



Cowden Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COWDEN PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 9 DECEMBER 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), Sergeant Nathan Cox (Kent Police), PCSO Joe Cain (Kent Police) and Peter Lake (Kent County Councillor).
Councillor Dickins (Sevenoaks District Councillor) had provided apologies for absence.

Public Question Time:

Councillor Dickins provided the Clerk with updates on the following matters prior to the meeting:

There was no progress in respect of discussions between Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and the Planning Inspectorate regarding the Local Plan.

The planning application for Claydene Farm would not now go before December's SDC Planning Committee meeting but it was hoped that it would go before the Committee at January's meeting.

Christmas Refuse collection dates and information in respect of Christmas tree recycling are included in the latest edition of "In Shape" magazine.

Councillor Dickins had contacted West Kent Housing regarding the damaged signage at the bottom of Chantler's Mead.

Sergeant Cox and PCSO Cain (Kent Police) introduced themselves to the meeting. Sergeant Cox reported on the latest crime statistics for the Ward which showed an increase in crime in the area. He advised the meeting that he received the crime statistics on a daily basis together with intelligence information received from members of the public.

Councillor Saunders commented that the crime statistics available over the last twelve months show a significant increase in crime and asked Sergeant Cox whether the increase in the local area was being addressed proactively and whether the criminal activity was being disrupted. Sergeant Cox, whilst acknowledging that the number of crimes had risen, stated that the increase was not as high as in other areas. He further advised that Kent Police were proactively working with cross-border police forces and sharing intelligence and working hard to disrupt the criminal activity.

Councillor Saunders raised the matter of speeding along the B2026 and asked whether any speed checks were being undertaken. PCSO Cain advised that several speed checks had been undertaken recently and that only one vehicle had been speeding.

Councillor Lake advised the meeting that he had noticed the poor road conditions along Spode lane and that he would report the potholes to Michael Payne (Kent County Council).

In terms of parking at Cowden Station, Councillor Lake said that parking remained a concern but finding a solution to the problem was difficult.

Councillor Lake reported that there was a real problem with Ash Dieback. £16 million had been allocated to remove dangerous roadside trees in Kent. Kent County Council is being encouraged to replace Ash trees taken down with a number of trees as implemented in other county councils.

Finally, Councillor Lake reported that some issues had arisen with the school bus services in respect of drivers' Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks not being undertaken properly.

Councillor Saunders asked Councillor Lake if he knew why speed strips had been placed along Spode Lane just before Windmill Hill. On previous occasions, when discussing speeding along the B2026, the placement of speeding strips had not been possible due to cost constraints. Councillor Saunders questioned why, if cost was a constraint, strips had been placed along Spode Lane rather than on the B2026. Councillor Lake was not aware of the reasons why the strips had been placed along Spode Lane and agreed to check on this and advise the Parish Council.

Councillor Boakes raised the matter of the newly introduced policy of restricting access to the household waste recycling site in East Grinstead to West Sussex residents only. This means that Cowden residents are no longer able to use this facility. The Parish Council had been made aware that an arrangement was in place which permitted Dormansland residents to use the facility. Councillor Boakes asked if Cowden residents would also be able to use the facility. Councillor Lake advised that he had no knowledge of how Surrey had come to implement arrangements with West Sussex County Council regarding this.

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 9 as a member of the Fete Committee and agenda item 10 as an allotment holder.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved: The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11 November 2019 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting with the following amendments:

Page 5; agenda item 8 – delete the word “financial” from Annual Audit paragraph.

Page 6; agenda item 14 – typographical error – amend “Trusk” to read “Trask”.

4. Clerk’s Report

The Clerk’s Report was circulated and noted.

5. Highways

Highways Report circulated and noted.

6. Aircraft Noise

Correspondence has been sent to Gatwick Airport Ltd (GAL) setting out further questions in respect of the Parish Council’s concerns regarding revisions to the trigger thresholds for the Cowden noise measurement equipment. Correspondence also sent to Tom Tugendhat MP advising him of the Parish Council’s concerns regarding the revisions.

Further correspondence from the Parish Council to be drafted and sent to the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP (Secretary of State for Transport) and Roger Gough (Leader of Kent County Council) setting out the Parish Council’s concerns in respect of GAL’s proposals to increase utilisation of the main runway and to utilise the emergency runway as a “second runway”. Parish Councillors and members of the public are encouraged to submit comments and representations in respect of GAL’s proposals individually.

7. Broadband

Councillor Saunders reported that the matter of providing fibre to premises at Crippenden remained ongoing. The issue is to be logged again with Openreach and a survey undertaken. In order to progress this matter, Councillor Saunders continues to work with the Kent County Council manager responsible for community schemes. Funding towards the cost associated with this is still available.

8. Financial Matters

(a) Accounts for Payment:

Resolved: Payments approved as set out below:

Payee	Description	Amount (£)
Mrs C Bizios	Reconciliation Payment & Expenses	382.69
HMRC	Tax & NI	254.18
Cowden Memorial Hall	Room Hire Charges	36.00
CPRE	Annual Subscription	36.00
Comm Svs Trading Ltd	Gang Mowing Recreation Ground	218.88
TOTAL		927.75

(b) Financial Report:

The Financial Report was circulated and noted.

(c) Bank Reconciliation:

Bank reconciliation up to month ending 30 November 2019 together with supporting bank statements provided to Members for review and information.

(d) Provision of Bulk Refuse Freighter – 2020:

Members approved two visits to the village during 2020 of the bulk refuse freighter service provided by Sevenoaks District Council. The Clerk to liaise with John Cox to confirm dates and associated costs.

(e) Quotation for Approval – Landscape Services – Allotment Maintenance:

Agenda item deferred to the next Parish Council meeting.

9. Recreation Ground

(a) Request to Use the Recreation Ground – Village Fete 2020:

A request received from the Fete Committee to use the Recreation Ground for the annual village fete on Saturday 27 June 2020.

Resolved: Request from the Fete Committee to use the Recreation Ground for the annual village fete on Saturday 27 June 2020 approved.

10. Allotments

Councillor Saunders to follow-up telephone calls made to Beeney & Co arrange a meeting on the allotments to discuss the possible source of the water leak.

11. Burial Ground Matters

Application for Memorial Headstone (Ashes Plot in New Burial Ground):

Application received in respect of the erection of a memorial headstone on an ashes plot in the New Burial Ground for the late Mrs Janine Budgen.

Resolved: Application for erection of memorial headstone for the late Mrs Janine Budgen approved.

12. Asset Repair and Maintenance

(a) Bus Shelter:

The Clerk to source a contractor to undertake repairs to the broken leaded glass pane in the bus shelter.

(b) Shed:

The Clerk had sourced two quotations for a new shed which ranged between £650 and £680. The Clerk was given approval by Members to procure a new shed within the price range provided.

Millennium Sign:

The Clerk confirmed that Les Putman had re-erected the village Millennium sign sited near to the bus shelter.

13. Correspondence Received

A complaint had been received from a member of public in which they allege that Councillor Henley has discussed with a resident of Cowden the confidential complaint they made to the Parish Council regarding the village fireworks event.

14. Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies

Nothing to report.

15. Matters for Reporting or Inclusion on Future Agenda

Review of Risk Assessment

Review of Standing Orders

Review of Financial Regulations

Grant Payments

Grant Funding Requirements

16. Dates of Future Parish Council Meetings

Monday 10 February 2020

Monday 9 March

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Chairman:

Date: