

SHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on
8th April 2021 on Zoom**

PRESENT

Mr R Lane (Chairman)
Mr R Theobald
Mr Bugg
Mr R Hardy
Ms Clifton
Mrs S Lindley
Ms A Franks
Mrs L McCluskey
Mr C Rea

APOLOGIES

Parishioners in attendance: PCSO Ellie Middleton

141 To receive any declarations of interest.

As recorded at the previous meeting, Cllr Lane and Cllr Bugg are the Parish Council appointed trustee members of the Village Hall Management Committee. Ms Clifton is also a member of the Village Hall Management Committee on behalf of a village club, and Mrs Poole is Treasurer and Secretary of the Village Hall. However, it was agreed at the previous meeting that there is no conflict of interests as the building and land is vested in the Parish Council and the Village Hall is a key community asset of the parish.

142. To approve the minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 25th February 2021

The minutes were **AGREED** as a true record.

143. Any matters arising not otherwise on the Agenda

None.

144. To discuss local Police issues with PCSO Ellie Middleton

PCSO Ellie Middleton was welcomed to the meeting. Discussions focussed primarily on the problems of anti-social motorbikers in Park Pale, and off-road motorbikers in Claylane Woods and the fields between Shorne West and Thong.

With regards to the off-road bikers in and around Claylane Woods, PCSO Middleton explained some of the difficulties involved. The area has many access and escape routes, the fences are frequently damaged, and the area has a public footpath through it, all of which make it difficult to apprehend the bikers. A PCSO's powers are limited and the bikers frequently refuse to stop.

PSCO Middleton has been in touch with the Problem Solving Task Force and has put a bid in to help address the problem of motorbikers and inconsiderate parking in Shorne and Cobham, and some action has been taken.

With regards to Park Pale, Mr Lane reported that discussions and meetings with the Police have been ongoing since 2014, but the problem continues, and he expressed his frustration with the lack of enforcement of the TRO which prohibits vehicles from entering Park Pale except for access.

PCSO Middleton reported on issues regarding inconsiderate parking near the school, and she has been in contact with Gravesham Council to address parking offences.

Members felt that it would be beneficial for residents to have visibility of Police actions and initiatives in the area, but we had been instructed not to give the PCSO parish updates any publicity. The Parish Council said that we would be pleased to publicise Police actions and reports on our local social media platforms.

PCSO Middleton was thanked for her attendance and input.

145. Report on Litter Patrol on 27th March

Mr Lane reported that over 60 volunteers took part in the litter pick on or around 27th March, a tremendous response. This followed a separate litter pick in Park Pale on 26th March by a number of volunteers from Rochester & Cobham Park Golf Club.

146. Report on cleaning of Shorne War Memorial

P & S Property satisfactorily carried out the work on 24th March. Their operative observed that the joints between the stones need filling, and some filling or rendering is needed on the base on the church side of the memorial. P & S Property will provide us with recommendations for future maintenance, which should be carried out more frequently in order to keep the monument in good condition. Mr Lane asked Mr Bugg to look at the Memorial to see what we can do on the filling/rendering of the Memorial.

147. Update on progress with upgrading the play area at Shorne Common

Our grant application to Veolia Environmental Trust was successful, Shorne Parish Council has made the £1,500 Third Party Contributor payment, and Redlynch has been instructed to proceed with supplying and installing the new play equipment, which is provisionally scheduled for the second half of May.

Mr Lane reported that an application for further funding has been submitted to Gravesham Borough Council, and they have provisionally agreed to contribute £10,000 towards the scheme, pending Portfolio Holder's signature.

Mrs Poole showed a summary of funding secured, and an indicative breakdown of costs. With grants received, Shorne Parish Council's contribution, and private donations in excess of £2,500, we have a budget of £35,000. The play equipment will cost £24,000, and the additional funding will enable the Parish Council to proceed with further enhancements, including seating, fencing, and an adventure trail.

A local resident has expressed concern regarding the location of the play equipment, and would prefer that the new equipment is relocated further into the Common, away from its existing location. Members were requested to give the matter consideration. Members felt that although the new equipment will take up more space than the existing equipment, it will not interfere with the Public Right Of Way, and its present long-established location maximises the remaining space available on the Common for other general recreational purposes. It was unanimously agreed that the new play equipment should be installed in the same location as the existing play equipment.

148. Update on Shornemead Level Crossing

Mrs Lindley reported that a response has been received from Joy Oluyomi of Network Rail, stating that whilst they would like to close the road crossing, they are not pursuing this at this time. They currently expect the footbridge to be installed by October 2022. Mr Theobald will circulate a report on this matter.

149. Update on the repainting of the railings in The Street

With Members' approval, Mr Theobald has agreed a price reduction with JD Bush and instructed them to proceed. It is expected that the work will start on or about 29th April 2021.

150. Proposal to defer the resurfacing of the car park at the village hall

In view of the uncertainty regarding the financial position of the Village Hall, and the possibility that the Parish Council may need to provide financial support, Mr Lane proposed to defer the work until the situation is clearer. This was seconded by Mr Hardy and agreed by Members. Mr Lane further proposed that if we go ahead at a later date, we may consider that the competitive quotation process has taken place and allow Mr Bugg to negotiate a price with the preferred bidder. This was agreed.

151. Planning & Highways Committee update

Planning

Mrs Lindley reported that the last committee meeting was on 11th March 2021, and the next meeting is 22nd May 2021. There have been about 10 planning application since the last meeting, and some are repeats. The largest application was for the change of use for the storage of caravans at New Green Farm, Lower Road.

Gravesham Borough Council has issued a Lawful Development Certificate to incorporate land at Tanners Grange into the residential curtilage. Mrs Lindley has queried the extent with Gravesham Borough Council and is awaiting to hear from them.

Engineering works are in progress at the rear of Shorne Mead which would appear to need planning consent. Planning Enforcement officers are investigating.

Highways

Mrs Lindley reported that the current KCC's Highways Officer has moved on again. The 30 mph speed limit extension in Pear Tree Lane has now been installed. Road repairs in Shorne Ifield Road are being carried out in the next couple of days. It was noted there have been comments on local social media about pedestrian safety on Tanyard Hill, and hedgehog signs.

Meetings with Lower Thames Crossing are continuing, including a meeting today regarding landscaping. The meeting was very useful, as it included the landscape designer. The proposed car park near the junction of Thong Lane and Shorne Ifield Road has been dropped in favour of a proposed 100-space car park including provision for horse boxes on the western side of Thong Lane, near The Inn On The Lake, which is preferable to Shorne Woods Country Park. The previous meeting was on Cultural Heritage. They have found an Iron Age hearth, which they will leave in situ, but nothing else that is particularly significant.

Highways England plan a further consultation this summer, which was originally intended to be on construction impacts, but the scope of the consultation may be extended. The DCO application is scheduled for later in the year.

152. Update from the Footpaths, Properties & Greens Committee

Ms Clifton reported that Tom Gozzett has carried out the first cut at Crabbles Bottom earlier this week. John Vilday has ordered the telegraph poles for the butts or bollards. Ms Clifton reported that the new gate at Shorne Recreation Ground has dropped at the catch end. She will contact the company AGS Hoarding who installed it as it is only been in less than 6 months.

153. Finance Report

Date	Description		Amount	VAT	Total
	B/F		£28,171.79	£2,011.84	£30,183.63
04/03/2021	BACS	Nest pension	£60.21	£0.00	£60.21
05/03/2021	BACS	Vodafone	£16.26	£3.25	£19.51
15/03/2021	BACS	SLCC	£154.00	£0.00	£154.00
15/03/2021	BACS	Expenses, Zoom July-March, stationery etc	£300.32	£53.40	£353.72
15/03/2021	BACS	HMRC	£211.15	£0.00	£211.15
15/03/2021	BACS	Town & Parish Websites	£984.00	£0.00	£984.00
15/03/2021	BACS	PKF Littlejohn	£200.00	£40.00	£240.00
15/03/2021	BACS	CPRE	£36.00	£0.00	£36.00
22/03/2021	BACS	Eslip	£19.00	£3.80	£22.80
24/03/2021	DD	Public Works Loan	£1,623.43	£0.00	£1,623.43
25/03/2021	BACS	Pop Up Café donation	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00
25/03/2021	BACS	KCC Bollards Brewers Road	£6,380.30	£0.00	£6,380.30
25/03/2021	BACS	Mrs Poole (Mar Salary)	£817.74	£0.00	£817.74
25/03/2021	BACS	Mr Lane expenses (litter pickers)	£48.24	£9.65	£57.89
25/03/2021	BACS	HMRC	£25.98	£0.00	£25.98
25/03/2021	BACS	P & S Property (war memorial cleaning)	£785.00	£157.00	£942.00
			£39,933.42	£2,278.94	£42,212.36

Mrs Poole reported that we have received a £900 grant from KALC towards the new website costs as KCC were going to do this for free, but then decided that we would have to pay. We have also received a contribution of £2,334 from Shorne Country Park towards the bollards in Brewers Road. The bollards cost more than expected as the VAT-inclusive figure that KCC provided did not include any VAT, so we are unable to reclaim the VAT.

Mr Lane asked about the HMRC payment, Mrs Poole advised that as the amount we have to pay is low, HMRC only require us to pay every 6 months, so the amount we have paid now takes us up to the end of March 2021.

Mrs Poole has submitted a VAT claim on 2nd April for the whole year.

Mrs Poole reported that Nationwide has informed us that the Treasurers Account will be discontinued, so we will need to find another bank. Mrs Poole has spoken to Barclays and Lloyds, but they are not doing any new accounts due to Covid-19. When the banks are open, Mrs Poole will investigate suitable accounts and report back to the Council for their preference.

Mrs Poole said that when we change from Nationwide for Crabbles Bottom, we need to inform the Investment Company of the change as they pay the interest into this account.

