



Cowden Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE COWDEN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2020 AT COWDEN MEMORIAL HALL

PRESENT: Councillors: Valerie Bishop, Andrew Saunders, Lorraine Millgate, Celia Berry and Stephen Boakes. Also present: Caroline Bizios (Parish Clerk), Councillor Matthew Dickins (Sevenoaks District Councillor), Councillor Peter Lake (Kent County Councillor), Paul Smith (a member of the public), Tim Thompson (a member of the public) and a third member of the public (accompanied by a minor) who did not wish to introduce themselves.

Public Question Time:

Tim Thompson, on behalf of the Cowden Christmas Get-Together Event, thanked the Parish Council for its support towards this village event and asked if the Parish Council would consider supporting the event in future. Councillor Saunders said that the Parish Council were pleased to support this event and it and would formally consider the request for future financial support at a future Parish Council meeting.

Paul Smith, on behalf of Cowden Cricket Club, asked if the Parish Council would have any objections to him cutting-back and maintaining the boundary of the Recreation Ground near the road. Members raised no objections to this request and Councillor Saunders thanked Mr Smith for offering to undertake this work.

Councillor Dickins reported that productive conversations with Southern Rail continue in respect of parking arrangements at Cowden Station. He advised that car park charges were to be introduced at Ashurst Station.

Councillor Dickens advised the meeting that High Weald AONB had published a Housing Design Guide.

Finally, Councillor Dickens reported that the planning application in respect of development at Claydene Farm was coming to Sevenoaks District Council's (SDC) Development Control Committee on Thursday 13 February. He requested that the Parish Council register with SDC if a representative from the Parish Council wished to attend the meeting and speak.

Councillor Lake reported that correspondence had been sent to Kent County Council's (KCC) Cabinet Member Michael Payne regarding parking at Cowden Station. A response from Mr Payne was awaited.

Councillor Lake confirmed that contracts had been exchanged in respect of land in Edenbridge for the development of the new medical centre.

In terms of Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL), Councillor Lake reported that KCC has come down very firmly against GAL's use of the emergency runway as a second runway.

Councillor Lake commented on the dreadful state of the roads and encouraged Members and members of the public to report faults directly to Kent Highway Services (KHS). Councillor advised that Richard Emmett is the Head of KHS and the Highways Steward for Cowden is Amy Jeffrey.

In terms of grant funding available to local parishes, Councillor Lake advised Members that he will have grant funds available for any projects that the Parish Council may wish to undertake.

Councillor Saunders asked Councillor Lake if he had any information in terms of the reason for the placement of speed strips near to Windmill Hill. Councillor Lake advised that the strips had not been placed on the highway by KHS and that it was believed that they had been put in place by a developer.

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

MINUTES:

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received from Councillor Henley. In his absence, Councillor Saunders acted as Chairman and Councillor Boakes acted as Vice Chairman.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Berry declared an interest in agenda items 8(h) and 10 as an allotment holder. Councillor Boakes declared an interest in agenda item 13(a) as a member of the Parochial Church Council.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

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

Page 1; paragraph six; line 2: deleted duplicate reference to “crime”. .

4. Clerk’s Report

The Clerk’s Report was circulated and noted.

5. Highways

Highways Report previously circulated and noted

Councillor Boakes reported that he had contacted KHS and BT regarding water continually running across Butterwell Hill from a BT manhole cover. It was not clear how this matter was being resolved between the two agencies. The Clerk was requested to raise the matter with the KHS Steward for the Parish.

6. Aircraft Noise

Since the Parish Council held in December 2019 correspondence has been sent to Tom Tugendhat MP, The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP (Secretary of State for Transport) and Roger Gough (Leader of Kent County Council) regarding GAL’s proposal to increase utilisation of the main runway and its intention to utilise the emergency runway as a second runway. The correspondence from the Parish Council set out the Parish Council’s concerns in respect of GAL’s expansion proposals and stressed the importance of a full review of GAL’s proposals through an independent planning process and an open and fair consultation process.

The Parish Council has also written to Tom Tugendhat MP making him aware of the Parish Council’s concerns in respect of significant changes made by GAL to the trigger threshold for the aircraft noise monitoring equipment located in the Parish. Tom Tugendhat has replied advising that he would like to pursue this matter further with the Secretary of State for Transport.

Further correspondence to be sent to GAL from the Parish Council raising further question in respect of the changes it has made to the trigger thresholds for the noise monitoring equipment.

7. Broadband

Councillor Saunders advised the meeting that residents of Crippenden were required to initiate the required process to facilitate the provision of a fibre run to Crippenden.

8. Financial Matters

(a) Accounts for Payment:

Resolved: Payments approved as set out below:

Payee	Description	Amount (£)
Mrs C Bizios	Reconciliation Payment & Expenses	821.05
HMRC	Tax & NI	803.78
Cowden Memorial Hall	Hall Hire	36.00
Mr L Putman	Erection of Millennium Sign	162.95
Sevenoaks District Council	Emptying Dog Bins	151.32
ACRK	Annual Subscription	55.00
SES Business Water	Water Rates - Allotments	151.36
Skinner's Sheds Ltd	Provision and Installation of New Shed	619.00
TOTAL		2800.46

(b) Budget Report:

Budget Report circulated and noted.

(c) Review of Risk Assessment:

Agenda item deferred to next Parish Council meeting when Chairman will be present.

(d) Review of Standing Orders:

Agenda item deferred to next Parish Council meeting when Chairman will be present.

(e) Review of Financial Regulations:

Agenda item deferred to next Parish Council meeting when Chairman will be present.

