

WESTBERE PARISH COUNCIL
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING - HELD TUESDAY AT 7.30PM on 21 January 2020

Present: Parish Councillors: Karen Williams (Chairman for the meeting), Sylvia Harlow, Maria Morcom, 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 Williams was Chairman for the meeting in the informed absence of the elected Chairman and Vice Chairman for this meeting. She welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Tom Hopkins (Chairman) – work commitment, Stephen Laws (Vice Chairman) – work commitment, and Canterbury City Councillor Louise Harvey-Quirke (at a CCC meeting).

2. Resignation of Parish Cllr Joshua Croucher

Joshua Croucher resigned as a parish councillor on 12 January 2020 as he is relocating to London. The Clerk has informed CCC electoral services and put up the relevant notices on the village noticeboards. Provided there is no request from 10 residents for a by-election then the parish council will be able to co-opt to the vacancy from 1 February 2020.

3. Declarations of Interests – None.

4. Minutes of the last meeting held 19 November 2019 :

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

5. Chairman's Report and Councillors' Reports

Cllr Williams – Cllr Williams had nothing to report.

Cllr Harlow – Cllr Harlow advised she has collated the KMBR data for birds, mammals and reptiles and will send this off shortly.

She attended a meeting of the Westbere Green Spaces Protection group on 13 January 2020 – there is concern about run off especially down Westbere Lane which is affecting listed buildings and causing problems like damp. The reason for this increase in run off is the high rainfall of the last few months. The Westbere Green Spaces Protection group feel there should be no more building on the Westbere side of the A28 as this will make run off problems worse.

Cllr Morcom – Cllr Morcom advised she went to the Sturry Fordwich Westbere Twinning Association meeting held on 19 December 2019 and was made welcome. The next meeting is in February. They are a new committee, who are setting up a programme for 2020. Events are advertised in the Westbere parish council newsletters. The Association would like Westbere residents to get involved.

Cllr Morcom advised that she attended the last WVPS meeting on 09 December 2019. She reported back on the current Walnut Tree bank situation and the parish council decisions made at the November 2019 parish council meeting. One WVPS member thought that the bank was owned by CCC but ownership enquiries have not established this.

WVPS discussed the parish council idea about the large feature Cypress tree in the closed churchyard needing to be felled in the next two years and the parish council suggestion that the stump be left at 6-8 feet and be made into a sculpture. Cllr Morcom explained that the majority of the WVPS members were very opposed to this – for aesthetic and financial reasons. There is a possibility of a CCC grant for up to 50% of the carving costs. The parish council will consult more widely with all

the village residents in the next newsletter. The Clerk commented that there needs to be positive comments to be able to apply for a capital grant.

Cllr Morcom also advised that the WVPS are to consider a Christmas Party for both adults and children in 2020. They are also to hold an Archives exhibition in the Yew Tree pub during the evening of 6 February 2020 which residents are invited to.

Cllr Morcom commented that the Book Library has been very well received and is very well stocked. It also has some maps and cassettes too.

A resident has given thanks via Cllr Morcom for the organising of the new 20mph roundels in the village.

Cllr Morcom also explained that there is a For Sale sign at Russet Orchard on the A28. Cllr Glover advised she had looked at the details online and it is for part of the site as a small building plot.

Cllr Wilson – Cllr Wilson explained that she is dealing with Neighbourhood Watch reports in Herne Bay Police Station every Thursday again. She has also erect a new/replacement NHDW sign and a cheque was written for £8 at the meeting to reimburse her for this.

Cllr Wilson explained that she was contacted by a resident who has advised that milk is being stolen off doorsteps locally.

Cllr Wilson also advised that there had been a village hall meeting in January and there will be a Quiz on 18 April 2020 to raise funds for the hall.

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 explained 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.