Mrs Poole will also look into setting up 'sinking fund' accounts or separate pots to provide general repair and renewal reserves for various identified assets, including the play equipment, with appropriate transfers from our annual precept. Mr Lane is concerned that having an unallocated floating reserve could potentially put us at risk in future years.

Mrs Poole reported that the works loan is now repaid, the last payment was made in March 2021. Mrs Poole also reported that we have underspent the precept by £3,444.60. This is largely due to not carrying out the repainting of the railings or the car park resurfacing during 2020/21.

Mr Lane sent an email to the new Scout Leader Suzanne Patrick to make her aware of our offer to provide a donation towards their proposed additional cabin. Mr Zgoda sent details of the proposed cabin and requested comments before the planning application is submitted. Mrs Lindley will respond to Mr Zgoda re planning application comments.

154. Internal Audit - Martin Thomas/PKF Littlejohn

Mrs Poole has a meeting on 14th April with Ms Clifton as Internal Pre Checks Officer, to go through the account before it is given to our Internal Auditor Martin Thomas on the 16th April. A Notice of Public Rights Accounts 2021 has been posted on the noticeboard and will remain on display until 21st May 2021. Mrs Poole requested Ms Clifton and Mrs Lindley to send her signed copies of the minutes of previous meetings held remotely, and Mr Lane to send a signed copy of the 25th February minutes agreed at this evening's meeting.

155. Report from Borough Councillor R Lane

At the Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee, Cllr Lane made the point that the protection given to Green Belt under the National Planning Policy Framework should override arbitrarily-set housing targets. However, officers and the controlling group are of the firm opinion that the Objectively Assessed Needs housing targets, together with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the densification of development taking place on urban and brownfield land, satisfies the exceptional circumstances required to permit the removal of land from the Green Belt to accommodate development. To be sustainable, such development will need to take account of local transport and facilities, i.e., not in remote isolated locations.

In the absence of Neighbourhood Plans or positive engagement from parishes, Gravesham Borough Council will determine where the development will take place.

Although not part of Cllr Lane's report, Mrs Lindley pointed out that she has responded on behalf of the Parish Council to any proposals put forward in public consultations.

156. To receive any report from County Councillor B Sweetland

Apologies received, nothing to report.

157. Correspondence requiring action

Mrs Poole reported that the KALC Gravesham Representative Forum had requested confirmation of our representatives. Ms Clifton has confirmed that it is herself. Mrs McCluskey confirmed that she is also willing to continue as a representative.

158. To agree the format for holding the Annual Parish Assembly online on 22nd April

This was discussed, and it was agreed that Parish Council Chairs would keep their reports brief at the online Annual Assembly. Full reports would need to be published in advance so that members of the public have the opportunity to raise any questions. Mrs Poole requested the reports from Ms Clifton and Mrs Lindley to be with her by the 12th April so they can be put on the website.

Mrs Poole reported that a lot of clubs have already sent in their reports and we are just waiting for a few. Letters are being sent out with joining instructions, and Mrs Poole will produce an agenda for posting on the website, noticeboards, and social media, asking members of the public to contact her for joining instructions.

159. Proposal to bring forward the Annual General Meeting to 6th May

As the Government has not extended the dispensation to hold mandatory meetings remotely beyond 6th May, it is proposed to bring the Annual General Meeting (which must take place during May) forward to 6th May. This was agreed by all Councillors.

160. General matters raised by Members for discussion

- (a) Mr Lane reported that has now fitted the new pads to the AED.
- (b) Ms Franks asked about the possibility of having litter bins in Park Pale to help reduce the amount of litter left by people parking there when visiting the Country Park. It was pointed out that vehicles are not permitted to enter Park Pale except for access, and there were concerns that the provision of litter bins would legitimise the unauthorised parking. However, it was felt that a litter bin near the entrance to the Country Park might help reduce the problem. Ms Clifton will speak to the Country Park about getting some bins at the entrance to the Country Park.
- (c) Ms Clifton reported that Speed Watch will start again on 9th April 2021.
- (d) Mr Lane reported that the Speed Indicator Device will be repositioned on Saturday 10th April.

161. To discuss the financial implications of COVID-19 on Shorne Village Hall.

Mr Lane has advised the Village Hall Management Committee that in view of the exceptional circumstances presented by the COVID-19 restrictions, the Parish Council had agreed in principle that it would be prepared to provide financial support if the need arises, but that this should be as a last resort.

The Management Committee has also been advised that before the Parish Council would consider providing financial support, it would need to receive a formal request, and would need to see the accounts, monthly forecasts of costs and revenues, and evidence of actions that the Village Hall has taken (eg grants, cost reductions, depletion of reserves, etc) to enable it to ascertain how much support it will need to provide, since this will inevitably need to be recovered from parishioners via the precept. Any request would need to be submitted in good time to allow proper consideration.

To date, no approach has been made to the Parish Council. The next meeting of Shorne Village Hall Management Committee is on 12th April.

Date of next Parish Council (annual general) meeting 6th May 2021

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.41