

SHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Footpaths Properties & Greens Committee
Meeting held on 7 September 2017 in Shorne Village Hall**

PRESENT

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

APOLOGIES

for absence were received from Mr R Cooper
and Mr R Hardy

**ALSO IN
ATTENDANCE**

PCSO Jo Hartley
PCSO Dil Gosal
Mr & Mrs S Fish, Mill Hill Lane
Mr D Parmenter, Woodlands Lane

16 Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 June 2017

The minutes were AGREED as a true record.

17 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

18 Shorne Common Land adjacent to Brier Cottage, Mill Hill Lane

On 9 May 2017 an email was received from Mr & Mrs Fish of Brier Cottage, drawing attention to the litter and misuse of the land adjacent to their property and requesting permission to clear the brambles, etc., seed the area, and to install a gate to provide off-road parking.

This was discussed at a committee meeting, and on 20 June Mr Lane responded on behalf of the Parish Council stating that it would not be appropriate to allow the land to be gated or used for parking, but that the Parish Council would have no objection to the cutting back of brambles where appropriate, provided the overall environmental characteristics and amenity value of the land is maintained for public benefit.

On 15 July, an email was received from Mr & Mrs Fish confirming that they had cleared the area of brambles, nettles, rubbish and debris, but had not removed any trees.

On the 16 July 2017, Councillors were contacted by Mr South of Fir Meadow Cottage who expressed concern at the extent of clearance work carried out. On inspection, it was observed that the area of land adjacent to Brier Cottage had been completely stripped of all vegetation, and it appeared that the ground had been levelled in places.

On the 20 July 2017, the Parish Council wrote to Mr & Mrs Fish expressing concern with the nature and extent of the clearance work that had been carried out, with the result that the overall environmental characteristics and amenity value had not been maintained, and that the area no longer appeared to form an integral part of Shorne Common. Mr & Mrs Fish were requested to reinstate the original contours of the land to any areas where significant soil had been removed and to allow the natural vegetation to re-establish itself.

Mr & Mrs Fish replied on the 10 August, stating that no soil had been removed and that the area is now of a similar appearance to Shorne Common, with grass in the middle edged by brambles.

It is acknowledged that the grass seeded by Mr & Mrs Fish has established itself quite quickly, but concerns remained about whether the area appears to be an integral part of Shorne Common.

It has been suggested that it may be necessary to install timber butts alongside Mill Hill Lane to define the boundary of the common land and to deter unauthorised parking and it has also been suggested that it may be appropriate to install signage to identify ownership of the land.

The Council is dismayed to find itself under criticism through no fault of its own, and faced with unexpected and unbudgeted additional expenditure.

Mr Fish was invited to comment. Mr Fish tabled some pictures of the area and read out his email dated 10 August 2017 sent in response to the Parish Council's letter dated 20 July 2017. Mr Fish reiterated that no soil had been removed and that the ground had merely been trodden down after the removal of rubbish and vegetation. Now that the grass had established, the area is not unlike the remainder of Shorne Common, with grass edged by brambles.

Mr Fish said that he has received positive comments from dog walkers and parishioners who use the lane, who have said that the removal of brambles is pleasing to the eye and an improvement to the area, although he is concerned about comments made by Mr South. Mr Fish stated that he has no intent to take over or claim ownership of the land, but he would like to keep it under control to prevent it becoming overgrown and misused in the future. He is supportive of the installation of timber butts to prevent parking or misuse.

Mr Lane is concerned that the area must be seen to be part of the common land and that it would not be appropriate to mow it as a garden lawn. The remainder of Shorne Common is cut on a monthly basis and any cutting of the grass should be to a similar standard.

The Parish Council will write a letter to Mr & Mrs Fish, reaffirming that the land remains common land in perpetuity and that any maintenance carried out must be in keeping with the environmental characteristics of the Common.