Sturry Relief Road and viaduct

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. But it is dependent on:

The Sturry new development planning application CA17/01383/OUT

The old Greenfields site is a strategic site for approximately 800 new homes and the application is going to the CCC Planning meeting on 04 February 2020. The plans/layout include the Sturry Relief Road to the viaduct in the KCC application within this new application. But the draft S106 Agreement says there will be no requirement for a planning contribution to the road until the 250th house is built.

Additional PROWS across the Two Fields site at Staines Hill

Cllr Marsh explained that he has pushed the manager of the PROW team at KCC for a faster turnaround for this application to be determined but the Head of the team has explained there is a lack of resource and a backlog restricting this.

7. City Cllr reports

Cllr Georgina Glover explained that CCC had an emergency Policy and Resources meeting and CCC voted to give a bursary to the medical school at UKC.

Herne Bay and Whitstable towns have been awarded plastic-free status awards with traders using paper bags and recyclable cups etc.

CCC is to bring in charges in the region of £45 per year for the collection of green garden waste, as a savings measure. This will be optional for residents, who may wish to consider a composter instead.

There is a concern that this action will increase fly tipping and/or landfill waste.

Cllr Glover explained that there is a large extension planned for the Northgate Medical Practice and all the public car park will be lost, but services will expand.

Cllr Glover was also saddened to report that an 80 year old Hersden resident was attacked and left for dead on 16 January 2020 – he was airlifted to hospital.

8. Adjournment for residents' participation

As there were no residents present there was no adjournment.

The meeting continued.

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

A date of Tuesday 4 February 2020 from 7.30pm in the Yew Tree has been set. The Clerk has booked out a section of the pub and made enquiries about the cost of 'nibbles' too. Cllrs will be expected to buy their own drinks. The Clerk has invited the Clerks and all parish councillors from Hersden and Sturry to attend and also invited the city and county councillors also. The city and county councillors are to attend the CCC Planning meeting but hope to arrive late.

The Clerk will confirm numbers and catering arrangements with the Yew Tree. She explained that city councillor Louise Harvey-Quirke has kindly offered funding from her opportunities fund of £150 towards the catering. The Clerk has completed the application form for this.

10. Planning Matters

CCC review of the Canterbury District Local Plan.

CCC is reviewing the CDLP which will provide a vision for the District to 2040. An important part of the preparation of the Plan is to assess its impact on the environment as well as the social and economic impacts. CCC has prepared a Draft Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report, which sets out how they intend to approach this assessment. Details at

www.canterbury.gov.uk/scoping-report

The following response was sent in December 2019:

Westbere Parish Council has considered the Draft Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment and Scoping Report and would make the following comments:

1. Chapter 4: Air quality

Island Road (A28 from the Sturry Level crossing through to Upstreet) is not mentioned, and the parish council feel it is important to factor Island Road into the review. There are over 1,100 new homes planned for Broad Oak and Sturry, 500 at a strategic site at Hersden and the permissions for Hoplands Farm and Old Colliery sites also to provide circa a further 500. The additional traffic generated by this housing together has potentially serious implications for air quality both before and after the construction of any Sturry relief road. These issues need to be addressed and the situation carefully monitored as the developments progress. Even a temporary deterioration pending the completion or implementation of any mitigating measures would be both legally and politically unacceptable.

2. Chapter 13: For "Sustainability Appraisal Framework"

There is a key sustainability objective but no mention of the provision of infrastructure to support new houses. The parish council consider that sustainability is clearly unachievable without cast iron guarantees being in place to secure that any new houses are supported by the transport, and other infrastructure they need to prevent damage to the environment and allow the occupation and use of the new housing in a way that reinforces the sustainability objective. The scoping report is relatively unclear about the methodology to be employed in determining housing need and the extent to which it will comprise need generated from outside the district. There should be a determination not to address such needs until all measures to achieve the sustainability of the housing to meet such needs are not only guaranteed but also in place.

3. Chapter 14: Transport

31 For cycling, there is no mention of the possible provision of new cycle routes from the east and the new housing in Sturry and Hersden into the city. One way these could be provided would alongside the riverside walk? The absence of a purpose built segregated cycle route along the route is a significant disincentive to the use of cycle for access to the City which would support the sustainability and air quality objectives.

3.2 Furthermore, it is important to try and factor in a new bypass that could connect Sturry/Fordwich to St Martin's Hill/Littlebourne to enable traffic to totally bypass the city centre.

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 Councillor(s) will also be invited.

CCC would like to meet parish councils during January and February 2020.

A session on 28 February 2020 has now been arranged which the Clerk and Cllrs Harlow, Hopkins and Laws will attend, venue tbc.

The Clerk will put together a discussion points list and circulate to councillors.

A28 Link Road

KCC/CA/0091/2019 - Construction of part of a new road (A28 Link Road) including viaduct between A28 Sturry Road and A291 Sturry Hill and associated on-line improvements. A28 Sturry Link Road, Sturry, Canterbury.

The update is as per KCC Cllr report above.

Westbere Parish Council sent the following representation on 28 November 2019:

Representation sent by email to:

Kent County Council : planning.applications@kent.gov.uk

Copied to Canterbury City Council : planning@canterbury.gov.uk

Response to documents, plans, and drawings notified in October 2019 in respect of Planning Application No. : KCC/CA0091/2019 for the construction of part of a new road (A28 Link Road) including a viaduct between A28 Sturry Road and A291 Sturry Hill

Westbere Parish Council fully supports Sturry Parish Council's written representation to these planning documents, and in particular the following comments:

Sturry train station and barrier down time

No evidence has been provided to show that Canterbury City Council (CCC) or Kent County Council (KCC) have worked with Network Rail and the train operator Southeastern to determine what changes could be made to reduce the time when the level crossing barriers at Sturry (and other level crossings between Ashford and Ramsgate via Canterbury West) are

down.

One of the main causes of traffic congestion and build up on the A28 is the result of the Sturry train station barrier down time.

Both Sturry Parish Council and Westbere Parish Council consider that a simple solution could be to require the train operators to allow passengers to alight from the rear 4 train carriages at the Sturry train station, so that the train does not stop over the level crossing, thereby reducing the barrier down time and allowing movement of traffic.

Subsequently updating the signalling and providing platforms long enough for all trains stopping in Sturry to do so on the platforms sited on the east side of the level crossing linked by footbridge with a lift should be a priority. In addition rather than considering new roads the feasibility of constructing a train bridge to avoid having a level crossing in Sturry should be carefully examined.

Cumulative and in-combination impacts from all the planned developments

Westbere Parish Council supports Sturry Parish Council's call for the cumulative and in-combination impacts from all the planned developments in the Canterbury District Local Plan on the road network to be properly assessed and a sustainable integrated transport plan to be planned and adopted instead of the Sturry Link Road. There is a legal requirement under the Town and Country Planning (Environment Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regs), and under the Scoping Opinion dated 7 April 2017, to consider the cumulative and in-combination impacts arising from planning applications CA/17/01383, CA/18/00868, and all the planned developments in the Canterbury District that are underway or in the pipeline. This has not been fulfilled and it would be unlawful to grant planning permission to the Sturry Link Road because there is insufficient environmental information to determine all of the environmental effects of the proposal as required by Regulation 18(4) and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations.

Congestion and air pollution

By accommodating and encouraging additional vehicle journeys that will be generated from the proposed new dwellings in the Canterbury District the Sturry Link Road will add considerably to congestion and air pollution in Sturry, Broad Oak, Westbere and Hersden, having a deleterious impact on parishioners and the environment. The Sturry Link Road is a key component in the proposed development of over 1000 new dwellings in Sturry and Broad Oak and it was estimated that those new dwellings alone would generate 6000 - 7000 additional vehicle movements / day in Sturry and Broad Oak.

However, the overall impact to Sturry, Broad Oak, Westbere and Hersden would be much greater once the 15,000 other new dwellings proposed in Canterbury, Herne Bay, Hersden, and Westbere, extended park and rides and new slip roads have been built.

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.

The 70 questionnaires showed that 86% of respondents visit the fields at least weekly with half of the 86% visiting daily. All of them said that they see other people there when using the land so they represent a far larger body of people. The most popular activities are walking and dog walking but

many people also enjoy running, cycling, horse riding, nature rambles, bird watching, foraging for berries and mushrooms, photography and, of course, children play there. The application had to show that residents have been using the fields, as of right, for at least 20 years. The questionnaires clearly showed that this is the case with 60% of respondents having used the land for at least 20 years and 40% of the total respondents for more than 30 years. It is also pleasing that the respondents were fairly evenly split from the areas around the fields - Westbere, Fairview Gardens and Island Road and the roads north of it. The first step is to have the application accepted. There is a backlog of up to 3 and a half years for applications to be assessed and for a decision. However, if Bellway submit a planning application before a decision, the fact that there is an application submitted will hopefully be taken into account.

Update from Lisa Laws 18 December 2019 detailing the KCC Officer update sent on 17 December:

"I have been waiting for confirmation from the Planning Inspectorate that we are able to take your application forward, which I have only just received this morning. I am pleased to confirm that the County Council is able to investigate your application to register the land known as Two Fields at Westbere as a new Village Green. The application has been given the reference VGA681 (which should be quoted in all correspondence) and added to our schedule of applications.

I shall begin working on the application in the New Year and will be in touch again then to confirm the arrangements"

"Village Green applications are often complex and time-consuming to resolve so really cannot give you any idea of timescales at this stage I'm afraid.

There is an initial process which involves a 28-day consultation, followed by an opportunity for you as the applicant to comment on any representations received to the application (normally a further 28 days). Thereafter, it really depends upon the nature of any objections received (and whether any legal advice is required) or whether any further information is required from you and/or the objector to enable the application to be determined. There is often a lot of information relating to a particular application and I have to go through it all before I can make any assessment on it. If a Public Inquiry is required (normally where there is a conflict of evidence on paper which requires oral testimony to be given), this can add many months - or even years - to the process to give everyone time to prepare and for the Inspector to produce a report.

We do not have any Officer delegated powers for Village Greens, so all applications are ultimately referred to the County Council's Regulation Committee Member Panel for final decision. I'm sorry that I can't be more precise and I wouldn't want to create any unrealistic expectations for you by attempting to put a timescale on it."

NOTED that the parish council sent a letter to the KCC officer on 3 January 2020 in support of the action group's village green application. The officer has acknowledged receipt of this.

New planning applications:

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

This is a very large, significant and ambitious build.

The parish council is not opposed to it but has concerns about the deliveries to serve the build.

There is no mention in the planning application of the preschool that runs five days a week in the village hall next door. The parish council will write to CCC with a request for a condition restricting delivery times so that they do not clash with the drop off and pick up of children at the preschool – deliveries should NOT be made between 8.30am and 9.30am, between 12 and 1pm, and not between 2pm to 3pm.

Planning notifications: None this month.

11. AUTHORISATION OF ACCOUNTS

The expenditure list circulated to Cllrs as Appendix 3 totalling £1,521.51 plus the £8 cheque to Cllr Wilson detailed above was authorised for payment.

