

WESTBERE PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING - HELD TUESDAY AT 7.30PM on 18 February 2020

Present: Parish Councillors: Tom Hopkins (Chairman), Stephen Laws, Sylvia Harlow, Karen Williams, and Kathy Wilson.

Clerk to the Council, Amanda Sparkes.

Canterbury City Councillor Georgina Glover (for part of the meeting)

Kent County Councillor Cllr Alan Marsh (for part of the meeting)

No residents.

1. The Chairman's opening remarks and apologies for absence

Cllr Hopkins welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Parish Cllr Maria Morcom (family commitment), and Canterbury City Councillor Louise Harvey-Quirke (although she had sent a report, embedded in these Minutes below).

2. Vacancy on the Council

Following the resignation of Joshua Croucher on 12 January 2020 relevant notices were posted, and CCC electoral services have now confirmed that no election has been called for, and the parish council may co-opt to the vacancy. This will be advertised on the noticeboards and next newsletter.

3. Declarations of Interests – None.

4. Minutes of the last meeting held 21 January 2020 :

All councillors agreed that these were a true record of the meeting and the Chairman of the meeting duly signed them.

5. Chairman's Report and Councillors' Reports

Cllr Hopkins – Cllr Hopkins had nothing to report not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Cllr Laws - Cllr Laws had nothing to report not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Cllr Williams – Cllr Williams advised that the date she and the Clerk had set aside to inspect all the village drains had to be rescheduled due to a storm, and a new date of Sunday 1 March is now agreed.

Cllr Harlow – Cllr Harlow advised she has sent the KMBR data for birds, mammals and reptiles. She had nothing else to report not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Cllr Wilson – Cllr Wilson reminded all residents to be vigilant and report suspicious behaviours. A shed in Bushy Hill Road was recently broken into.

The councillors authorised her to purchase a new Neighbourhood Watch sign for both ends of Walnut Tree Lane and seek reimbursement for these.

6. KCC Cllr Alan Marsh report

A push to extend the 30mph limit from Sturry (Fairview Gardens) along the A28 as far as Hersden

This was first discussed at the September 2019 meeting. A speed limit reduction is in the previous parish plan. And a crash history should exist to support the request. A reduction in the speed of traffic would help reduce speeding of drivers travelling in to the village's 20mph zone if they were travelling at a lower speed to start with. Councillors have witnessed incidents of crashes in to cars that were waiting to turn right into Bushy Hill Road and Church Lane and there have been similar accidents at the Pennington Close entrance. The Babs Oak Hill turning and other junctions on the Sturry side are also affected. The provision of all the new homes being built and planned will only make the situation worse. A reduction should be considered from Sturry up to the roundabout at The Hoplands/Care Home as a minimum or even as far as the Lakesview roundabout.

Hersden Parish Council is unanimously supportive of this initiative and Sturry Parish Council is to discuss it at their next meeting.

KCC Cllr Alan Marsh again confirmed that a Traffic Regulation Order should not be required as the new Persimmon development planned for Hersden will have a 20mph zone plus there is to be another 20mph zone in the Popes Lane area current roads in Sturry, and therefore the A28 between the two will be the connection link, so he is looking to make this all one zone, although this will take some time to implement. Cllr Marsh explained he will have no update until its all put together with the emerging Persimmon development and the Sturry Relief Road applications.

Sturry Relief Road and viaduct

The Relief road is in two parts – the housing application (CA/17/01383/OUT) and the KCC road application including the bridge over the River Stour (KCC/CA/0091/2019). Cllr Marsh advised that a bid for £5.9m needed an approval from CCC for the housing element by 14 February but this did not happen so CCC set an emergency meeting for 19 February but this date could not be met for the required information in the officer reports. So the new KCC Leader sought an extension until May 2020. Cllr Marsh explained that KCC will forward-fund the £6m for the bridge and viaduct over the River Stour. This will be completed in 2022 or later.

Cllr Marsh also advised that KCC passed its budget in February with an increased budget for adult social care of 2%. He commented that six care homes have closed recently. There is also an extra £30m allocated to Highways.

7.

City Cllr reports

Cllr Louise Harvey-Quirke

Although CCC Cllr Louise Harvey-Quirke had sent apologies to the meeting she also provided the following written report:

"I wanted to make you aware of two things I have personally been working on –

- I have been appointed to the new Housing Working Group. This group will be working with CCC officers and executives on the (potential) smooth transition to 'in-House' management of services, from East Kent Housing.
- as promised, I have continued to chip away at Network Rail and Southeastern in regards to a second ticket machine and better pedestrian access at Sturry station. Both Councillor Rachel Carnac, from Reculver, and I have been working on this and will be tabling a motion at full council on Thursday, asking to improve access and infrastructure at stations across the District. But, in particular, Sturry.