19 To consider the Installation of Timber Butts and Additional Signage at Shorne Common

Joshua Gearing of Shorne Woods Country Park is willing to provide 3 chestnut butts free of charge. AGS Hoarding & Fencing Ltd has quoted £247.40 + VAT to install these in the verge alongside Mill Hill Lane. This represents good value compared to similar works recently carried out at Shorne Common Rough. The Committee APPROVED this expenditure.

SSP Direct has quoted £32 + VAT for a bespoke 400mm x 300mm aluminium sign similar to that recently installed at Shorne Common Rough. A spare steel post or 3x3 timber post is available, but would need installing. The Committee was invited to consider approval of this expenditure. Mr Fish stated that he was able to supply the sign free of charge to the Council. It was AGREED to accept Mr Fish's kind offer and for Mr Lane and Mr Fish to erect the sign.

20 To discuss Police issues and receive an update from PCSO Jo Hartley

Mr Lane welcomed PCSOs Jo Hartley and Dil Gosal to the meeting. PCSO Gosal said that she is moving on to other duties and PCSO Hartley explained that she is now covering Shorne in partnership with PCSO Louis Arnold. PCSO Hartley will forward his details to Mr Lane.

It was noted that the Police carried out an operation in Park Pale on Wednesday 12 July 2017, in which seven motor cyclists were reported for breach of the vehicle prohibition. There continues to be occasional disturbances as indicated by the tyre marks on the road.

PCSO Gosal stated that with regards to parking in Park Pale, notices will be posted on vehicles parked in this area warning them that there is a traffic regulation order prohibiting vehicles from Park Pale, and that they will be liable to receive a fixed penalty notice in future. It was felt that the Country Park should advise visitors to this effect.

With regards to the 'Hire2You' advertising van parking on Brewers Road overbridge, it was noted that this was vandalised on or around 24 June and was subsequently relocated to the Park Pale overbridge. More recently, it has been seen alongside the A2 next to site of the former service station. Mr Theobald has taken the matter of unauthorised advertising up with Gravesham Borough Council, but Mr Lane said that there is no reason why the Police should not take action where there are breaches of traffic regulations.

Mr Parmenter said that he had contacted the Police and the Borough Council, but they were not prepared to do anything. PCSO Hartley strongly disagreed and said he is not aware of actions taken. Mr Lane noted that GBC had put a parking ticket on the van when it was at Brewers Road. PCSO Hartley said

that she is aware of the situation and has spoken to the owner, but he is not an approachable individual and parishioners should not approach the owner.

Mrs Lindley raised the problem of fly-tipping. PCSO Hartley advised that the matter can be reported to the Borough Council, but vehicle registration numbers would be required in order to take action against the offenders.

21 To Receive an update on the CCTV Scheme (8)

The decision to install CCTV was approved at the Parish Council meeting on 6 July 2017. Mr Lane has registered the system with the Information Commissioner, and produced Policies and Procedures. He has also notified the Police, and informed residents within the field of view. The equipment was installed on 18 August 2017 and is now operational. The Committee APPROVED the policy and procedures, and it was AGREED that Mr R Lane, Mrs S Lindley, Mr R Theobald, and Mrs G Ashby are Authorised Personnel.

The “CCTV in Operation” signs which Prestige proposed to install were unsuitable and not legally compliant. Mr Lane therefore obtained bespoke signage from SSP Direct at a total cost of £27.23 plus VAT. The Committee was invited to approve this expenditure. This was AGREED.

Mr Lane has applied for a KCC grant towards the cost of the CCTV scheme, which is supported by Councillor Bryan Sweetland.

22 Litter Patrol - To Consider the Purchase of Portable Warning Signs

The next volunteers’ Litter Patrol will take place on Saturday 21 October 2017. The Committee AGREED to the purchase of eight folding “Caution – Litter Picking in Progress” signs for the sum of £104 plus VAT.

23 Update on Crabbles Bottom (3)

H&P Conservation carried out the mid-season cutting back of vegetation to the footpaths and bridleway during July.

The decision to accept quotations from AGS Hoarding & Fencing was approved at the Planning Committee meeting on 27 July. The two damaged sections of fence were repaired and replaced on 8 August 2017.

