

**Minutes of a Meeting of
BOUGHTON MALHERBE PARISH COUNCIL
at 7.30pm Tuesday 26th March 2013
in Grafty Green Village Hall**

Present: Robert Turner, Chairman
Ron Galton
Mike Hitchins
Tony King
Barbara Pearce

Christine King, Clerk

Richard Emmett, KCC highways
Kathryn Lewis, KCC Drainage

Cllr Richard Thick, MBC
Cllr Jenny Whittle

5 members of the public

1. Apologies

Keith Anderson; Alan Beech; John Collins; Joan Drury; Jenny Gibson; Chris Wheal.

2. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes, having been previously circulated, were APPROVED and signed

3. Any Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

4. Matters Arising

The Clerk reported that the footpath conditions at Judge Farm and Broadstone Cottage have been reported by Keith Anderson and a Public Rights of Way and Access Service Rep came out on 13th February and has ordered the necessary works to be carried out.

5. Local Policing

5.1 Police Report from PCSO Alan Beech read out by CK

Reported / recorded crime figures for the period 23/01/2012 - 25/03/2013:

There have been no reported / recorded crimes for the Parish during this period.

For the same period in 2012 there were 6 reported / recorded crimes for the Parish.

There is nothing of note that needs to be reported to the Parish for this period. I have been in and around the Parish as often as possible over this period.

TK - requested any outcomes/follow-up of crimes in future.

5.2 Speedwatch Report from Keith Anderson, read by CK

The Speedwatch team have been out couple of times this year with good results and feedback from the Police. At present we have had to hand back the equipment to Lenham, and are not sure when we can have it back. It may be necessary to ask to borrow Headcorn's. Keeping the equipment is becoming ever more of a problem regardless of who we borrow it from; perhaps it's time to consider purchasing our own equipment.

In light of this report it was suggested that enquiries be made regarding borrowing a redundant unit as it is thought a new one would cost in the region of £2,000.

The Police have contacted Jenny Whittle stating they wish to remove the Speed Check Sign. In order for the sign to on display, a minimum of four Police Checks have to be carried out per year. That would incur a cost of £53 /hour and equate to nearly £1,000 a year. It was pointed out that the Police have never come to check the local Speedwatch in operation which they said they would do.

A choice has to be made: either Police speed checks or installation of HGV restriction signage. It was pointed out that HGV restrictions on Liverton Hill could just shunt the problem to Boughton Hill and other local roads. The Headcorn to Lenham road is the only one without HGV signage in the area. To be discussed at the next meeting.

6. Highway and Footway Matters

6.1 Speed Indicator Device

It was considered that the Interactive sign does it make a difference to the speed of traffic, that drivers do slow down, but it's not known how long for.

There had been no further response regarding proximity of the device to the road. CK wrote to Ben Hilden again last week and awaits a response.

Richard Emmett said he will contact Ben Hilden and recommend it be tweaked or moved, he had had a look before the meeting and it is the solar panel which is too close to the road edge for high sided vehicles.

6.2 Flooding/Drains at Crumps Lane Corner, Headcorn Road

Flooding signs have been erected, but one has been hit (Grafty Green side of Crumps Corner towards Headcorn). It was reported and will be re-sited, Katie and Richard had a look and confirmed. Regarding the ditches and gullies there, they also inspected them. The problem is that there is insufficient drainage and they proposed that increasing the size of the culvert may cure the problem and will take this further.

6.3 Ditches and Gullies in Woodcock Lane

Work on ditches and gullies has been carried out here and continues this week. There will be a blitz when Liverton Hill is closed and will be done properly in June or July. All roads are due to be cleansed then so it's up to us to report problems so they can be addressed then.

6.4 Liverton Hill

RT described Liverton Hill as a patchwork quilt of repairs with a huge hole at the bottom again, and wondered about the possibility of getting the whole thing properly resurfaced. Richard E suggested that double dressing or micro surfacing would restore the surface to something half reasonable. Micro- stone and chips are small with a finer look and dressing would improve skid resistance and also has a little resistance to ground movement. Richard E will put this forward. Katy will let CK know when they're coming.

At the bottom of the hill the camber is wrong and so water lies there. Richard E said they would inspect it again and Katie said she would prepare a report for our next Parish Council Meeting. Liverton Hill is on an 'Enhanced cleansing Regime' which means it will be done at a minimum of 6 monthly, and 3 months in the autumn.

Elmstone Lane: weather never good enough to get the repairs done! It needs to be looked at, get water controlled, possibly by a ditch on one side. The road is also breaking up on the top part of the road.

Richard Thick raised an issue from a parishioner who has asked about a road sign for Coach Road. There is one at the Egerton end but has never been one in Boughton Malherbe. The Parish Council looked into this last year. Nobody was prepared to take responsibility and funds were not available. Richard Emmett will forward a contact with a view to possibly getting it done.

Jenny Whittle expressed thanks to Richard E and Katie who have been brilliant on a number of issues lately, especially gritting, and Richard and his crews have been working around the clock and done an excellent job.

They will come and meet with us in new financial year re our requirements.

6.5 Missing Finger Post, Chain Gate

Richard E reported that we are just awaiting installation. He noted that there is also a finger post hanging down.

