



Cowden Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING of
COWDEN PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
MONDAY 4 MAY 2021

(The Parish Council Meeting was held remotely via ZOOM)

PRESENT: Councillors: Glyn Henley, Andrew Saunders, Celia Berry and Stephen Boakes.
Also present: Councillor Matthew Dickins (Sevenoaks District Councillor), Councillor Peter Lake (Kent County Councillor) and Caroline Bizios (Parish Clerk).

Public Question Time:

Councillor Lake advised that this would be his last attendance at a Parish Council meeting having chosen not to stand again in the forthcoming elections. Councillor Lake expressed his pride at having been able to represent Cowden over the years at both District and County Council level. He considered Cowden Parish Council to be more active than any other parish he represents. He thanked the Parish Council for its support and advised that he will be briefing his successor and will ensure ongoing support to Cowden is a priority.

Councillor Henley thanked Councillor Lake for his support to the Parish over the years and on behalf of Members wished him a happy retirement.

Councillor Dickens reported on the following matters:

Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) had served an Article 4 Direction on a property at the end of Moat Lane. Article 4 Directions restrict the activities that can be carried out without planning permission.

The Council Tax support scheme has been approved and adopted.

In respect of the Local Plan, the next steps were to report to the Development and Conservation Advisory Committee.

SDC is working to establish how to manage the requirement to resume face-to-face meetings rather than continuing with holding meetings remotely.

An enormous amount of planning had been undertaken by SDC to ensure that the forthcoming elections could go ahead.

SDC has participated in the Department for Transport's night flights consultation and reinforced the view that ambient noise levels are far lower than the methodology used assumes.

The Neverworld Festival will not be taking place this year.

In respect of the Article 4 Direction served, Councillor Boakes commented that the Parish Council had raised its concerns in respect of this site during the planning consultation for a new entrance and hardstanding. At that time, the Parish Council expressed concerns to SDC that clearing the area of trees would present the potential for development on the site.

Councillor Saunders asked Councillor Dickins whether SDC were aware that at the site referred to as Land West of the Round House, an access point had been made through the hedge and that there was increased activity on the site. Councillor Saunders asked if Councillor Dickins could make Planning Enforcement aware of this recent activity.

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

MINUTES:

1. Election of Chairman

Resolved: Councillor Henley was unanimously elected as Chairman. Proposed by Councillor Saunders and seconded by Councillor Berry.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

Resolved: Councillor Saunders was unanimously elected as Vice-Chairman. Proposed by Councillor Boakes and seconded by Councillor Henley.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received from Councillor Millgate.

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Berry declared an interest in agenda item 13 as an allotment holder.

Councillor Boakes declared an interest in agenda item 15 as a member of Cowden Parochial Church Council (CPCC).

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved: The Minutes from the Parish Council Meeting held on 12 April 2021 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting with the following amendment:

Agenda item 17 to include the request made by Councillor Saunders for Councillors Millgate and Berry to undertake the annual inspection of trees on land owned or managed by the Parish Council.

6. Clerk's Report

The Clerk's Report was circulated and noted.

7. Highways

(a) Highways Report:

Highways report previously circulated and noted.

The Clerk reported that potholes along Moat Lane had been logged onto the Kent Highways fault report system and that Councillor Lake had been advised.

The Clerk was requested to log the multiple potholes along Spode Lane, particularly by Waystrode and to report the general poor condition of the highway.

8. Aircraft Noise

Councillor Saunders to circulate a summary of the night flights consultation document received.

9. Broadband

The Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) had issued a consultation/call for evidence on improving broadband connectivity to very hard to reach areas. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had invited input to the consultation from Parish Councils. Councillor Saunders agreed to try and establish broadband speeds in areas on the periphery of the Parish where it was known that speed issues were being experienced. This information would be included in a response to NALC.

10. Website Accessibility Compliance

The Clerk reported that a copy of the Parish Council's Privacy and Accessibility Statements had been submitted to Aubergine. The Clerk had attended an on-line training session and was working to establish what was now required in terms of adding content onto the new website platform. Councillor Saunders agreed to provide support the Clerk in terms of adding the required content. The Clerk to discuss timescales for launch of the live website with Aubergine.

