

CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on **Monday the 13th March 2013** at Capel Village Hall, 55 The Street, Capel at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Mrs A Schryver (Chair), Mrs J Pearson, Mr Cox and Mrs Coke the Clerk.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr. Helyn Clack, Cllr. Valerie Homewood and four members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES: Mr Garber, Mr Salter, Mr Dale, Mr McLachlan. Cllr. Osborne-Patterson, Cllr. Murdoch, Richard Herbert (Ockley parish)

2. MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday 12th March 2012 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS: None

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Cllr. A Schryver

The Council's year had been a mixture of the usual housekeeping and the relatively unexpected. This year the annual round of hedge cutting on the Recreation Ground also included a major prune back of trees overshadowing the allotments.

The Council continues to maintain the Parish Burial Ground but now that space has finally run out, coffin interments take place only in the St John the Baptist Churchyard with the Council receiving a much diminished income from ashes burials only.

The Council remains responsible for the grass cutting at the Capel Recreation Ground and the Beare Green as well as Bennetts Green and various verges around the Parish. The Council also has to maintain any ditches and drains that are part of Parish land and with the high rainfall during 2012 /13 flooding issues have arisen and been dealt with at Seamans Green, Temple Lane and Rusper Road. Flooding issues in the road and verge of Vicarage Lane continue with Highways so far not finding a solution, however a solution appears imminent for the flooding in Newdigate Road.

We are told the desperate state of the local road surfaces is to be addressed via the Project Horizon scheme (see Cllr Clack's address), however at present the Parish is currently reporting pot holes and badly eroded road surfaces on an almost daily basis.

Capel Parish along with five other local Parishes have formed the Dorking Rural Highways Hub, the intention being for the Hub to provide local Highways related services to their Parishes in accordance with the Surrey County Council Localism offer of 2012. For 4 yrs from April 2013 a limited amount of funding will be provided by the SCC Mole Valley Local Committee, with any future activity depending on how successful the trial turns out to be. For the first year of the trial the annual maintenance of Markham Copse has been put forward for the scheme.

The Biffa cable laying, which caused considerable inconvenience to Capel residents has been completed.

During the year the Council has responded to several MVDC consultations including the Mole Valley Larger Villages Consultation Paper and currently the Green Belt Boundary Review. The concerns that both of these issues raise are making the formation of a Neighbourhood Plan essential for both Capel and Beare Green in order that residents of both villages can have a say in what they feel to be appropriate or not to their communities. Goldharbour is less vulnerable to

development as it is surrounded by both NT and Forestry Commission land as well as being designated an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In October 2012 Tom Denton, Head of Corporate Responsibility at Gatwick addressed a Parish Council meeting with regard to PR-NAV- Departure SID, a new system of navigation being rolled out across Europe and being trialled at Gatwick. This threw up some major concerns with regard to flight paths over the three villages. When asked if there was anything further to report with regard to a second runway Mr Denton responded that there were certainly no plans at present. The very next morning the BBC news announced that Gatwick was consulting on plans for a second runway in order to make Gatwick more saleable. Proof if it were needed as to how important it is for GACC to keep us all informed of what is actually happening.

Also in October 2012 lobbying by the PC and residents enabled Royal Mail to be persuaded to keep the Capel Post Office open.

The Council was given a gritting machine by Surrey Highways for use prior to snow fall on Capel pavements. Use of this meant employing someone to operate the machine, - volunteering not being a viable way forward. It is hoped that by the winter of 2013 a more efficient means of operating this scheme will be found and that it can be extended for use in Beare Green.

The Council was delighted to be able to plant three disease resistant Elm trees in honour of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the PC expresses its gratitude to Cllr. Helyn Clack for the grant provided towards this by the SCC Local Committee.

The residents parking issues at Holmwood station have been partly eased thanks to the promised white lines at the junction of Old Horsham Road with Hawkesmoore Drive and the implementation of the bus stop cage but there are still problems in Coles Lane with regard to Ockley Station with commuters parking inappropriately. The Parish Council is working with Ockley PC to try and find a solution.

The Chairman thanked the local Police for working with the Parish so closely and keeping members abreast of crime figures and for effectively dealing with antisocial behaviour in Capel. County and District Councillors were thanked for their support as well as Parish councillors for giving so freely of their time. Thanks were also extended to the Clerk.

5. HENRY SMITH CHARITY, (WARBLETON ESTATE, PARISH OF CAPEL) Report for 2012 – 2013- The Charity

Last year the Capel Local History Group looked at various events happening a century ago as it was the centenary year of the founding of what was to become Capel Memorial Village Hall. One of the aspects they looked at was the "Smith's Charity" in Capel, and they made the following report on their findings.

'Henry Smith founded his charity in 1628. He was a successful salt merchant who invested in property (especially in London) and when he died he left £2,000 to the charity for the relief of the poor. Nowadays the Henry Smith Charity makes grants totalling over £25 million each year to over 1,000 organisations and charities throughout the U.K.