12. FINANCIAL MATTERS

- i) RECEIVED the bank statements and bank reconciliation for November and December 2019, and RESOLVED the signature of a councillor other than the Chairman thereon;
- ii) NOTED a payment by direct debit of £36.00 for the annual CPRE membership subscription taken on 28 February 2020.
- iii) NOTED that on 26 November 2019 the Clerk dealt with an advertiser enquiry who signed up for a one-off advert in the January edition of the parish council newsletter and will pay £18.00.
- iv) NOTED that on 06 January 2020 the Clerk completed an on-line VAT refund claim for the period 01 January 2019 to 31 December 2019 totalling £511.87
- v) RECEIVED an End of Quarter 3 income and expenditure report and NOTED that this was uploaded to the parish council website to satisfy the Transparency Regulations

Concurrent Function Funding

The Clerk explained that she had heard that a consultation on the future of any concurrent function funding from CC is to come to the next Rural Forum on 23 March 2020 with a report going to the relevant CCC committee in June 2020. A loss of grant will have a significant effect on the parish council and if CCC's view is to reduce or remove the grant altogether the parish council will push for a phased reduction to minimise the impact on the precept.

Capital grant application for 2019-2020

The parish council received a CCC capital grant for £ 577 for a backless bench seat 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. The backless bench production and delivery costs were £576 (£480 excluding VAT). 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. Delivery of the bench has now been made to the contractor. Kent Highways require a permit to undertake work on the highway which has to be applied for by the parish council – the Clerk is trying to organise this and obtain an installation date from the contractor.

Capital grant application for 2020-2021

Councillors resolved that a capital project for the CCC Parish Council Capital Grant scheme 2020-2021 should be an application for the planting of a mature replacement tree on the green to become the feature tree when the Cherry tree finally needs total removal. An application was made with total project costs of £550 for the supply of a 10-12 foot mature Cherry tree and protective cage. CCC's Community Committee resolved to fund all projects at 72.5% uplifted by the individual parish council's score over the average score. Westbere Parish Council will receive a grant of £241. The capital grant budget forms part of the budget that is presented to Full Council in February for approval and assuming approval, the parish council will be issued with a funding agreement for signature in March with funding paid in April 2020.

New bank mandate and new signatories

The parish council now only has two authorised signatories following Cllr Dawson standing down. The Clerk and Cllr Williams went into the bank on 17 June 2019 with the new signed mandate form and Cllr

Williams ID documents for Cllr Williams to be added as a signatory. However on checking in branch on 03 January 2020 the form has not been processed. Furthermore the mandate to remove Jeanette Dawson and Georgina Glover as signatories has also not been actioned. RECEIVED new mandates to remove old councillors. Also RECEIVED new mandates to add Cllr Karen Williams and Cllr Tom Hopkins as new signatories. Cllr Morcom proposed and Cllr Harlow seconded and it was resolved that the two existing signatories should sign the forms with authorisation for these amendments. Cllr Williams and Cllr Hopkins will need to take their mandate into branch and present themselves with suitable ID documents also.

Website Accessibility Regulations

There is a requirement to make websites as 'accessible' as possible for people with disabilities such as vision impairment, colour blindness, those with motor difficulties, learning disabilities, and the hearing impaired. This involves a rethink on the website template and things like the headings, links and link descriptions, the font size and type face, and colours, and descriptions of images not just the images. 20% of the UK population has a permanent condition that affects their access to digital material (plus many more will have a temporary condition.)

The requirement takes effect from September 2020. There are 50 criteria to meet.

The parish council must also publish an Accessibility Statement.

The Clerk attended a KALC training session on 20 January 2020. But the following also needed to be considered:

Parish Council website hosting update

KCC EIS host the parish council website currently at no charge. They will not continue to fund the free website from 1 September 2020. The current KCC EIS websites are not Web Accessibility Compliant and a new provider is required. Cllr Harlow proposed and Cllr Wilson seconded and all Cllrs RESOLVED to appoint KCC Cantium as the new parish council's website host at £995 for the first year and £675 for the subsequent years (based on a 3-year contract).

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.)

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 Clerk will ask the contractor when the work is to be carried out.

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. Items are included elsewhere in these Minutes.

17. Inspection of the village drains

Cllr Williams and the Clerk will meet to inspect all the drains in the village and report any defects.

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: 18 February, 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.