

SHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Footpaths Properties & Greens Committee
Meeting held on 8 September 2016 in Shorne Village Hall**

PRESENT Mr R Lane (Chairman)
 Mr R Theobald
 Mr M Redfern
 Mrs S Lindley
 Miss P Clifton

APOLOGIES were received from Mr R Cooper

17 Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 June 2016

The minutes were AGREED as a true record.

18 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

19 Update on the Telephone Kiosk at Chestnut Green (3)

Ms Clifton reported that the broken glass windows have been replaced with plastic. It has now been reported that the light is not working. Miss Clifton will report the defective light to BT.

20 Volunteer Litter Patrols (4)

The volunteer litter patrol will take place on Saturday, 17 September 2016, six months after the national ‘Clean for the Queen’ litter patrol. There are currently about twenty definite participants. A number of people have responded to say that they would have liked to participate but they are away on the date. It may be better to arrange for future litter patrols to take place in October.

21 Crabbles Bottom – To Consider Approving the Proposal to Place an Order with Kent Wildlife Trust to Provide a Written Report (6)

Mr Redfern has provided a report to the Council on his meeting with Neil Coombs of the Kent Wildlife Trust on 11 July 2016.

Mr Coombs approved of what we have done so far to clear undergrowth in the

orchard where there is already more grass and fewer nettles, and to clear the main paths and access between the meadows. Now there is some fruit, it is clear that the fruit trees in overgrown scrub along the path are mostly pear, though probably too old to be worth clearing the brambles, which form good habitat. Mr Coombs advised not to prune off the larger dead branches on the Bramley apples, as several are hollow and may form habitat for bats.

In the meadow area, there are now many orchids flowering, although just the relatively common pyramidal orchid. The parts of the meadows where clay from the bypass was not dumped seem to be species-rich chalk meadow and worth preserving. He advises not mowing them at the moment, though they could be mown later in the year, so long as the cuttings are collected to keep soil fertility low and discourage more vigorous grass and brambles. The other areas of the meadow may be difficult to mow as they have many hummocks caused by ants and best preserved.

Mr Coombs would be happy to prepare a report, long or short, and a management plan, plus quote for actioning that plan if required. He pointed out that, while they would like to offer free advice, they need to cover costs and suggest the following scale of donations: Visit + advice £175; visit + written advice £350; Management plan (for a site this size) £700.

Mr Redfern requested that the Committee consider approving payment of £350 for written advice, so that we can determine what needs to be done in the future. The Committee was invited to consider giving its approval to this expenditure which was AGREED. Mr Redfern will advise Mr Coombs accordingly.

22 Shornemead Level Crossing (7)

The Open Spaces Society has written to congratulate the Parish Council on the successful application for the addition of the footpath across the Shornemead level crossing and has asked to put the story on their website and possibly in their magazine. Mrs Lindley will respond on behalf of the Council.

Subsequent to the meeting, the Parish Council has now received a copy of the Definitive Map Modification Order 2015 from KCC.

23 Review of Additional Maintenance & Cutting of Greens & Verges (8)

At the previous meeting, it was agreed to continue with the additional spring cutting of greens and verges in future years.

Mr Lane noted that Gravesham Borough Council's landscaping team has been operating the soft landscaping contract on behalf of KCC, cutting grass eight times a year, and shrubs and hedges once annually.

However, from next year KCC proposes to reduce the contract value by 45% to £40,000 a year, which could result in a 50% reduction in the number of times the grass is mown. At GBC's cabinet meeting on 5 September, 2016 the

cabinet decided that it is no longer viable to continue with the contract, and agreed to end the arrangement from 31 March next year.

Mr Lane said that the Parish Council will need to monitor this to ensure that there is no detrimental effect to the maintenance of greens and verges in Shorne.

24 Court Wood – Footpaths (9)

At the previous meeting, Mr Redfern reported that he had been in contact with the Ramblers Association, and that it would be necessary to obtain evidence and affidavits from people who have walked the paths if it was decided to try to get the pathways registered as PROWs. It may also be necessary to establish who owns the various parts of Court Wood. It was noted that GBC has previously granted consent to block off one of the pathways. There was a discussion about whether there is a path beside Swillers Lane stream. Mr Theobald suggested that Mr Redfern contacts Robert Shove.