Peter Ede rescued a wonderful record (a leather bound register of all the donations made by the Smith's Charity from 1854 to 1951) from being burnt when Miss Forbes was having one of her regular clearances, so we are really grateful to him. In 1912 the Charity donated loaves of bread to 149 people living in the village. The number of loaves varied between 4 up to 12 loaves per person. The number was increased if the person had children. The Charity received ten guineas (£10:10:0) or £10.50 in

today's currency. With this and one pound and eight pence farthing that they had left over from 1911, they were able to distribute 958 loaves. Three bakers provided the loaves at a cost of three pence (approximately 1.5 new pence) each. The bakers were Mr Carpenter, Mr King and Mr Geary.'

Capel Parish Funds

In view of the difficult economic climate we are very grateful that our grant for 2012 remained at £2,400. This enabled us to keep the Christmas Vouchers at the same value as 2011. 103 vouchers were cashed, two fewer than last year; 35 at £20 for couples and 68 at £15 for single folk. The Vouchers are accepted by Beare Green Stores, Capel Newsagents, Carter's Capel and Village Greens Ockley, (unfortunately Ockley Post Office no longer sells groceries). The cooperation of all four stores 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

In addition, the Charity bought 8 Salt Bins, 3 each for Beare Green and Capel and 2 for Coldharbour to be used in icy conditions. The cost of the salt bins came partly out of the surplus for 2011-12 and partly from Charity reserves. The cost of the rock salt for the bins came out of the grant for 2012-13.

The total expenditure, to date, is £2,063, leaving a surplus of £337 to be added to the Charity's reserves.

Jenny Richards, Chair of Trustees

6. OPERATION HORIZON (Surrey Road Maintenance) (copy on file) –

Cllr Helyn Clack: Emphasised the importance of the project for the local economy. £7M / yr had been saved by changing the Highways contract to May Gurney. The project involved a £100m investment over the next 5yrs with a minimum of £10m being invested in Mole Valley's road network. The Local Committee had endorsed the programme which would be going to the Council on 26th March.

The majority of the programme would be delivered during years 2 and 3. For Capel Parish re surfacing was proposed in Newdigate Road, Trig Street and Kingsland, Rusper Road, Anstie Lane, Coldharbour Lane, Coles Lane, Abinger Road, Beare Green Road A29, Mill Lane, Weare Street and Vicarage Lane to Misbrooks Green Road.

Cllr Homewood made a request for Merebank to be added to this list.

With a shared contractor (with Sussex) Highways has more spending power so procurement power is very good.

Parishes have been working with the police to increase driver awareness through Speedwatch.

SCC / Cllr Clack has established the Strood Green Flood Forum in conjunction with Thames Water and the Environment Agency to map the drainage system. Highways can change to using farmers for ditching. The importance of ditch clearing was emphasised in relation to effective drainage.

7. PROJECT OVERHALL (Refurbishment of Beare Green Village Hall) –

Cllr. Pearson Phase 1 – The disabled access, new toilets including disabled toilet, new flooring and baby changing room are complete and the electrics are now DDA compliant. The second foyer is now a separate area to use with the new entrance to the foyer being completed shortly. The second entrance to the Hall will be the disabled access. Stage 1 is now complete with all costs paid. The Hall has been kept open for use during the alterations.

The next stage will be to modernise the heating.

All are invited to the BGCA AGM on April 17th

Michelle Watson: (Beare Green resident) considered that the recent PC letter (copy on file) sent to the Project OverHall Committee re Parish Council funding was obstructive and outrageous. (Cllr Homewood agreed but later retracted the remark). Cllr Clack explained that being public money the PC was accountable for how it spends its funds and would require the OverHall Committee to produce a viable Business Plan, engage the services of a professional Fund Raiser to complete grant applications, a Project Manager and some matched funding. The PC were proposing to meet members of the OverHall Committee to discuss the matter.

8. ACTIVITIES IN COLDHARBOUR WARD – Cllr.McLachlan

(i) Coldharbour Common Road (byway up to the cricket pitch).

Work has been carried out to resurface the byway at the track leading up to the cricket pitch and the far end at Cockshot Hollow. Although we are pleased that the work was sanctioned our recommendations were not heeded so there are still problems with water and debris run-off at both ends. We had wanted the track to be cambered to one side in order to divert the water into silt traps and are in negotiation with SCC Highways to try and rectify the situation.

During the recent snow, as with every winter, the steep slope by the houses in the village centre becomes polished and highly dangerous for walkers by the unnecessary use of the byway by 4x4's who come to play in the snow. These activities are not illegal although there is a public safety and public nuisance issue. Property has been damaged and the 4x4's cause alarm by their night time activities. We would like to get a Traffic Regulation Order issued to close the byway to motorised vehicles but this is a lengthy and expensive legal process and only has a chance of success if we gather a large body of evidence. The CAD system used by the police 101 call centre has been updated to recognise Coldharbour Common Road so that all reports from the public can be grouped together and will eventually help in any application to get the byway closed.

(ii) Coldharbour Highways

After a long campaign we have succeeded in getting 6'6" width restriction signs installed on all of the feeder roads to Coldharbour Lane and Abinger Road on both sides of Leith Hill. This will hopefully stop unwanted large lorries using these roads as a cut through.

As with most areas there has been a huge rash of pot-holes this winter. The system for reporting pot-holes and getting them temporarily fixed is lengthy but works well. However a strong complaint has been made that the quality of the work is so poor that the patches sometimes only last a matter of days. May Gurney, the highways contractor, have been formerly challenged over this issue and a response is awaited. Parish Councils and residents in Surrey should monitor the situation and keep the pressure on their local council representatives.

(iii) Oil Exploration in the Surrey Hills

The 7 day public Inquiry held last July resulted in the Planning Inspector supporting the decision of the SCC planning committee to reject the planning application by Europa Oil and Gas back in May 2011. The Leith Hill Action Group (LHAG) and Capel Parish Council played an active role in the Inquiry and many thanks are due to all the efforts of those involved. However the applicant has now applied for a S288 Quashing Order to have the Planning Inspector's decision overturned by the High Court. This action concerns legal interpretation and not planning considerations, the main argument being what constitutes 'inappropriate development in the green belt and AONB'. LHAG have submitted a witness statement and been accepted as a co-defendant for this hearing. Sadly SCC has declined to defend its own planning

committee's decision. The hearing will be heard in the Royal Courts of Justice on November 12th and 13th 2013.

(iv) Mountain Biking in the Surrey Hills

For the last 4 years a working group chaired by Neil Maltby of the Surrey Hills Board and including Capel Parish Council has been investigating this problem. Quite quickly the conclusion was drawn that this issue cannot be stopped and the only way to resolve the conflict between bikers and other legal users of bridleways is to build a dedicated mountain bike trail crossing all 3 hills in the region. The trail would have to be well designed and maintained in order to make it interesting for the riders and experience shows in other parts of the UK that if successful this can result in the reduction of illegal use of footpaths and other 'off-piste' bike-riding. Since that decision there have been many discussions with landowners regarding liability issues and with funding organisations. In the last month £15,000 of funding has been secured from the Surrey County Council Olympic Legacy Fund and the CTC, the 150 year old nationwide cycling organisation, has been engaged to manage this project. With their experience of these projects both legally and technically it is hoped that this project will prove to be a great success. The 8km route for the first phase from Leith Hill Tower to Wotton has already been agreed and work should start soon. Eventually it is hoped to build a trail some 30 kilometres in length which will be a loop to join up twice with National Cycle Route 22 which passes through Dorking and heads west below the North Downs ridge.

(v) High Speed Broadband

It is now over 2 years since we were announced as one of the winners of the BT Race-to-Infinity competition meaning that superfast broadband (over 30mbps in speed) would be supplied to 90% of the residents of the Capel telephone exchange. For clarification this is any phone number which begins 01306 71xxxx. There has been much activity by BT Openreach and disruption of phone lines. This work is due to be finished by the end of April this year. Each consumer has to contact their broadband supplier to enable superfast broadband as it may require the installation of a new router inside your property as well as some other measures. You are not forced to buy your broadband from BT.

In Coldharbour, because of its distance from the main exchange, extra measures had to be taken. The street cabinet in Anstie Lane had to be upgraded to fibre-optic and the electricity required for it to operate is currently being installed – a process considerably delayed by a local landowner not granting wayleave. BT also agreed to install a new street cabinet nearer to the village centre. The planning application for this cabinet has just been submitted to Mole Valley. For complex engineering reasons, it will be located opposite White Cottage at the top of Anstie Lane and not closer to the village centre as we had hoped. BT Openreach has stated that the farthest property from this cabinet is Highland Cottage which is less than 1.5 kms and is easily close enough in order to provide high-speed broadband. They did say 'depending on the quality of the existing cables'. We will organise a lobbying campaign if this does not prove to be accurate.

(vi) Parish Maintenance in Coldharbour

Each year the parish council provides funding for the maintenance of various sites in Coldharbour Ward. They include the 2 cuts of the church hedge, the strimming of the grass triangle opposite the village pond and the maintenance of the sports pavilion and village notice boards. This year the pavilion was given a fresh coat of Sadolin and paint for the outside in order to keep out the damp weather. An elm tree was also planted in the village centre to commemorate the Queen's diamond jubilee.

(vii) Gatwick Airport - update

The Parish Council is a member of the Gatwick Airport Conservation Committee (GACC). This year there has been a lot of media speculation and government noise about a 2nd runway at Gatwick. The current agreement not to build a 2nd runway expires in 2018. GACC is completely opposed to any proposals and meets regularly to discuss its own media activities which include press articles and direct lobbying of MP's and cabinet ministers. If and when a firm proposal is announced then a campaign will be launched to oppose. Details of why GACC is opposed can be found on their web-site.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business the Chairman thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Would be in March 2014 (date to be confirmed)
(Copies of all full reports held on file)