(f) Grant Payments:

A grant payment of £200 to Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge to be included on the Payments List for the Parish Council meeting taking in place in March. Two £100 payments to Age UK were approved by Members at the Parish Council meeting held on 8 July 2019. However, a cheque for £100 raised in September had not been received by Age UK and had been stopped by the Parish Council. The Clerk had agreed with Age UK that the full £200 grant payment would be paid to them in one payment in March 2020.

Grant payments to Kent Air Ambulance and Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service to be considered at the Parish Council meeting being held on 9 March 2020.

(g) Grant Funding Requirements:

Members to consider any requirements that the Parish Council may have that could be supported by grant funding at the next meeting of the Parish Council on 9 March 2020.

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

A quotation had been received from Landscape Services in respect of vegetation clearing works on the allotments. The quoted price is £528 (excl VAT). A subsequent quotation had been received from Landscape Services in respect of spraying the cleared areas with a substance that would allow safe rowing of fruit and vegetables. The quoted price for this is £556.99 (excl VAT).

This agenda item to be deferred to the Parish Council meeting on 9 March 2020 when Members would decide how the Parish Council should proceed in terms of the funds available within the Parish Council's budget at financial year end.

(i) **Quotation for Approval – Landscape Services – Gang Mowing Recreation Ground:**

Quotation received from Landscape Services for gang-mowing of the Recreation Ground for the 2020 cutting season. Quotation is for £1148.37 (plus VAT) for 18 cuts.

Resolved: Quotation of £1148.27 (plus VAT) for gang-mowing of the Recreation Ground for the 2020 cutting season approved.

(j) **Parish Council Website – Changes to Hosting Platform:**

The Clerk had received correspondence from Kent Association of Local Council's (KALC) regarding the hosting arrangements for the Parish Council's website and changes that are required to comply with new accessibility regulations.

Currently, the Parish Council websites is hosted by KCC EIS Parish Websites. KCC has advised KALC that website services are to be migrated onto a new platform developed and delivered by Cantium Business Solutions. Currently, there is no cost to the Parish Council for the hosting of its website. KALC has advised that there will be changes to the pricing arrangements in the future.

Cantium Business Solutions has also contacted the Clerk and advised that the new hosting arrangements will be based on a three year contract. For Parish Council's with a precept below £30K, for the first year of the contract KCC will meet the hosting costs. After the first year the cost to Parish Council's is £675 per annum for subsequent years. The deadline for the Parish Council's to accept Cantium's proposal is 28 February.

Members expressed concerns at the short timescales imposed in respect of acceptance and at the costs to the Parish Council moving forward. The Clerk was requested to register this concern with Cantium and to contact neighbouring Parish Council's in order to understand their website hosting arrangements with a view to exploring the options available in terms of alternative hosting arrangements.

9. Recreation Ground

The Clerk had received a request from the Tennis Club for a key to the gated entrance to the Recreation Ground to be kept in the key safe in the Sports Pavilion. The Clerk had declined this request on behalf of the Parish Council for reasons previously provided to the Tennis Club.

The Clerk was requested to contact Landscape Services to request a quotation in respect of ditch clearance on the boundary of the Recreation Ground.

10. Allotments

Councillor Saunders continues to try and contact Beeney & Co to arrange a meeting to discuss the water leak on the allotments.

The Clerk had received a complaint from an allotment holder regarding damage caused to their allotment plot by tractor tyres during hedge-cutting. The Clerk was requested to contact the property owner to request that the property owner asks contractors not to drive a tractor over the allotment plot in future.

11. Burial Ground Matters

Nothing to report.

12. Asset Repair and Maintenance

Shed: The Clerk confirmed that the new shed had been delivered and erected.

Bus Shelter Glass: Work to source quotation for repairs to broken in bus shelter ongoing.

Fencing – New Burial Ground: The Clerk has asked Hever Countryside Services to provide a quotation in respect of repairs to broken fence posts in the New Burial Ground.

13. Correspondence Received

(a) Parochial Church Council:

Correspondence received from Cowden Parochial Church Council (CPPC) notifying the Parish Council of its decision to apply to the Ministry of Justice for an Order in Council to close the churchyard around St Mary Magdalene Church to further burials. Following closure of the churchyard, CPPC has requested that the Parish Council assumes responsibility for the maintenance of the churchyard.

Whilst, the Parish Council, in principle, raised no objections to the closure process, Members wish to consider carefully the full implications to the Parish Council of assuming maintenance responsibility for the churchyard. The Clerk requested an opportunity for Parish Council representatives to arrange a site visit with representatives of the CPPC in order to assist with the Parish Council's deliberations in respect of this matter. A date for the site visit is to be agreed.

(b) Surrey County Council – Bridleway SR662

Correspondence received from the Countryside Access Team confirming the diversion of Bridleway SR662.

(c) Surrey County Council – Public Footpath SR663

Correspondence received from the Countryside Access Team as part of the consultation to consider proposals to divert public footpath SR663. Members expressed the wish to walk the proposed route in order to provide a considered opinion on the proposal. The Clerk to check the consultation response deadline date with the Countryside Access Team.

13. Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies

Nothing to report.

14. Matters for Reporting or Inclusion on Future Agenda

Future Grant Funding Requirements
Appointment of Internal Auditor
Risk Assessment
Standing Orders
Financial Regulations

15. Dates of Future Parish Council Meetings

Monday 9 March
Tuesday 14 April

Meeting closed at 9.05pm.

The Clerk wishes the Minutes of this meeting to record that at the close of the meeting, the member of the public who did not wish to be identified, turned to Members upon leaving the room and stated “enjoy your gossip”.

Meeting closed at 9.05pm

Chairman:

Date: