

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER ON TUESDAY 17th MARCH 2015**

PRESENT: Cllr. Veitch (in the Chair), Cllrs. Fletcher, Goodchild, Holmes and Swann

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Fermor, Hazlewood, Hemsted, Marley and Rook

Members who had a personal or prejudicial interest, whether direct or indirect within the meaning of Section 51 of the Local Government Act 2000, or a personal or prejudicial interest defined by the Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council's Code of Conduct, in any of the matters appearing on the agenda were invited to declare that interest at this stage. Alternatively, personal interests can be declared at the time when the specific interest is being discussed, if a member wishes to speak on an item in which they have a personal interest.

33/14: Play Equipment – Jubilee Field:

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. Lane and Mrs. Nettles to the Meeting. Mrs Lane informed Members that they had opened a bank account and had a potential promise of £5,000 with provisos. Cllr. Veitch stated that we were aware that we had been asked to match fund the potential donation. Mrs. Nettles stated that the daughter of a late Sissinghurst parishioner wished to donate a bench to the Village and as she loved children it was felt that a suitable site would be near to the proposed new small children's play area. They had noted that a new bench had recently been installed. The Clerk explained this was a replacement bench for the previous Bun Penny bench which had become dilapidated. The ladies stated that there was another bench on the far side which had appeared. Cllr. Fletcher suggested that when a site for the bench had been agreed that it would be better for the Parish Council to obtain a quote and receive the donation as we can claim back the VAT.

A discussion took place on possible funding streams and it was generally found that a lot of funding was only available for charitable trusts. Cllr. Veitch informed Members that she was currently setting up a trust in her late husband's name to benefit the parishioners of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst. This would enable funds to be received and donated. Mrs. Nettles stated that they had approached the Co-op without success. Mrs. Lane stated that she had approached Waitrose – there was a list which you can join. Cllr. Holmes suggested an organization called "funding buddies". Cllr. Veitch had a list of available funds and showed this to the two ladies. The ladies tabled a brochure with a piece of equipment which they thought suitable for younger children. Members thought that this could be achievable and a discussion took place on what sort of safety surfacing would be more suitable. Everyone was pleased with the progress being made. Cllr. Holmes suggested that any funds raised should be in the Parish bank account before the equipment was ordered. Again there were benefits if the Parish Council ordered the equipment as the VAT can be reclaimed. Cllr. Veitch asked the Clerk to obtain a quote from Wicksteed for the requested equipment and its installation.

Mrs Nettles mentioned that the repairs to the rocking horse had not been carried out. It was agreed to ask Geelan Fabrications to carry out welding works as a matter of urgency.

Before leaving the meeting the ladies mentioned the new street lights in Cobnut Close, they thought them excessive. The Clerk explained that we had contacted Golding Homes who had confirmed that in order to have the road adopted that the lights were a requirement from Kent County Council.

34/14: Issues from Inspections of Grounds:-

a) Allotments:

Cllr. Holmes stated that he had been dealing with a request for a shed which had caused some difficulty. After a full discussion it was felt that the wording of the rules should be amended to say that sheds would be permitted on the perimeter boundary, where space allows. Cllr. Holmes reported that the person who judged the allotment competition last year would be prepared to judge again this year and he asked that a formal invitation letter be sent.

b) Ball Field:

Cllr. Goodchild stated that the Field was in good order.

c) Crane Valley:

Cllr. Swann informed Members that together with the Clerk and Parish Warden, he had met with a drainage and civil engineering company to discuss the problems in the Crane Valley. We were now awaiting a quote. The Clerk informed Members that whilst at the site meeting, the main bridge was being surveyed by a member of the public rights of way team. We were told that the bridge would be replaced in the near future. The replacement bridge would be the same width but longer and therefore this would overcome the problem of the water pooling on the Brookside end and freezing over causing a hazard. Unfortunately there did not seem to be an answer at this present time to the water running out of the bank on the town side of the path. The drainage engineer thought the problems with water run off on the public footpath was weather related and that the ground was saturated. However in the Crane Valley he suggested that more drainage should be put in at spaced out intervals with an outlet to the stream. This work could not be carried out until the ground dried up and would be a summer job.

Cllr. Swann reported that the grounds contractors would be having a good tidy up and will be cutting the eastern hedge by the end of the week. The wild flower planting had been undertaken by Cranbrook in Bloom as agreed. Cllr. Veitch reported that the hedge laying on the Co-op boundary had been completed by the Kent High Weald Project. The Clerk informed Members that the five bar gate and posts at the top by Brookside had collapsed and the Parish Warden will be installing the new oak bollards, which will be lockable but able to be removed if necessary to allow access.

Cllr. Veitch informed Members that the skate ramp had been damaged and that the persons believed to have been responsible had taken part in a restorative justice procedure which had been organized by the police.

Cllr. Swann stated that whilst attending the recent site meeting, it had been noticed that there was a very muddy area which would benefit from the boardwalk being extended. The Parish Warden had agreed to carry out repairs to the bridge near the skate ramp and also to install a grid which would help to stop debris flowing down stream.

d) Tomlin Ground:

In the absence of Cllr. Marley, Cllr. Fletcher informed Members that he and Cllr. Swann had attended a recent event at the Rugby Club and they were grateful for the support given by the Parish Council. The Clerk informed Members that a notice had been served on the Parish Council as owners of the land, the Club are intending to submit a planning application for some disabled parking spaces. Members welcomed this suggestion.

e) Jubilee Field:

In the absence of Cllr. Hemsted, there was nothing to report.

35 /14: Car Parks:

a) Issues from Inspections:

The Chairman stated that she inspected the car parks on a regular basis and she thanked Cllr. Goodchild for carrying out the inspections of Jockey Lane. She also thanked Cllr. Bancroft for carrying out inspections in The Tanyard. The litter situation seems to be much improved and the cars parks are running quite well and looking good.

b) Parking Order:

The Chairman stated that she is still trying to get a parking order in place. She gave an update of the problems between the legal opinions of KCC and the legal opinion of the Borough. We are no further forward but she did not intend to give up.

c) Enforcement Contract:

With regard to the Enforcement Contract, Cllr. Veitch reminded Members that we had a contract which was only for six months; this had not been updated or renewed. We are now in a position where there is no enforcement being carried out. This issue runs hand in hand with the parking order. She is continuing to try to move things forward with both KCC and TWBC.

36/14: Highways Issues:

The Chairman reminded Members that the Wilsley Green junction improvements were still being considered and meetings had been held between KCC Councillor Sean Holden and the residents group. We had not seen the most recent plans. There remains to be a problem with pot holes and she mentioned the ones which were still outstanding in Chapel Lane.

The Clerk gave an update on the Gas Works. Martin Burke from Kent Highways had extended the permit for another month to allow more progress to be made up the High Street. She confirmed to Cllr. Fletcher that Morrisons would still be responsible for any damage to the surface dressing for a period of two years even if they do not continue with the contract.

Cllr. Fletcher informed Members that BT Outreach had been working on the corner of High Street and Stone Street and had pumped out the sump all over the road. It was very unpleasant and he had spoken to them to make sure they cleaned it up.

Cllr. Swann, responding to a question from Cllr. Goodchild confirmed that the surface dressing at the top of Oatfield Drive was a temporary feature to shut off the pavement. He was not sure why it was painted green.

37/14: Litter and Litter Bins:

The Chairman stated that new bins were nearly all in situ. We will be contacting Cory Environmental and sending them a map of where all the bins are sited. With regard to litter she was appalled at how much litter is all along the roadside and she had litter picked the Golford Road and got twelve sacks of litter. Cllr. Holmes stated that the A21 and the A262 is strewn with litter. Cllr. Veitch stated that this had been reported to the Borough Council. The Clerk informed Members that apparently the Borough Council now have to have a traffic management plan in place prior to any roadside litter picks.

The Chairman read out an email from a parishioner asking whether we were undertaking any litter picking initiatives on Litter Picking Day which was this Saturday. A discussion took place when Members agreed that this was too short notice.

A litter picking weekend was scheduled for the 18th and 19th April. She would discuss publicity with the Clerk. It was suggested by Cllr. Fletcher that visible areas used by the public should be litter picked. The Clerk suggested that areas which were serviced by proper footpaths would be safer than roadside verges.

38/14: Street Lighting:

The Chairman read out an email from Ken Bonner from Streetlights regarding replacement lanterns in the Crane Valley. Unfortunately four out of a total of six have suffered vandalism, mainly from catapults. The suggested replacements were either a tried and tested model called Monaro which cost £665 + VAT or a LED at £390 + VAT, but this had not been tried in a vandal situation. After a full discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Holmes to agree the finance for four of the LED lanterns but in the first instance to install one and trial this to see if it is successful. This was seconded by Cllr. Fletcher and agreed.

Cllr. Swann informed Members that he had asked our street lighting engineer to carry out a survey of the concrete columns in the Wheatfield and Oatfield Estate. Cllr. Holmes requested that the middle light in New Road be assessed as part of the survey.

39/14: Public Rights of Way:

In response to a question from Cllr. Holmes, Cllr. Swann stated that there was no news yet on the claimed right of way in Angley Wood. The Clerk informed Members that at the Planning Committee Meeting held this morning that no objection had been raised to the diversion of the public footpath at Bounds End which was on the Staplehurst boundary. The existing path ran through a former farmyard where the buildings had now been converted to residential and it was beneficial for privacy and security reasons to divert the path. Cllr. Swann suggested the Walks in Time leaflet should be checked as he thought this path was shown on the plans and would need to be amended.

Cllr. Holmes mentioned that he had been made aware that some of the waymarkers were missing from some paths in the Goudhurst area and he had provided the details of the public rights of way department. Cllr. Veitch informed Members that she had met with Jonathan Bibby the PROW Officer to discuss the garish sign at the top of the churchyard. This will be replaced with a more sympathetic type of sign.

40 /14: Items for Information:

- a) Cllr. Goodchild stated that he had attended the lambing weekend at Angley and it was very popular.
- b) Cllr. Fletcher stated that the Goudhurst Parish precept had risen by 56%.
- c) Cllr. Veitch updated Members on the current position with regard to the serving of a Building Preservation Notice in relation to the Cranbrook Engineering site.