reported that several unused allotments were now very overgrown and in an unmanageable condition. There were four members of the public currently on the waiting list.

The Clerk to contact Landscape Services to discuss whether the services it provides would extend to the clearance of allotment plots.

11. Burial Ground Matters

Nothing to report.

12. Asset Repair and Maintenance

The Clerk will inspect the Parish Council shed to assess its condition in order to establish if the procurement of a new shed is required.

The Clerk to contact Smithers & Sons regarding repairs required to a window in the bus shelter.

13. Correspondence Received

(a) Request for Information – Freedom of Information Act:

A member of the public has made a request to the Parish Council to be provided with copies of certain information held by the Parish Council under the Freedom of Information Act. A response from the Parish Council together with associated documents had been provided to the member of the public.

(b) Sevenoaks District Council – Monitoring Officer – Complaint:

A member of the public has made a complaint to the Monitoring Officer at Sevenoaks District Council against Councillor Henley and the Clerk. The complainant was advised by the Monitoring Officer that the complaint against Councillor Henley was not considered to have constituted a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct. The complainant was also advised by the Monitoring Officer that under no circumstances could a complaint against the Clerk be considered by the Monitoring Officer through an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct.

(c) Complaint Received – Village Fireworks Event

A complaint has been received from a member of the public regarding the long-standing village fireworks event on Saturday 9 November. The complaint was received prior to the event. The complainant was informed that this event is not a Parish Council run event and is organised and run by a committee with no affiliation to the Parish Council. The Clerk contacted the event organiser and it is understood that the organiser and the complainant spoke prior to the event.

(d) Request to Erect Banner – Christmas Get-Together Event

Since receiving this request a suitable location for siting the banner has been found and this is no longer a matter requiring the consideration of the Parish Council.

14. Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies

Councillor Boakes reported that Reverend Trask would be officially retiring from the Parish at the end of November, however, Reverend Trask's last service at the Church had been held on 3 November. This means that the Parish is now interregnum. A period of interregnum can go on for quite some time. Services at the Church will continue as before with visiting clergy. The Arch Deacon of Horsham will be visiting the Parish on 8 December and Councillor Boakes hoped to hear what plans there are for the Church.

Councillor Millgate asked whether the Parish Council would consider co-opting an additional Member onto the Parish Council. The Clerk advised that there were currently no vacancies.

15. Matters for Reporting or Inclusion on Future Agenda

- Provision of Bulk Refuse Freighter
- Unused Allotment Maintenance
- Condition of Parish Council Shed

16. Dates of Future Parish Council Meetings

- Monday 9 December
- Monday 10 February
- Monday 9 March

Meeting closed at 9.35

Chairman:

Date: