

CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on **Monday the 10th March 2014** at Beare Green Village Hall, Merebank

PRESENT: Mrs A Schryver (Chair), Mr S McLachlan, Mr K Salter, Mr C Ball, Mrs M Watson, Mr D Cox and Mrs Coke the Clerk.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr. Valerie Homewood and thirty two members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES: Mr Garber, Mr Dale, Cllr Murdoch, Cllr.Clack

2. MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday 13th March 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS: None

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Cllr. A Schryver

There had been widespread flooding throughout the three Wards. Amongst the places particularly badly hit was Chantry Cottage on the Street in Capel which experienced huge and constant deluges of water coming off the fields behind which entirely flooded the house. The Parish Council has done what it can to help alleviate the situation by clearing storm drains and digging out and repairing the ditch by the telephone box which has helped but not cured the problem.

What this situation has thrown up is how little we know of the water flow around the Parish so the Clerk has applied to SCC for whatever drainage maps they have in order for us to find where existing ditches flow to and to perhaps identify long overgrown and previously unidentified ditches that might need re-instating.

The Clerk spent a large part of January and February reporting and where, when on our land, arranging for the removal of fallen trees and unblocking of ditches around the Parish and she is to be commended for the speed and efficiency with which these situations were dealt with.

The Parish Council is still trying to resolve the appalling flooding issues in Vicarage Lane in Capel but this can only be dealt with by SCC who say that currently there are insufficient funds available and that nothing can be done before the new Budget in April but as the Clerk has been in communication with SCC about this issue for over four years now we are finding their reluctance to act hugely frustrating.

The Clerk is also in communication with Hyde Housing regarding the flooding of the Beare Green Hall car park. Whenever ditches are neglected there is the danger of flooding and getting landowners to take responsibility is definitely an uphill task.

I am pleased to report that with the help of Helyn Clack some of the parking issues, including the provision of a bus stop square in Old Horsham Road in BG have been addressed but that further lineage work to the northern end of the road still needs to be addressed.

As you will all I am sure be aware, the Godwins site was sold to Developers at the end of last year. There was divided opinion amongst the residents regarding the proposal for additional housing but I think that the redevelopment of this site was inevitable and to those who were or are still opposed to it I would say that this development has generated a substantial sum of money for Project Overhall, and I

would like to thank Cllr. Paul Garber for negotiating so successfully on behalf of the Parish.

Other issues dealt with during the past year include: re-surfacing the entrance to the Beare Green Cottages; the repair of the bus shelters in Capel; routine hedge cutting around the Parish; gully clearing and currently the refurbishment of the Parish Council allotments on Capel Recreation Ground is being undertaken by a working party made up of members of Capel Horticultural Society, Jackie Coke our Clerk and myself. I would also like to thank Cllr. Helyn Clack for her contribution of £130 towards hedge cutting in Rusper Road and down Wolves Hill, also for £1,000 contributed from the Localism Fund towards the maintenance of the copse in Markham Park.

The maintenance of the playgrounds by Fred Evans in all three Wards continues and is definitely proving a successful strategy with any problems being identified and dealt with immediately. The playground in Capel was installed in 2004 and at the time we could only afford bark, the least expensive surface available which has issues with regard to weeds and litter as well as requiring topping up on a regular basis. Cllr. Garber successfully applied for a grant from The London Marathon Trust for us to resurface the playground with eco mulch and we very much hope to have this up and running by Easter.

As always there have been contentious issues for the Parish Council to deal with.

There is the ongoing consultation with The Weald School regarding its proposed redevelopment or possible refurbishment. This is highly controversial due to the possible loss of Green Belt land should the school decide to go for the complete re-build option. Public consultation is still underway and in the Parish Council's view, needs to be spread much wider. These discussions have been set back somewhat now that the school has been put into Special Measures.

During the course of the last year CPC has responded to several important public consultations; most recently the Housing and Traveller Sites Plan and Minor Green Belt and Village Boundary Changes together with various Gatwick consultations including the London Airspace Consultation, the Revised Gatwick Noise Action Plan and the Night Flight Consultation.

Some of these consultations have very short response times. On notification of a consultation the Parish Council aims to draw up a draft response at a meeting of the Planning Committee which will then go to a full Council meeting for approval. I would like to thank Paul Garber and Stuart McLaughlan for all their hard work on these consultations which are time consuming and definitely not for the faint hearted.

The issue of Neighbourhood Plans has been largely addressed by CPC's submitted Land Allocation response to MV last November although it is to be noted that SCC could overturn our Plan if it was felt that the County need was greater. Consequently there was little enthusiasm generated to go to the expense of a full Neighbourhood Plan if it could be overturned so readily.

I am absolutely delighted to report that we have two new Beare Green Councillors; Michelle Watson and Chris Ball who are both proving to be very enthusiastic and proactive. Their arrival has prompted the Council to look into the use of Social Media as a way of reaching more of the community quickly and regularly, and I very much hope we will be in a position to get something underway shortly.

All the Council meetings whether of the full Council, Planning or Finance meetings are open to members of the Public. Details of the meetings and the Agenda are posted on the Parish notice boards and as from last month the Agenda can be found on the Parish Council website at least four days in advance of a meeting.

I would like to thank Paul Garber for Chairing our Planning Committee, his knowledge and expertise are invaluable and also Ken Salter for Chairing the Finance Committee so patiently and expertly.

Finally, as always, I have to thank our Clerk, Jackie Coke whose organisational skills and commitment to getting the job done never seems to falter.

5. HENRY SMITH CHARITY, (WARBLETON ESTATE, PARISH OF CAPEL) Report for 2013 – 2014 by Mrs Jenny Richards (Chairman)

The Henry Smith Grant

In September 2013 the Henry Smith's Charity asked us to review our need for a grant. This was because they were conscious that in these difficult times the demand for their funds is increasing significantly and it is therefore more important than ever to ensure that funds are spent as effectively as possible.

As a result of our submission, we were very grateful to receive a grant of £2,400 - the same as last year.

Distribution of Capel Parish Funds

Just before Christmas we distributed vouchers to the elderly and needy of the civil parish which they exchanged for groceries at four local, independent shops. 95 of these vouchers were exchanged in 2013 - 14; 29 at £20 were exchanged by couples and 66 at £15 were exchanged by single persons, giving a total expenditure of £1,570.

The responses from recipients make it clear that these vouchers are greatly appreciated. The cooperation of the four stores - Beare Green Stores, Capel Newsagents, Carter's of Capel and Village Greens, Ockley - is greatly appreciated by both the Trustees and the recipients of the Vouchers.

Once again, the Chair of the Trustees is very grateful to Elizabeth Green and Jean Pearson who deliver the vouchers by hand in Beare Green and Capel respectively.

Donations were also made to Merebank Over 60's Club and Capel Evergreens, and gratuities were paid to Parish Helpers.

This year's total expenditure to date is £1,912, leaving a surplus of £488 to be used to meet any needs that arise, with the balance added to the Charity's reserves.

6. Leith Hill Mountain Bike Trail – Cllr Stuart McLachlan

Mountain Biking has become a very popular recreational activity and the Surrey Hills are known nationally for their suitable landscape characteristics for this sport. For the last 4 years a working group set-up by the Surrey Hills Board containing local landowners, councillors, biking professionals and local businesses to try and resolve the problems associated with mountain biking and particularly the conflict which is caused with other users of the bridleways and byways. Mountain Bikers can legally use bridleways and byways and the vast majority are courteous and caring of their surroundings but by their very nature they travel fast and quietly particularly on

downhill stretches. This can be very frightening for hikers and horse riders being overtaken. Using experience gained from many other parts of the country, including locally in the Hurtwood control area on Holmbury Hill, it has been proved that by building dedicated single-track trails for mountain bikers that this does resolve the conflict issues but also over a period of time reduces the proliferation of off-piste, illegal riding and trail building, if the trails proves to be exciting for the riders and knowing that they will not meet any other users of the hills. Several grants were applied for by the working group and just under 1 year ago £15K was awarded for phase 1 of the trail. This will run from Leith Hill Tower across Wotton Estate, National Trust and Forestry Commission land towards Wotton to join up with the existing Summer Lightning trail. The CTC, the national cycling charity in existence for over 100 years, have been contracted to manage the build of the trail and the 5-year maintenance programme which is required in order to meet liability and Health and Safety requirements. The trail is now under construction and we hope to have an official launch in the next few months. If this proves to be successful we would like to extend the trail to cover the whole of the Surrey Hills with a trail network of over 40 kms joining up with National Cycle Route 22 which runs along the North Downs from Dorking to Guildford and beyond.