11. Financial Matters

(a) Accounts for Payment:

Resolved: Accounts for Payment approved as set out below:

Payee	Description	Amount (£)
Mrs C Bizios	Reconciliation Payment & Expenses	239.62
HMRC	Tax & NI	403.96
TOTAL		643.58

(b) Financial Report:

Financial Report circulated and noted.

(c) Internal Audit:

The Clerk reported that a date had been confirmed for the Parish Council's internal audit which would take place on Monday 7 June.

(d) Bank Reconciliation:

Bank reconciliation together with supporting bank statements to 31 March 2021 provided to Members for review and information.

The Clerk reported that a Community Infrastructure Levy payment of £479.38 had been paid to the Parish Council by Sevenoaks District Council.

12. Recreation Ground

Planning application documentation had been submitted to Sevenoaks District Council in respect of the siting of a storage shed on behalf of the Sports Association.

Email correspondence had been received from Ms N Potter, owner of the field behind the pavilion expressing her objection to the planning application based on her belief that the hedge was to be removed for the siting of the storage shed. The Clerk had responded to Ms Potter advising that there was no intention of removing the hedge.

A request had been received from Cowden Cricket Club requesting permission to site a water tank behind the pavilion and to erect directional signage on the Memorial Hall car park. Members considered the installation of a water tank to be a matter for consideration by the Sports Association in the first instance rather than the Parish Council. The request for signage on the Memorial Hall car park was a matter for consideration by the Memorial Hall Committee.

13. Allotments

The Clerk reported that the clearance work on the allotments had recently been undertaken. Councillor Berry reported, however, that the plot on the right hand side when entering from Church Street had not been cleared. The Clerk to contact Landscape Services regarding this.

14. Burial Ground Matters

The Clerk reported that Les Putman had cut back the overgrown Laurel in the Old Burial Ground. He had advised, however, that the height of the Laurel would need to be addressed but disposal of the waste vegetation was an issue. Councillor Boakes agreed to seek permission for

the waste clippings to be burnt on the Churchyard bonfire if arrangements could be made to move the waste to the bonfire site.

Councillor Henley agreed to contact the manager at Sussex House Farm regarding the disposal of the spoil heap in the New Burial Ground.

15. Churchyard Maintenance:

Correspondence had been sent by the Parish Council to Cowden Parochial Church Council (CPCC) confirming that the Parish Council will assume responsibility for the routine maintenance of the Churchyard from April 2022. A meeting had been arranged on 15 May for the Clerk to meet with CPCC representatives to discuss and agree the way forward.

16. Asset Repair and Maintenance:

The Clerk to source quotation for repairs to the broken window in the bus shelter.

17. Correspondence Received

Nothing to report.

18. Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies

Nothing to report.

19. Matters for Reporting or Inclusion on Future Agenda

Approval of Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/2021

Approval of Accounting Statements 2020/2021

20. Dates of Future Parish Council Meetings:

Changes to legislation which effect all local councils, has removed the ability for the Parish Council to hold full meetings of the Parish Council remotely. From May 6 face-to-face meetings for full meetings of the Parish Council must resume. In order to comply with this legislative change and to comply with Government COVID-19 regulations, the date of the Parish Council meetings held in June and July have changed. The July meeting of the Parish Council has been cancelled. Future dates for full Parish Council meetings are confirmed below and will be held at the Memorial Hall:

Monday 28 June

Monday 13 September

Monday 8 November

Monday 13 December

Changes to legislation in respect of the resumption of face-to-face meetings does not apply to meetings of the Planning Committee. Since March 2019 the Parish Council has adopted a different approach for reviewing and responding to with planning applications relevant to the Parish and Members agreed that this approach should continue.

Information in respect of planning applications open for consultation will be listed on the Parish Council's website. Members of the public are able to provide comments to SDC in respect of any planning application directly, or provide their comments to the Clerk. Members will provide comments in respect of a planning application to the Chairman of the Planning Committee who will formulate the Parish Council's response. Once the response is agreed by Members it will be submitted to SDC by the Clerk. Any comments from the Parish Council can be viewed by members of the public on the SDC's website.

The Chairman of the Planning Committee reserves the right to convene a face-to-face meeting in the event that a planning committee received for consultation is deemed to be of a significant or contentious nature.

Meeting closed at 8.35pm

Chairman: Date:.....