Mr Redfern responded to an enquiry received from a parishioner regarding the availability of apples from Crabbles Bottom community orchard.

It is noted that there is a welfare portakabin in the layby at Crutches Lane and gas works are being carried out nearby.

24 Maintenance & Cutting of Greens & Verges (4)

At the previous Footpaths, Properties & Greens Committee, Mr Lane reported that KCC offered to pay the Parish Council an annual sum of £1,201 to take over the maintenance. This is expected to cover 6 grass cuts a year, plus one

visit to trim shrubs in Shorne West. KCC's performance and the frequency of cutting has been monitored and cutting has taken place at monthly intervals. Apart from earlier in the season, the grass has not been too overgrown. Due to other priorities, the revised 'options' paper has not been taken forward. This will be progressed if it is found to be necessary in the future.

25 Maintenance of Public Rights of Way (5)

Mrs Davies contacted the Parish Council on 1 July to report that KCC had cleared footpaths NS163 and NS163A.

Miss Clifton reported that John Pelham informed the Gravesham Rights of Way Committee (GROWC) that KCC had funds available for footpath clearing, and to email him if any paths needed attention. Miss Clifton reported that NS156 needed cutting back and this has since been carried out.

On 29 August Mrs Leppard reported that footpath NS157 at Green Farm Lane was overgrown. This has been reported to KCC and directly to John Pelham.

Two issues with footpath NS156 have been reported. North of Gravesend Road, the farmer has cultivated to the edge of the field without leaving a 1.5m gap. Mr Lane has spoken to the farmer, Mr Steve Glover of Hartley Bottom Farm, who will attend to the matter. There were reports of a bull or bulls in the field opposite the See Ho, but it transpires that these were heifers.

At the previous meeting, Mr Lane reported that in addition to brush cutters and hedge cutters, Mammoth Hire also hire flail mowers and Mr Lane undertook to enquire about the cost. However, Mr Lane was advised that it would be necessary to open a 'plant' account in order to obtain hire charges for larger equipment such as flail mowers. This account requires a significant amount of information and it may not be appropriate for a Parish Council.

26 Pathway Obstructions in Court Wood (6)

At the previous meeting, Mr Theobald reported that the Ordnance Survey maps incorrectly show that the pathways radiating from Court Wood stop short of the fields and are not connected. Mr Theobald wants to ensure that the pathways are accurately plotted and shown to be linked before residents are asked to complete forms and affidavits. Mr Redfern said he would find out if any of his contacts has access to accurate GPS equipment and Mrs Lindley would look at any mobile apps that might be suitable.

On 8 August, Mrs Martin passed on a message from Ms Sam Cook. Mrs Lindley thought this might be the same lady who had previously been in contact about what was actually a neighbour problem in Cuxton. Mrs Lindley had attempted to contact her at the number given but is awaiting a reply.

Mrs Lindley reported that she had been in contact with the Land Registry regarding ascertaining the ownership of the various pieces of land and has

received a reply, although the enquiry form is not clear about the charges. She will contact them again about this and submit a formal query.

Mr Theobald reported that he had carried out some research on GPS equipment. There is a piece of equipment produced, but it is very expensive, whereas other equipment using mobile phone GPS technology may not be sufficiently accurate. Mrs Lindley had looked into availability of SmartPhone Apps but had not found one that would record and map accurately enough during a walk for the required purpose. She will ask John Pelham at KCC if he can help with loan of suitable GPS equipment. Mr Redfern suggested that a university might be able to help as part of their research or student courses.

27 Swillers Lane Pathway Extension (7)

At the previous meeting, Mr Theobald reported that he had not yet contacted Mrs Shove's daughter, Kay Jenman, to ask if they would be willing to consider allowing the track extending from Swillers Lane alongside the stream to the edge of the wood to be designated as a Public Right of Way. Mr Theobald reported that the land in question is farmed by Lilllichurch Farm in Higham and is owned by St John's College, Cambridgeshire. The farmer was not enthusiastic, but will send Mr Theobald the agent's details.