6.6 Pot holes

In addition to the aforementioned, Southernden Lane was repaired today.

7. Resources and Environment Matters

7.1 Emergency Plan

RG reported that they are at stage where they feel have enough information to start listing facilities and people who can help, and get it categorized. So they are getting on with that and will give updates as and when necessary. There is a massive amount of paperwork. Sources of water for the Fire Brigade will be listed when hydrants run out. Sean Charlton gave permission for his reservoir to be used as an emergency water supply should the need arise.

7.2 Neighbourhood Plan

TK reported that a group had been formed, to look at feasibility for of a Neighbourhood Plan for Boughton Malherbe. A Planning Conference was attended by 3 councillors and a talk last night, tailored to Boughton Malherbe, took place in Grafty Green village Hall attended by Councillors and parishioners. A plan will take a great deal of time and money and there is more research to do. The next step is to engage with MBC.

7.3 59 Bus

The new timetable started yesterday with an extra service going back into Maidstone in the afternoon instead of running back empty. The new timetable will be in Malherbe Monthly.

7.4 Queen Elizabeth Yew Tree

RT and RG met with Jamie Clark to discuss possibilities. RG reported that drilling under the walls is necessary to see why there is movement and ensure that there is adequate drainage. Does it need a wall around it? Is the tree a parish asset? If public funding is sought for repairs, public access may be conditional.

8. Public Session

Removing the elders from around the tree would be beneficial.

9. Matters of Report

9.1 County and Borough Councillors' Reports

Richard Thick - Cautioned that oil thefts are happening again.
He had attended an Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee Meeting where the subject of flooding came up.
There is a little more control, now, regarding traveller sites.

Jenny Whittle - spoke of her concerns about future budget constraints; amongst the main pressures are elderly care, and a growing demand on school places. Her priorities after the election will remain enough primary school places, broadband, highways etc. Some local schools are full which has a knock on effect on surrounding parishes. She pledged to fund HGV restriction signage and will ask Ben Hilden to come out and survey the entry roads. Access is needed for business, oil deliveries etc. RT voiced concern that, as Lenham and Harrietsham expand as service centres, traffic between the two, through our parish via Liverton Hill, will increase.

9.2 The Chairman's Report

RT had attended the last Police Forum at Headcorn and reported that there was a reduction in crime, down by 8.9% and that rural crimes were also down.

On 6th February he attended a KALC meeting, with a section referring to Concurrent Functions asking us to report what our allocations would be under the new Parish Services Scheme.

There were 3 Speedwatch sessions in March and he thanked Mike Davidson and Keith Anderson for their early starts with him on bitter cold mornings.

On 23rd March he attended a Parish Conference, along with TK and RG. There was a very good workshop about Neighbourhood Planning, as well as some interesting talks, and a discussion by Richard Knox Johnson about protecting Kent.

On the 25th March there was a talk in Grafty Green Village Hall with Brian Lloyd explaining the Neighbourhood Plan, and RT thanked CK and TK for organising it.

10. Councillor Reports on External Meetings attended - covered above.

11. Finance

12.1 Income since the last meeting: NONE

12.2 It was AGREED to authorise the following payments made since meeting of 22nd January 2013:

Chq No 000391	Headcorn PC, Speedwatch, 5 sessions @ £30	£150.00
000392	Thurnham PC, JPG contribution	7.45
000393	KALC, Planning Conference, RG, TK and RT	216.00
000394	R Tew, Christmas Tree on Green	99.00
000395	B. Lloyd Neighbourhood Plan Talk expenses	13.05

12.3 To sign any cheques -None

12.4 The Balance at the Bank was **noted:** £5393.61
Available Balance: £5058.11

12. Finance Committee/Parish Services Scheme Update

MH reported that the budget had been prudently set on the basis that the Parish Services Scheme would allow nothing, however, Boughton Malherbe has been allocated almost £1000. Costs for Neighbourhood and Emergency plans are unknown although a nominal figure was budgeted for. Things are tight, however, and rumour has it that next year the PSS may be capped.

13. Correspondence

Playgrounds Spares Service
Maidstone Tourist Association
Heart of Kent Hospice
Clerk and Councils Direct
Affordable Rural Housing: A practical guide for parish councils

14. Further Information

14.1 Grafty Green Village Hall Constitution.

The GGVH Committee has taken a look at its constitution and found that it specifies 6 organisations entitled to nominate representatives to sit on the Committee. Some of these are now defunct. The Parish Council has a representative in Robert Turner though it is not thought he was nominated by them.

The GGVH Committee would like to regularise the situation by amending its constitution so that, in future, the committee comprises only members elected by the public at its AGM each year. Councillors, having previously considered this, voted to terminate the right to nominate a representative. RG proposed, MH seconded, all were in favour.

14.2 Membership of CPRE

Council for the Protection of Rural England - is an active group in the area (CPRE Protect Kent based at Charing), and gives support in planning matters as well as advice and assistance with Neighbourhood Planning, and all for £29 per year. TK proposed BMPC join, RG seconded, all were in favour.

15. Dates of next meetings

Tuesday 14th May, Annual Meetings

13th August

12th November

21st January 2014

25th March

The Meeting closed 9.22pm