25 Management of Trees on Shorne Parish Council Land – To Approve the Appointment of a Tree Surveyor (10)

Mr Lane has obtained quotations from five qualified arboriculturalists to carry out three-yearly surveys of the trees in the three Zone 1 areas, and has circulated a report to Councillors summarising the quotations received. Based on compliance with the tender enquiry and value for money, Mr Lane recommended the appointment of Invicta Arboriculture to carry out separate, triennial surveys of each of the three zones. This was AGREED by members.

Mr Redfern suggested that the first survey should be carried out at Shorne Common Rough. Nothing further has been heard about the tree that was leaning at Shorne Common as previously reported by the Scouts.

26 Shorne Common Rough Chestnut Butts (11)

Mr Lane reported that Mr Parmenter has kindly installed timber butts at Shorne Common Rough to deter vehicles from the grassed area. Tim Bell at the Country Park has kindly donated 7 logs to the Council. These are currently lying adjacent to Venesta in Woodlands Lane. Mr Lane has asked Mr Parmenter's contractor for a quotation to replace the missing butts around the perimeter of Shorne Common Rough.

27 Bus Shelter at Shorne Cross Roads (13)

At the previous meeting, Mr Lane reported that he had obtained a price from John Vilday on 5 May 2016 for removing the ivy from the bus shelter, and instructed him to proceed. However, despite many reminders, Mr Vilday has not responded nor carried out the work.

Mr Lane has since obtained a price from Kevin Law, but it is significantly higher than that originally quoted by Mr Vilday.

Mr Lane has also asked Richard Sloan (Higham Handyman) for a quotation, but he declined. Mr Lane has also left a message with another contact, Mr Darrell Bailey, but has received no reply.

Mr Theobald suggested that perhaps Mr Vilday's price was too low, and that the council should accept Mr Law's quotation. Mr Lane would contact Mr Law and if necessary instruct him to proceed.

28 Locks at the Recreation Ground (14)

At the previous meeting, Mrs Clifton reported that the padlock to the gate was broken. The report that unauthorised keys were in circulation was found to be not correct. Packhams in Perry Street were unable to repair the padlock on this occasion and it was therefore necessary to order a replacement at a cost of £65. This has now been obtained and the defective padlock replaced.

29 Footpath at Uralite (16b)

At the previous meeting, Mrs Lindley reported that the route location of the footpath near Uralite Works is inaccurately shown on the Parish Footpaths Map. Mrs Lindley has liaised with Mr Hart, a former Councillor, and the map has now been amended. Mr Lane has uploaded it on to the website.

30 Any Other Business

(a) Highways Issues at The Ridgeway.

Correspondence has been received from a parishioner expressing concern regarding speeding in the Ridgeway.

Mr Lane reported that a parishioner had contacted him to express his concern that the Annual Report stated that the Parish Council would like to see the footpath extended at The Ridgeway.

Mr Theobald stated that he considers that something needs to be done about the footway. Mr Lane said that he did not consider that this would address the speeding problems. Ms Clifton said that residents find it hazardous joining traffic in The Ridgeway. Mrs Lindley considers that the footway at The Ridgeway is a pedestrian safety issue. A discussion followed regarding measures that had been implemented at Cobham and Thong.

As this is a planning issue, Mrs Lindley will place this on the agenda for the next meeting. Mr Theobald also asked for the streetlights on the A226 to be placed on the agenda.

(b) Park Pale Unsocial Behaviour

There has been a recent increase in disturbances from motorcyclists in Park Pale and this has been reported to the Police. Sgt Carli Deacon has returned to duty following maternity leave and has been in contact with Mr Lane.

(c) Lorry Watch

KCC have said that they are quite happy for Shorne to carry out fixed lorry watch patrols and/or to reactively report non-compliant vehicles observed in the restricted areas. KCC has agreed to supply a number of “lorry watch” signs to the parish.

- (d) Mr Redfern reported that there was a water main leak in Pear Tree Lane.
- (e) Mrs Clifton reported that the radiator is still on the green. She will report this to the fly-tipping team.
- (f) Mrs Clifton mentioned Volunteer Corporate Day and asked if anyone was interested.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.55pm.