Finally, during a meeting last week, I asked the Leader of the Council to abolish the 20% 'premium' charge on early morning, Canterbury parking. I'm pleased to say that this was agreed and passed at Council, during the budget meeting, last week. There will still be a small increase. However, the premium charge will no longer be applied."

Cllr Georgina Glover

Cllr Glover advised that she and Cllr Harvey-Quirke had had a meeting with CCC officers for an update on the Two Fields site, especially with regard to CCC's current Call for Sites for development running until June. There is no news/update at this time.

Cllr Glover also advised that Church Lane is temporarily closed under KCC licence until 20 February as her house lost all electricity on 13 February 2020. She has been provided with a generator although this has been temperamental. A gas leak was also found although this has been fixed but which held up the electricity board.

Cllr Glover explained that she has been busy with meetings at CCC including budget setting, the CCC offices not being environmentally friendly and being not fit for purpose, and also the future of the waste contract.

8. Adjournment for residents' participation

As there were no residents present there was no adjournment.
The meeting continued.

9. Planning Matters

CCC review of the Canterbury District Local Plan.

As part of the CCC review of the CDLP, CCC has invited all the parish councils in the district to individual sessions to talk about the Local Plan review and any aspirations for the Parish and the District over the next 20 years. The sessions will be informal workshops for Clerks and parish councillors only and the local Ward Councillors will also be invited. A session on 28 February 2020 has now been arranged which the Clerk and Cllrs Harlow, Hopkins and Laws will attend. A list of discussion topics was finalised.

Village Green status application to KCC for the Two Fields site

NOTED that the Sturry and Westbere Two Fields Action Group submitted an application for the Two Fields to be designated a Village Green to KCC at County Hall on 08 November 2019. 70 residents of Westbere and Sturry submitted Evidence Questionnaires along with their memories of using the fields and photographs. Cllr Laws advised that 08 March 2020 is the closing date and the application will move to the next stage thereafter.

A new fence line of stock fencing has been put up along the Eastern field behind Westbere Lane by the landowner (not owned by Bellway Homes.) It is believed that conservation area consent should maybe have been obtained to erect this fencing. Cllr Glover agreed to make enquiries at CCC about this.

A stile has also been put up on the official public right of way, where there wasn't one before and which causes accessibility issues – a kissing gate would be preferable. The entrance used to have a kissing gate which has been broken for some time. The Clerk will take a look and photograph this and talk about the obstruction with the KCC PROW team.

New planning applications:

CA/20/00088 - Kemp Hall, 31 Westbere Lane, Westbere, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 0HH

Proposed single-storey outbuilding with extension of existing vehicular access together with conversion of the existing listed outbuilding to ancillary living accommodation.

And

CA/20/00089 - : Kemp Hall, 31 Westbere Lane, Westbere, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 0HH

Application for listed building consent for external and internal alterations including replacement of existing and installation of new windows, replacement of existing garage doors with brickwork to form ancillary living accommodation, together with proposed detached single-storey outbuilding.

CA/20/00419 - Rose Cottage, 9 Church Lane, Westbere, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 0HA

Proposed use of garage and outbuilding as ancillary accommodation.

And NOTED the following new application in Hersden:

CA/20/00100 - Application for approval of reserved matters for part of Phase 2, relating to appearance, layout and scale for the erection of a nursery (D1 use class) with associated external work area including playspace and parking, pursuant to outline planning permission CA/16/00404/OUT.

Notifications:

CA/19/10292 – Parsonage House, 2 Church Lane

Proposed detached single-storey outbuilding, two-storey rear extension, patio and swimming pool following demolition of existing conservatory – GRANTED by CCC

10. Joint network meeting of all Cllrs and Clerks of Westbere, Hersden Parish Council and Sturry Parish Council

Clerks and Cllrs from Hersden, Sturry and Westbere Parish Councils met informally on 4 February 2020 in the Yew Tree. KCC Cllr Alan Marsh also attended. It was a productive networking meeting. There is goodwill from all three councils to work together. One idea raised by a councillor was whether the three parishes (and possibly Fordwich too) could group together to do a joint Neighbourhood Plan. The council will ask CCC this question at the 28 February 2020 CDLP session. People at the informal gathering felt that there could be merit in the 3 parishes meeting again, perhaps hosting in turn, and perhaps on a quarterly basis or similar, and perhaps invite Fordwich Town Council too. The Clerk will speak to the Sturry Clerk to try and arrange a date in June.

11. AUTHORISATION OF ACCOUNTS

The expenditure list circulated to Cllrs as Appendix 3 totalling £1,306.83 was authorised for payment.

12. FINANCIAL MATTERS

RECEIVED the bank statements and bank reconciliation for January 2020, and RESOLVED the signature of a councillor other than the Chairman thereon;

The Pensions Regulator – Re-declaration of compliance

Every three years there is a duty to re-declare compliance with the Pensions Regulator. NOTED that the Clerk completed the online re-declaration of compliance on 22 January 2020.

KCC LGPS – Local Government Pension Scheme

NOTED that the Actuary for the KCC Local Government Pension Scheme has completed his tri-annual report and that the employer contribution rate from 1 April 2020 for the next three years to 31 March 2023 will increase from 19.9% to 23.9%. This is an extra £23.94 per month.

Sturry Fordwich Westbere Twinning Association

Cllr Morcom had emailed the Clerk and councillors prior to the meeting to explain that the Twinning Association committee are looking for money to help fund the Twinning Day when the French members are coming to Kent in May 2020. They will also be applying to Sturry Parish Council for some funding, and wondered if Westbere would consider a donation too.

The parish councillors discussed this but felt that it was not clear what the request was for and there was no information on what the Twinning Association's own funds situation is. All councillors felt that a donation would not be ruled out for the future but that no donation should be offered at present.

The future of Concurrent Function Funding

Canterbury City Council is considering the future options for the concurrent functions funding budget and will hold a stakeholder event to explore the options for CFF for 2021/22 onwards on 27 February 2020. For Westbere:

The CFF award in the final year (2020-2021) of the four-year funding agreement will be £4,094.

The grounds maintenance contractor tender alone is £2,840.

The precept this year is £14,423. (which is a 20% increase on last year's).

To add £4,094 if there were no award at all would be a 33% plus increase to Westbere's residents on their precept.

The Clerk and Cllr Harlow can attend this session on 27th March and the Clerk has booked their places.

Capital grant application for 2019-2020

The parish council received a CCC capital grant of £ 577 for a backless bench to be provided on the site of the removed telephone box on Staines Hill. Match-funding is required for the balance from the parish council. Kent Highways require an approved contractor holding their certificate to undertake works on a highway. The Clerk has arranged this with the parish council's usual contractor. Kent Highways also require a permit to undertake work on the highway which has to be applied for by the parish council – the Clerk has completed the permit and supplied the required information and the contractor should install the bench by the middle of March 2020.

New bank mandate and new signatory

NOTED that Lloyds Bank has confirmed that all three mandate variations have now been processed – these remove Jeanette Dawson and Georgina Glover as signatories and add Cllr Karen Williams and Cllr Tom Hopkins as new signatories.

Website Accessibility Regulations (by 1 September 2020) and current KCC EIS website hosting

NOTED that as per the resolution at the January 2020 meeting KCC Cantium has been appointed as the new parish council's website host. This was originally quoted at £995 for the first year (and £675 for the subsequent years (based on a 3-year contract)), but the Clerk heard on 23 January 2020 that Kent County Council has made a recent political decision relating to the transition of the KCC EIS Parish Websites onto a new platform developed and delivered by Cantium Business Solutions (CBS). After a number of representations from Parish Councils and KALC, KCC has made a decision to supplement the first year development/operating cost for those councils currently with EIS and with a precept below £30k PA for the 2019/2020 financial year. In effect, this means that those Parish Councils with a precept of less than £30K per annum for 2019/2020 will not need to find the transition cost or support charge for the first year of the new contract with Cantium Business Solutions. From the start of year two onwards Parish Councils with a precept under £30k who have transitioned to the new platform will be expected to pick up the support and maintenance charges as agreed with CBS until the contract is terminated.

13. Overgrown bank at Walnut Tree Lane

This item is carried forward. The Clerk has not yet contacted the residents who suggested/urged improvements.

14. Tree works at village green and in the churchyards

For the Village Green Cherry tree the Clerk advised the contractor to: Remove dead wood, trim all round to neaten and shorten the heavy, low horizontal limb to an upright growth point around 2m from the stem. Conservation area consent has been given but the work has not yet been carried out. The Clerk will ask the contractor when the work is to be carried out. The Christmas tree lights are still on the tree and this could be why the work has not been undertaken. The Clerk will ask for them to be removed asap.

The same contractor was also awarded further tree work in the churchyards but these required conservation area permission and a planning application for this was submitted to CCC and approval given on 6 December. The contractor undertook the work on 22 and 23 January 2020.

15. Possible tree stump art sculpture for feature tree in the West Churchyard, should tree be felled

At the September 2019 meeting the Clerk explained that the Arboriculture Survey done earlier in the year highlighted the need to consider felling a large Cypress in the West Churchyard. It is a feature tree and its loss would impact. The Clerk therefore suggested that the parish council consider the tree being felled to a height of 6-8 feet and then the stump crafted into an artwork/sculpture. The parish council felt that this was a very good idea. This could form a capital grant to CCC in 2020 for up to 50% of the carving costs. However as noted above in light of Cllr Morcom's feedback on WVPS not liking the idea on aesthetic and financial reasons, the parish council will consult more widely with all the village residents in the next newsletter.

The Clerk explained she has sourced a Kent based chain saw carver and sculpture but will put making enquiries on hold, along with enquiries to Strode Park about their sculptures and who did them for a further quote, pending the residents' comments.

16. Clerk report - The Clerk report had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. Most items are included elsewhere in these Minutes.

Canterbury City Council Corporate Plan consultation

CCC is consulting on its draft Corporate Plan for the next two years. The Corporate Plan is one of the council's key strategic documents and is developed so councillors can set the agenda and priorities for the council. It is used by council officers to help them focus their energies and increasingly-limited resources, implement agreed priorities and formulate future policy. It also helps them shape the way services are delivered. Read the draft plan at

<https://news.canterbury.gov.uk/downloads/download/2/draft-corporate-plan-2020---2022>

The draft plan for 2020 to 2022 proposes four priorities:

- Priority One: We will take a leading role in tackling climate change across the district
 - Priority Two: We will deliver our services effectively and efficiently ensuring we do all we can to get them right the first time
 - Priority Three: We will help to increase prosperity throughout the district in as sustainable a way as we can
 - Priority Four: We will focus our increasingly scarce resources on meeting the needs of our communities
- Give views using the questionnaire at <https://www.snapsurveys.com/wh/s.asp?k=157926863336> by 23 March 2020. All the feedback CCC receives will be reported to councillors before the final Corporate Plan is adopted.

17. Environment

The Clerk will report a large and dangerous pothole in Westbere Lane at the back of the convent.

The Clerk was asked to write to the convent explaining that their hedge is very overgrown and with ivy encroaching into the road from the A28 into the village.

18. Inspection of the village drains

Cllr Williams and the Clerk will meet on Sunday 01 March 2020 to inspect all the drains in the village and report any defects.

Cllr Glover commented that there is an awful lot of leaf litter in the village. The road sweeper came out but was seen driving through Church Lane but without the actual sweepers down to clear leaves and debris. The leaves are making the roads very slippery and it does not help that several of the drains are blocked.

19. Annual Electors' meeting

A date needs to be set for the Annual Electors' meeting. The Clerk will ask the hall booking clerk for available dates for the hall from 6.30pm and circulate these to the councillors.

20. Sandwich train station and platform lengthening

The Clerk advised that she had heard that the platforms at Sandwich train station have been/are being lengthened, possibly because of the Sandwich Golf Open in July 2020. Westbere Parish Council still feels that if the platforms at Sturry train station can be lengthened to avoid train overhang across the level crossing barriers then the barrier down time can be shortened and the traffic would flow better. The councillors authorised the Clerk to do a Freedom Of Information request to Network Rail about the lengthening of the platforms at Sandwich train station, and ask: Why was this done? What was the need? Were feasibility studies undertaken? What was the cost? Who is paying? What is the full scope of the work? Has it involved the moving of signals?

With that information a further request to ask for Sturry station lengthening may then be considered.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm

Signed: Date:

Chairman

Please note these Minutes remain as draft Minutes until they are approved by the parish council at their next parish council meeting

Dates of future meetings: 17 March, Annual Electors Meeting – date tbc, 21 April, 19 May, 16 June, 21 July, no meeting in August, 15 September, 20 October, 17 November, no meeting in December 2020.

Other diary dates: Village Green Party on the green Sunday 5 July 2020.