

CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on **Monday the 9th March 2015** at Beare Green Village Hall, Merebank

PRESENT: Mrs A Schryver (Chair), Mrs J Pearson, Mr K Salter, Mr C Ball, Mr P Garber, Mrs P Dale and Mrs Coke the Clerk.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr. Helyn Clack, Cllr. Hazel Watson, Cllr Homewood, Cllr Huggins and 29 members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES: Mr McLachlan, Cllr. Osborne-Patterson

2. MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday 10th March 2014 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

3. PEAR TECHNOLOGY Services Ltd.

Chris Makin (Managing Director) gave a presentation on Pear Technology's one-stop shop for all mapping and map - associated needs. Their system utilises OS maps for general asset management, accurately showing asset locations, owned land, location of services, Rights of Way, plans for events, cemetery and allotment management and features added to a map can be linked to the relevant records including pictures and documents. Maps can be emailed, placed on the website for public information purposes and sent to principal authorities and as well they provide an effective means of communicating information with Council members, the public and between staff.

The presentation was keenly received and use of the system will be further investigated by the Council

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Cllr. A Schryver

Congratulations were offered to the BGCA committee on the progress of work on the hall.

The Chairman reported:

Much of the general maintenance programme throughout the Parish had been routine but with a substantial amount unforeseen.

The problems of last year's appalling wet winter continued to impact through much of last year. There were the inevitable fallen trees to be dealt with and subsequent blocked ditches to clear throughout the Parish.

The majority of unforeseen maintenance during the past 12 months was in Beare Green. Following conversations with the National Trust the Parish Council accepted responsibility for ten poplars at Homewood Corner that were either dying or already dead and had them cut down and removed at a cost of just under £1,200.

Other maintenance issues were a blocked gully and collapsed pavement which had to be dealt with at the Moorhurst Lane / Old Horsham Road intersection. This was a substantial undertaking costing over £5,000. The Parish Council also cleared the ditch from The Firs in Horsham Road down to the junction with Newdigate Road, this is now running well.

A blocked sewer pipe and drain at the Beare Green Pavilion has been located and cleared by Thames Water with no cost to the Parish Council.

In Capel the ditch in front of Greenside Cottages has had to be cleared at a cost of £1,600.

All of these issues were in addition to the annual round of grass cutting and hedge cutting, gully clearing etc. that make up the month in month out maintenance of the Parish.

I am labouring the point about what has to be done and what it all costs because I think it is important that the residents of the Parish should have an understanding of how much land there is in the two wards of Beare Green and Capel that the Parish Council is responsible for maintaining.

When I first joined the Parish Council over 15 years ago we would have expected that some of this work might have been done by the Highways Department at Surrey County Council but the financial constraints placed on the County over the years have meant that a larger proportion of maintenance work now falls to the Parish Council. The cost of maintenance and repair work accounts for approximately 40% of the annual Parish precept.

Stringent budgeting is a financial necessity for the Council and I would like to thank Ken Salter for Chairing the Finance Committee so knowledgably and efficiently.

Highways issues in the Parish remain relatively constant; Willow Close in Beare Green is still flooding but the Parish Council has recently been contacted by Arabella Davies from Mole Valley whose department deals with Emergency Planning and flooding issues. She is in contact with Thames Water in an effort to rectify this ongoing problem.

The flooding in Vicarage Lane in Capel remains a source of concern as the situation appears now to be entering its fourth year unresolved.

The ongoing problems resulting from the increased parking that Homewood station brings will be reported on by Councillor Helyn Clack a little later on this evening.

Chorus Gardens is now largely completed and is I think a very attractive addition to Beare Green.

Circle Housing is aware of the problems with parking in the area of Turner House and confirms that plans have been submitted to improve the parking situation at the Sheltered Housing Scheme and their property team has been requested to investigate the planning proposal further.

Project Horizon has scheduled the re surfacing work in Newdigate Road for 2015/2016 whilst the re instatement of the verges and road surface in Rusper Road await the Highways Department's pleasure.

The Council Planning Committee chaired by Paul Garber has dealt with both relatively straightforward and also more contentious planning applications during the year as well as responding to Public Consultations. The Consultation responses take an enormous amount of time to prepare and I would like to thank Paul Garber for giving so much of his time and expertise to these documents.

I would like to commend the Police for all their help and support this past year. We have had some difficult situations in the Parish that the Police have dealt with strongly and very effectively. In particular I would like to thank our new Mole Valley

Neighbourhood Commander, Inspector Richard Hamlin; PC Mark Trezise; Mole Valley's Rural affairs officer who is so supportive in Coldharbour and I would particularly like to thank our Community Support Officer Pat Booker who attends so many of our meetings and does everything possible to assist us.

Capel Playground was awarded £23,000 by the London Marathon Trust to replace the old bark surface with a new eco mulch which is virtually maintenance free. A new piece of replacement balancing equipment was also fitted at the same time. The overall cost to the Parish was just over £7,000 which was the percentage payable by us in order to qualify for the grant. The playground should now be enjoyed for many more trouble free years. The job ran a little over its quoted completion date, so by way of compensation a little horse trading produced a new hard stand entrance to the allotments which lie next to the playground.

The Parish Council has decided to embrace the 21st Century and has commissioned a Face Book page as well as updating its website. Councillor Chris Ball is very knowledgably and patiently steering us through this and will be giving you a report later in the evening.

I would like to thank all the Councillors for their dedication to the job, for giving so generously of their free time for no particular reward apart from the satisfaction of perhaps making things better for their communities.

Like any organisation there are departures and new arrivals: one of our Beare Green Councillors, Michelle Watson, resigned this year and we have also said goodbye to Capel Councillor John Dale after over 20 years on the Council. His level head, local knowledge and quiet wisdom will be much missed. On a positive note though, John's daughter in law, Paula has been co-opted on to the Council in John's place thereby keeping the farming connection going and bringing the average age of the Council down by a good ten years.

All the Parish Council meetings are open to members of the public and I do urge you to come along and see how it all works; you might even find that the idea of becoming a Parish Councillor appeals to you. Yes, it is a big commitment but it can also be hugely satisfying.

Finally I must pay tribute to our Clerk Jackie Coke whose dedication to the job and to the Parish as a whole is nothing short of awe inspiring.

5. HENRY SMITH CHARITY, (WARBLETON ESTATE, PARISH OF CAPEL)

Report for 2014 – 2015 by Jenny Richards (Chairman)

The Henry Smith Grant.

Four hundred years after his death, The Henry Smith Charity is one of the largest independent grant-making charitable foundations in Britain distributing in excess of £25m per annum to a wide range of UK charities.

In January this year a book entitled "Henry Smith: His Life and Legacy" was published. Through dogged research in some long forgotten archives, Lucy Lethbridge and Tim Wales have pieced together the fascinating life of Henry Smith and that of his legacy through the centuries.

Distribution of Capel Parish Funds.

Although our Grant for 2014-15 remained at £2,400, the strength of our reserves enabled us to increase the value of the Vouchers we distribute to the elderly and needy of the civil parish, at Christmas time. The vouchers for couples were increased from £20 to £25 and for single persons from £15 to £20, to be exchanged for groceries at four local, independent shops.

29 vouchers at £25 were exchanged by couples and 59 at £20 by single persons, giving a total expenditure of £1,905.

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.

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 £2,355 leaving a surplus of £45.

6. Reports from Members:

(i) Parking in Beare Green: Cllr Helyn Clack

a) Parking problems in OHRd were largely due to commuters who use Homewood station parking all day either in the road, on the verge or on the bridge. This was causing traffic congestion, blocking access to side roads, and undermining verges particularly those on the bridge and leading to Merebank.

b) There appears to be an increase in commuter numbers using Holmwood station to avoid paying all day parking at Dorking, and / or because of insufficient parking space at Dorking station, and / or because there is an increase in commuters from the north Horsham developments and / or because of the limited parking at Ockley station.

However the station needs to have sustainable numbers of commuters just to maintain its timetable.

Ways of overcoming this situation might be:

For the DC to implement paid parking in the road

To find a large enough space to form a car park

Installing double yellow lines – requires enforcement

Restrict parking to certain times

Ockley PC proposes an increase in parking spaces at Station Approach, Ockley and will be applying for planning permission.

Increase in parking spaces at Dorking station.

c) Need to set up a Working Committee to set in motion traffic monitoring in OHRd to determine the parameters of the problem – who parks here and where they come from.

Cllr Clack was thanked for her contribution.

(ii) Europa Oil and Gas: Cllr Hazel Watson:

Cllr Watson gave a resume of the action so far starting in 2009 when the first planning application was submitted by Europa Oil and Gas through to the current appeal to be heard starting on April 22nd, and the current 'panhandle' application for response shortly. Cllr Watson underlined the complexity of these contentious applications and appeals.

7. Gatwick: Cllr Paul Garber: The Gatwick Co-ordination Group was established in June 2014 to represent the serious local concern and objections to the plan for a second runway at Gatwick Airport which had been short-listed by the Davies Commission. CPC is represented on the Group by Cllr Garber who had contacted 57 PC's in Surrey and West Sussex. 45 had responded that they would **not be supporting a second runway at Gatwick.**

The outcome of the Consultation would not be known until after the May 7th elections and whoever wins, any decision on the runway is likely to be challenged.

Flight Movements - In the hands of Gatwick

7a The PC Role in the Planning Process: Cllr. Paul Garber

Mr Garber said that MVDC failed to have proper regard to PC comments on planning applications, a remark contradicted by Cllr Homewood who sits on the MVDC Planning Committee.

The CPC looks at Planning Applications and Appeals in detail considering location, AONB, Green Belt, Design and what is right for the community.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

Now that the Local Plan has been set aside it is important that the Parish develops its own Neighbourhood Plan enabling it to create its own planning policies for the use and development of land in the parish. A Neighbourhood Development Plan would set out where development will go and what development could look like. It would involve input from across the local community, with voluntary and community organisations contributing.

8. Broadband: Cllr Stuart McLachlan:

It is now over 4 years since Capel exchange was one of the winners of BT's 'Race to Infinity' competition. As of today over 85% of the exchange area is now able to order superfast broadband. The only outstanding areas are as follows:

FTTC = Fibre to the cabinet, FTTP = Fibre to the property.

Coldharbour PCP 9. The new street cabinet has now been commissioned and the task of swapping all consumers to the new cabinet should be completed during March.

Capel PON 2: Partially live offering FTTP. Remaining work will be completed during March and SFB should be available during April 2015.

Capel PON 5: Completed, SFB (FTTP) available.

Capel PON 6: Completed, SFB (FTTP) available.

Capel PCP 6: In planning new Cabinet proposed for Anstiebury Close offering FTTC because of problems with disturbing the road surface in this private road.

Capel PCP 7: Completed, SFB (FTTC) available.

Capel PON 8: Majority of work completed and most residents should be able to place orders (FTTP) by end of March 2015. However, a few small spots were missed off original survey so these will be built this month and live by end May 2015.

8a Byways. Cllr Stuart McLachlan

Mole Valley has a network of ancient byways which have become very popular with recreational 4x4 drivers from throughout the south-east. These byways are part of the public road network and SCC has a duty of care to ensure their safety for all users. Particularly during winter, the use of the byways increases and most of them are now in very poor condition because of the damage caused by highly-modified heavy vehicles. Worse than this there are many examples of drivers going off-piste and causing untold damage to ancient woodland and historic boundary banks. Mole Valley has one rural police officer, who works tirelessly to try and control this problem but arrests are difficult because of the size of the district and the intention of the drivers to avoid prosecution by disguising the identity of their vehicles.

There have been a few successful applications to close individual byways to motorised traffic but this is a very expensive legal process and SCC are unwilling to begin this process because of their lack of funds. Nevertheless public money is constantly being used to maintain these byways.

The reason that Surrey has become a honeypot for 4x4 users is that when the new 'Countryside and Rights of Way' Act was published in 2000, Surrey opted to reclassify all RUP's and Green Lanes as BOAT's which meant that all motorised vehicles can legally use them. All other counties in the south-east did not make that decision and hence their byways have remained as permissive or restricted routes and they are able to blanket ban recreational 4x4's from using them. Capel PC and many other parish councils are members of a group called GLEAM (Green Lanes Environmental Action Movement, www.gleam-uk.org), whose patron is HRH Duke of Edinburgh. They have been actively campaigning since 1995 to get primary legislation changed to overturn the decisions which were made in 2000 for several counties in the UK. Here is a notice from their Hon. Sec. David Marr.

'The Government has announced that a new Stakeholder Working Group will be established to look at policy on recreational motor vehicle use of green lanes. We expect that GLEAM (through GLPG, the Green Lanes Protection Group, a much larger alliance) will be represented on this group. In order for GLEAM to convince both the Government and potential allies on the group about the seriousness of the issue, we need information about problems in as many areas of the country as possible. Could you, as a GLEAM member, help in this?

What we would like are:

- digital photos (with dates) of problem green lanes showing the nature of the problem e.g. damage, limited width, poor visibility etc. Please identify the green lane by providing grid references for its start and its end, and the name of the county, unitary or National Park authority where it is. Please also include the two grid letters (identifying the 100 km grid square) found on the diagram on Ordnance Survey maps, and the name of the lane if it has one. The route should be one which has current or recent (within the past 5 years) problems with off-roading. Although if you have older photos to show what a currently damaged route looked like before it was damaged, these would be useful to compare with your current ones.
- identification of green lanes or areas where there used to be problems but they have been resolved, and how they were resolved e.g. by police activity (incl. use of Section 59 Police Reform Act 2002), by traffic regulation order, by reclassification as Restricted Byways, or by NERC Act 2006. Please also let us know the nature of the resolved problem, the grid references of the lane or name of the area, and the authority where it is.

Anyone who has evidence, particularly photos with supporting information, should send them to the parish council for forwarding to GLEAM or they can opt to join GLEAM themselves.

9. PC use of Social Media. Cllr Chris Ball

It became clear that we need better forms of communication – faster, less intensive and crucially to allow better feedback from residents. Email, websites, Twitter, Facebook and Street life can all augment the more traditional methods. It is in fact expected that the PC use this new media provided the dangers are taken on board.

The existing website provides access to minutes, Councillor details and important links. The format is prescribed for safety and legality but doesn't always give us the flexibility to engage. Unlike individuals though the PC cannot just post comments and views at will- the view of the Council can only be expressed after agreeing / voting, so a Social Media Policy was drawn up to give direction and protection.

Councillors may report decisions and factual information

Councillors may not publish personal views, political bias

Councillors must consider all postings to make sure they are the view of the Council, accurate, not open to misinterpretation.

An Alternative Parish Website is under construction:

- This will be a Friendly, Engaging, Informative Gateway for Group Community use and will provide the ability to harvest emails providing the ability to inform the community.
- This is currently Free to host
- We require local information
- We are looking for local volunteers to keep it updated.

Facebook

We have a presence but plan to use it cautiously

Twitter

Capel Village already exists

Bearegreen already exists

We are not ready to use this medium yet.

Other Activity

'Corporate' Email address

- Name@CapelParishCouncil.co.uk

Database

Email Engine

Survey Monkey

Recording of meetings

Electronic Meeting Format

Mapping – Pear Technology

Other Concerns

70% of residents have access to email

So 30% do not so we must continue to use traditional methods to communicate.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – Nothing further

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Would be in March 2016 (date to be confirmed)