28 Update on maintenance and repairs at Shorne Common Play Area (10)

Mr Vilday of All Seasons Property Maintenance carried out the cleaning of the play equipment, cut back the vegetation encroaching on the play area, and spread the chippings under the play equipment on 23 June 2017. The conifer wood chippings provided by GBC were not good quality and it may be necessary to purchase play-grade bark when the work is carried out next year.

The broken gate post at the car park was replaced with a new 6x6 post by AGS Hoarding & Fencing on 9 August at a cost of £150 + VAT.

29 Repairs to Gate at Shorne Recreation Ground (13)

Repairs to the gate post were approved at the Planning Committee on 27 July, and the work was satisfactorily carried out by AGS Hoarding & Fencing on 9 August 2017. However, the gate itself has dropped. AGS Hoarding have agreed to brace the gate, but it may need replacing at some time in the future.

In July, it was reported that an unauthorised sponsorship advertisement had been fitted to the football club pavilion at Shorne Recreation Ground. Mr Lane contacted the football club and Mr Cater undertook to remove it.

30 Fly Tipping Signage (12)

Mr Lane obtained five "No Fly Tipping - CCTV in Operation" signs from SSP Direct at a cost of £35 each plus VAT. Three of these were installed in Shorne Ifield Road by Mr Wright. Mr Lane fitted one of the signs in Shorne

Common Rough, but it went missing within two weeks. This has now been replaced with the fifth sign, which was originally intended for Crutches Lane.

31 Shorne Common Rough Signage (14)

At the previous meeting, the Committee approved the purchase of an additional village green sign at Shorne Common Rough. Due to a measurement error by the supplier, SSP Direct supplied a second sign at no extra cost. These were both installed by Mr Lane on 1 August 2017.

32 Village Hall Clock Update

Mr Lane reported that he and Mr Bugg had managed to get the clock on the outside of the Village Hall working on 17 July, but it stopped again two weeks later. Mr Lane managed to get it working again on 25 August 2017.

33 Any Other Business

- (a) A Candlelit Concert will be held in the Church on Saturday 25 November in aid of church funds. Mr Pullen has asked permission to use the Common for parking. There was no objection to this. Mr Parmenter said that the far end of the car park is very boggy when it rains and vehicles can get stuck
- (b) Mr Redfern reported that the next Council meeting may be the last he will be attending as he will be moving out of the area.
- (c) Mr Rea drew attention to fly-tipping in Claylane Woods. The Borough Council will not remove this as the land is privately owned by Mr Rossi.
- (d) Mrs Lindley reported on the proposed mobile phone base station in the church tower. Councillors had attended the drop-in session at the church on 17 August and a meeting arranged by parishioners on 31 August.
- (e) Mrs Lindley reported that a meeting of the Joint Transportation Board is scheduled for next week, following the cancellation of two previous meetings. Residents had raised a petition about cars parking on the corner of Bowesden Lane to The Ridgeway. Mr Theobald had asked for that to be put on the agenda. Overall parking problems will also be discussed as much as possible.
- (f) Miss Clifton reported that she had filled in the KCC consultation form on Rights of Way. The content of the consultation questions was discussed.
- (g) Mr Parmenter thanked the Committee for the signs erected on Shorne Common Rough. He reported that his property had been broken into and his son threatened and he is considering extending the wall alongside his property. GBC Planning Department has confirmed that planning permission is not needed if the wall is under 2 metres high. Mr Parmenter would also like to plant bushes against it, on the Common side of the new wall. Mrs Lindley said that we would have no objections provided that the style of the wall is traditional and the bushes, which would be on Mr Parmenter's strip of land

anyway, are of native woodland species. Mr Parmenter reported that KCC had cleared the footpath. He also asked if he could spray the brambles and nettles in Shorne Common Rough. The Council would need to agree the extent of any clearance work proposed and details of the weed-killer.

- (h) Mr Theobald asked if Mr Lane had been able to establish the owners of the cars parked near Post Office Green. Mr Lane will find out if this information is available to the Parish Council.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.55pm