7a. GATWICK AREA CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN (GACC) - Cllr. Stuart McLachlan

Cllr McLachlan sits on Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign executive committee representing the interests of Capel Parish residents. GACC is vehemently opposed to a 2nd runway being built at Gatwick and in fact dispute the need for any airport expansion in the south-east. There is a host of information on their website www.gacc.org.uk. This group was formed in the 1970's and is very knowledgeable about airports, aircraft and the pros and cons of airport expansion.

Examples of GACC's recent press releases: In a recent newsletter GACC go into great detail refuting the claims made by Gatwick Airport Limited about how the costs of a new runway will not be passed on to customers and GACC estimate that there will need to be an increase of at least £50 in every return flight in order to pay for a runway.

GAL has also offered a payment of £1,000 to each of the 4,000 homes which they say will be affected. GACC comments as follows. 1). Using an accurate measurement of noise within EU limits the number of people affected by the noise from a new runway would be 48,000 as opposed to 10,000 currently. 2). £1,000 would be nothing compared with the loss in value of the properties affected. 3). The payment will not be made until after the new runway is operational. 4). It would not compensate anyone who will be affected by the new proposed flight paths in and out of the airport. 5). The payment would be miniscule compared to the deterioration in the quality of life of hundreds of thousands of people – the urbanisation caused by 40,000 new houses, loss of countryside, pressure on schools, hospitals, road and rail etc.

7b HIGH SPEED BROADBAND ROLLOUT - Cllr Stuart McLachlan

It is now over 3 years since Capel exchange was announced as one of the winners of the BT Race-to-Infinity competition. A lot of activity has taken place, including the installation of new street cabinets and the connection to cabinets and to homes with fibre-optic cables. Over 80% of the exchange is now 'Infinity Ready', householders still have to place individual orders to get it. The full roll-out is expected to be completed by the end of June 2014. The following areas are not completed.

- 1). CAB 9, the new cabinet in Coldharbour has been installed but will not be commissioned until the end of March.
- 2). PON 1- The vicinity of 66, The Street, Capel has known issues which are being resolved.
- 3). Coldharbour Common Road, track up to the cricket pitch (The Coldharbour triangle) has known issues which are being addressed.
- 4). Anstiebury Close, Beare Green, the underground duct has proved to be unsuitable, other solutions are being investigated.
- 5). Grenehurst Park, Capel, multi-owner site, authority needs to be granted by the landowner.

BT has responded very well to requests from the Capel RTI team and any known issues will continue to be actively pursued.

8. PROJECT OVERHALL– Julian Womersley & Project OverHall team

Stages 1 & 2 of the refurbishment scheme have already been completed with all costs having been covered. Stage 3 would provide a new entrance on the western side including new toilets and storage area; Stage 4 would provide a community shop; Stage 5a a new Café and 5b a corridor to an enlarged second hall.

It was hoped that work would start on the next phase of the project on 1st June 2014.

CPC would be providing £200,000 towards the funds required for the next stages, once the extension of the Hall lease was finalised.

The meeting congratulated the Project OverHall team on their presentation and the progress made on the hall refurbishment so far.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was discussion around the problem of parking in Old Horsham Road particularly in the area surrounding the access to the Godwins site where contractor's vehicles were parking on both sides of the road causing hazardous conditions. The Clerk reported that nothing further had been heard from Surrey Highways Traffic Management and Parking Team re the implementation of parking restrictions in OHRd. It was pointed out that 10 parking spaces had been allocated at the end of Hawkesmoore Drive for station parking, also that most of the all -day parking in OHRd is by commuters from the Horsham area. The Clerk would follow up where possible.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Would be in March 2015 (date to be confirmed)
(Copies of all full reports held on file)