

BOBBING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Wednesday 7th January, 2015

Present:

Cllr. G. Herbert - Chair	Lynda Fisher, Clerk
Cllr. R. Ball – Vice-Chair	Borough Cllr. B. Stokes
Cllr. L. Major	PCSO Ian Henderson
Cllr. R. Richardson	Nick Mayatt, Community Warden
Cllr. T. Wright	16 Residents
Cllr. Dewar-Whalley	

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair formally welcomed everyone. Apologies were received from Cllrs. Paige and Johnson and County Cllr. Baldock.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd December, 2014, were agreed and signed as a true transcript.

2. Public Session

PCSO Ian Henderson has been monitoring Bobbing Hill for speeding and Dog fouling, but has not managed to catch anyone as yet. He has been investigating parking on pavements; and following complaints by residents has circulated letters to Bobbing School parents asking them not to do this and everyone seems to be parking sensibly and traffic is flowing well. He has not managed to look at parking issues at the Dancing Dog and asked residents to contact him when this occurs and he will try and visit to look at the issues. Cllr. Dewar-Whalley mentioned problems with parking on the pavements near to the Meads shops and Keycol Hill; the PCSO will look at these areas. Cllr. Major asked if there is any specific Police policy on parking on the pavement; the PCSO replied that it comes under an obstruction and it has to be there and then, i.e., when a pushchair cannot get past a vehicle due to parking on the pavement then it is an obstruction, but if it is a pedestrian and they can pass, then it is not.

Numerous residents attended to raise their concern regarding the recent Traveller problem in Bobbing Hill. They had now moved but left a huge clean-up operation and human faeces were still lying on the land and had not been cleared. Residents felt they had received little support from Kent County Council and no support regarding the issue of the gate and access to the stopped up area of the road. They had looked into the cost of erecting barriers to stop future access to this area, but not prevent vehicles visiting the industrial site; costs ranged from £4400, plus V.A.T. for one type of barrier to £6000 to £10000 for another. Residents were willing to raise these funds but were receiving no support from KCC as regards obtaining permission to put barriers in this area. Cllr. Dewar-Whalley agreed that he will look into this on behalf of the residents.

Residents raised the issue of the proposed Planning Application at Howt Green for 16 mobile homes on farmland. They could not understand why this was being sought, particularly as the apple industry is going through a bad patch, with a drop in sales. The proposal is on a Greenfield site and they felt that this could eventually turn into a future application for housing, once the precedent for residential accommodation had been set. They queried why the previous application for mobile homes was for use for only part of the year but the new application is for use the whole year.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Dewar-Whalley declared an interest in 7.3.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes and Last Month's Meeting

1. **Land at the Bottom of Keycol Hill/Bobbing Hill** – Response received from Mark Cheverton indicates that soil sampling may be necessary, which has huge cost implications for the Parish Council. Agreed to thank him for his help; ask him to let the Parish Council know if he gets any further information and not take any further action on this at the present time. *Action: Clerk*
2. **Early Notice of Consultation Period Swale Local Plan** – Quite a difficult document to read, no further comments to add, although Members can respond individually.
3. **Updates: Parking Signs Keycol Hill; Pedestrian Bridge, Simpsons Crossing; Layby Sheppey Way:** Latest response from Chief Inspector Henley relating to Parking on Keycol Hill circulated. No response from Network Rail, although a resident advised that she had heard from them that the crossing is closing. The request for waiting time restrictions for the layby will be submitted to the next Joint Transportation Board meeting in March.

1. Councillors' Report

Cllr. Ball – mentioned the Dog Fouling signs purchased by Iwade Parish Council; Clerk to place this on the February Agenda. *Action: Clerk*

Cllr. Wright – warned that marking (indicating that a property is suitable for burglary) has been found on properties in Rooks View.

Cllrs. Major, Dewar-Whalley and Richardson – nothing further to report.

7. Correspondence

1. **Community Safety Issues** – Noted; this consultation is open to anyone.
2. **LGBCE electoral review of Kent** – Noted.
3. **Supporting Swale's Parish and Town Councils: Consultation on draft Statement of Intent** – Agreed Cllr. Paige to act as the Parish Council's representative and attend the next meeting. *Action: Cllr. Paige*
4. **Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2015/16** – Agreed Clerk to draft a response to Kris Hopkins, M.P., and circulate to Members for approval prior to submission. *Action: Clerk*

8. Planning

1. **14/505725/LAWPRO** - 8 Rooks View Bobbing Kent ME9 8GB - An application for a Certificate of Lawful Development for a proposed development being rear and side extension – no comments raised.
2. **14/505985/FULL** - Proposed change of use of land for the creation of hardstanding to site 16 mobile homes for 52 weeks of the year for occupation by seasonal agricultural workers along with associated engineering works - Howt Green Sheppey Way Bobbing Kent ME9 8QT – Members raised the following objections:
 - This proposal will create a ribbon development along Sheppey way; this is supposed to be agricultural farm land not a caravan site.
 - We understand that the caravans were occupied by workers and their families including young children last season; this contravenes the planning permission that was granted for seasonal workers.
 - There is already a large caravan population on site and we would query why these extra 16 are required in the same area when the applicant has clearly stated that the existing caravans are not fully occupied. Why does the applicant feel the need to place more caravans there, as clearly this will be a transit camp as made clear by one of the elected members of the Planning Committee on the application for the original 16 caravans?

- The caravans are for occupation for 52 weeks of the year but we understand only 44 weeks are required; as the application clearly states that it is difficult to determine the seasons how will this occupancy be monitored by the Borough Council? How will the Council monitor the proposed reduced number of occupants in each caravan? Will monitoring be carried out as there was a similar case in Borden and these caravans were not monitored; the situation being highlighted by residents?
- We understand the applicant has caravans at the Griffin Farm site at Maidstone which is on the main A299/A229 Hastings road and is more suited because it is away from any residential properties; are these to be replaced by this application?
- Concern that the external lighting required for these caravans will shine directly onto abutting properties and cause light pollution to the rural area.
- The current sixteen caravans have not been fully occupied. Therefore, the need on a purely agricultural basis is suspect; especially as there appears to be an over-production of apples. This is backed up by recent news stating that 40% of apples are discarded by supermarkets. An extract in the Daily Mail (Monday, December 15, 2014 - Page 10) illustrates the uncertainty in the future of the apple market.
- In a previous application for the new cold store the applicant was asked to produce a report on the rain water run-off created by a large area of concrete that he was planning to create, but we understand that in order to negate that report the size of the hard standing was reduced. We assume that this is now required due to the increased area but a report does not accompany this application.
- We understand that the cold stores were to provide storage facilities for fruit grown on the applicant's farms or farms managed by him, and that the company's website clearly states that the applicant is in partnership with multiple farms in the area and stores fruit grown by them, does this contravene the cold store conditions? An extract taken from the company's website states:

"In addition to our own production of around 50,000 bins of fruit each year we also work in partnership with an additional 20 growers; either share farming with them, purchasing fruit early in the season or providing storage and packing services. Every year additional growers join us; we must be doing something right! We currently farm 1,650 acres including 990 acres under leasehold arrangements; our partnership with 20 other growers means that there is an additional 1000 acres worth of fruit flowing through our business each year. These partnerships have been a consistent part of our business growth; for many years the family bought fruit at the Horsmonden hard fruit sale to supplement their own production, we now have direct relationships and support growers with agronomic and technical support services when required."

The above information shows that the total acreage is in excess of 1650 acres; Howt Green farm appears to be one of the smallest farms owned/managed by the applicant and by making it a hub for AC Goatham & Son has created a large industrial scale development in a semi-rural location.

- The applicant comments on a reduced carbon footprint, but if vehicles are being used to transport workers to other site this is not the case.
- The development will be seen from the public footpath, contrary to the statement made by the applicant, as it is nearer to the road/public footpath than any other part of the development and will be clearly visible.
- The residents at Howt Green number approximately 50 in 22 dwellings and this development, which could potentially house 192, when added to the existing caravans will out weigh the residents by almost 70% which is unacceptable and will overwhelm the existing population in Howt Green. Google Earth clearly shows the existing size of the development and the scale compared to the rest of the community.
- We believe that the site is now able to park several HGV tractor units and trailers due to the company letting part of the site to another operator, who has now got a vehicle operator's licence for

use of the agricultural land to park these vehicles; despite the applicant having a yard designed for the parking of tractor units and trailers near the Flanders Farm site. This development will have a further impact on the Sheppey Way, coupled with the new housing at Iwade. Vehicles will have to pull out of a shared drive onto an unrestricted single lane carriage way some 20m from Axminster tools car park entrance. The new A249 was built to alleviate traffic problems on the old road not make way for industry to create traffic on a scale similar to that prior to the new road being built.

- We understand residents have complained of having drivers sleeping in their vehicles and parked opposite their homes for the night; have suffered nuisance due to noise coming from the existing site and are concerned because the new area will be much closer to homes. We understand residents have complained to the Council regarding cars and taxis arriving at all times day and night and on one occasion the Police were called as the farm yard were being used as a race track at 10.30 p.m.
 - We can find no evidence of Council Tax bandings or a Business Rate figure for the sixteen caravans currently sited at Howt Green Farm; as these are connected with a functioning business do rates apply?
 - The proposed site was designated a noise buffer area and was provided to help with the noise level produced by the previous cold store planning application. This noise buffer area is now being disregarded and residents feel this should be left to protect those living opposite.
 - The Parish Council would query why the application does not give current vehicle movement numbers as the figures given appear to be the same as the last three applications for this site?
 - These jobs could and should be undertaken by a home grown workforce; this would reduce the carbon footprint and create employment for the unemployed able-bodied. Current government policy is to offer work to the local population and not to exclusively import labour from outside the United Kingdom
 - The statement that higher wages would be required if staff had to rent accommodation elsewhere is not a planning consideration. If other businesses wanted caravan accommodation for their workers in order to reduce their wage bill, it would not be considered relevant either.
 - It would appear from comments that several residents abutting the proposal have not received any notification of this, which is of concern to the Parish Council. It looks as though one resident is awaiting a statutory site notice before commenting and another commented that he believed the application date was the 18th November but only discovered it on the 5th December; he too never received a letter from the Borough Council.
 - Finally, Members are concerned that this application will create a precedent as a residential brownfield site which will then become the subject of further planning requests in the future; similar to the same circumstances at Hoo, St. Werburgh. This concern ties in with a recently withdrawn outline application for 42 dwellings on this site, under reference Ref. No: 14/506167/OUT.
3. **14/505535/FULL** -| Removal of condition 18 of planning permission SW/11/0637 (Development of up to 300 residential units comprising a mix of houses and apartments, together with associated access, car parking and public and private open space) resulting in the removal of live-work units from the development - Development Land Vellum Drive Sittingbourne Kent – no comments raised.
 4. **14/505540/FULL** - Variation of condition 1 of planning permission SW/13/1328 (Reserved matters of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping relating to the proposed erection of 224 dwellings, together with access, parking, open space and landscaping.), to incorporate a design change resulting in the removal of a section of the southern footpath. - Development Land Vellum Drive Sittingbourne Kent – no comments raised.
 5. **14/506013/FULL** - Single storey extension to hydrotherapy pool to provide disabled shower facilities/changing/parent viewing area and wheelchair storage - Demelza House Rook Lane Bobbing Kent ME9 8DZ – Members raised no objections to this application.

9. Finance

1. **Quotes for installation of Bollards – A249 Viaduct** – Place on February Agenda.
Action: Cllr. Johnson/Clerk
2. **Quotes for WW1 Church memorial** – A grant of £750 has been received from Swale’s WW1 funding. Cllr. Dewar-Whalley agreed to contribute £400 from his Member funds. Cllr. Ball has still only received one quotation for the remedial work; he will chase those outstanding. ***Action: Cllr. Ball***
3. **Quotes for Renovation of Memorial Bench** – Proposed by Cllr. Ball and seconded by Cllr. Wright, all agreed to accept the quotation of £130 to renovate the memorial bench. ***Action: Clerk***
4. **Budget and Precept 2015/16** – Proposed by Cllr. Ball and seconded by Cllr. Wright, agreed to request a Precept of £13875; which equates to £19.82p per Band D Household, a rise of 1.07%; .21p per year or .004p per week. ***Action: Clerk***
5. **Accounts and Cheques raised at this meeting** - The accounts to the 31st December, 2014, were agreed and the following cheques were agreed and signed -

Date	Cheque	Details		Amount
07.01.15	0436	L. Fisher	Expenses December 2014 – Tele, Use of Office, Refreshments	£33.62p
07.01.15	0437	H.M. Revenue & Custom	Tax due December 2014	£44.00p
07.01.15	0438	William Giles	Quarterly Payroll Preparation to Dec	£54.00p
07.01.15	0439	Steve Wakeling	Grass cutting Dec 2014	£100.00p
Four Cheques in total				

Payment by Standing Order: Wages - £176.27p - salary December, 2014

10. Any Other Matters Arising – None.

11. Next Meeting(s)

The next monthly Meeting will take place on Wednesday 4th February, 2015, commencing at 7.30 p.m. in Bobbing Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 10.05 p.m.

These minutes are certified to be a true and just record.

Signed: _____ Date: _____