

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF RIVER PARISH COUNCIL

Held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 8th September 2020 by video conference

PRESENT: Cllr. Taylor (in the Chair), Cllr. Dixon, Cllr. Atkins, County Cllr./Cllr. Beresford, Cllr. Eyre-Jackson, Cllr. Jones

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. A. Denyer (Parish Clerk), County Cllr. Collor, Dist. Cllr. Beaney, Dist. Cllr. Rose and members of the public via live streaming

Prior to the start of the meeting, Chairman asked the meeting if there were any objection to Corinne Watson (Co-op Member Pioneer and River School P.T.F.A Secretary) providing a brief presentation on her role. As there were no objection, this will take place after Item 76.

73. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllr. Buhlman

74. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were none.

75. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

a) Parish Council Meeting 14.07.2020

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14th July 2020 had previously been circulated. Cllr. Beresford proposed that the minutes represented a true record of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr. Dixon and all agreed.

b) Planning Committee Meeting 31.07.2020

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 31st July 2020 had previously been circulated and their contents were noted.

76. UPDATES FROM THE MINUTES

Item 63b – Football Matchday Parking: Cllr. Eyre-Jackson asked for this to be carried forward to a future meeting when crowds are once more attending matches.

Item 64(iv) – London Road Litter: Whitfield Parish Council have informed us that McDonalds their own litter collection team. They have contacted the local Community Liaison Officer and asked her to contact us direct.

Item 69b - HGV Signage: the new signs have been erected near the Crabble Road junction with Crabble Avenue. Cllr. Beresford has had a complaint that the sign on the right-hand side (when approaching down Crabble Road) is not visible. She has passed this information on to Kent Highways.

Item 71a - Keep Britain Tidy September Clean: details to be posted on the Facebook page for local awareness.

Item 72a – Former Meadowdene Nursing Home: – no update on the building.

Item 72b – River Post Office: Cllr. Dixon informed the meeting that the Post Office is now open three days a week.

Item 72c – Lower Road Telephone Kiosk: DDC (who objected to the box's removal) have no objection to the Parish Council adopting the Phone Box. Clerk will contact BT and bring a proposal to the next meeting.

77. PRESENTATION FROM CORINNE WATSON

Corinne Watson is the new Co-op Member Pioneer for the Dover and River Area. Her role, which is part-time, is to connect people within the community, to help with new ideas and, hopefully, be a catalyst for positive change in the community. She thanked the people of River for their welcome and offers of help and support.

She is also the new Secretary to River School PTFA. She thanked the Parish Council for the recent community grant. The sale of school uniform, held at the Recreation Ground, raised over £60 for school funds. She is looking forward returning to more normal events and activities when circumstances allow.

78. REPORTS:

a) PCSO / Policing

Cllr. Eyre-Jackson reported that there will shortly be a new PCSO for River with a smaller area to cover. The new area will cover River, Temple Ewell, Wooton and Denton. Recent incidents include: nuisance vehicles reported as part of Operation Fielding; also an address in Sanctuary Close has suffered criminal damage, possibly as an attempted break-in.

b) Parish Councillors

i) Cllr. Jones reported that the sale of vehicles in the laybys on London Road seems to have stopped for the time being. Levels of traffic and speed along London Road is now back to pre- lockdown levels.

ii) Cllr. Eyre-Jackson said that we cannot undertake any 'speedwatch' sessions on London Road until restrictions imposed during lockdown are lifted.

c) District and County Councillors

i) Dist. Cllr. Beaney read a report to the meeting which is appended to these minutes.

ii) Dist. Cllr. Rose reported that there is currently a lot happening, particularly with infrastructure. Catering facilities have now returned to Kearsney Abbey. An environmental review is currently taking place at DDC.

iii) County Cllr. Beresford reported that Covid cases locally are much reduced. Schools are now open. No problems reported so far with school transport. HWRC visits can now be booked twice a month and the booking system has been improved. There is a current white paper which will have consequences for housing.

Chairman asked if restrictions on visits to HWRC may be lifted. Cllr. Beresford responded, not currently so long as other Covid restrictions are in place.

iv) County Cllr. Collor reported that discussions on the budget are taking place. Particularly regarding how savings can be made without affecting frontline services.

v) He has attended a meeting, along with the MP and Cabinet Office Minister, Michael Gove, discussing Operation Brock and the consequences of a Brexit without a trade agreement. As a result, Mr. Gove will convene a meeting between DDC, KCC, Port of Dover and any other interested parties to discuss the issue.

QUESTIONS RECEIVED BY EMAIL FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: There were none.

79. PLANNING MATTERS:

a) Planning Applications

i) DOV/20/00648 | T1 - sycamore reduce in height by 4.5 metres T2 - beech limb over road - reduce back by 3.5 metres to suitable growth point T3 - beech limb over road - reduce back by 3.5 metres to suitable growth point T5 - beech limb over road - reduce back by 3.5 metres to suitable growth point T7 - beech limb over road - reduce back by 3.5 metres to suitable growth point T9 - beech reduce in height by 6 metres | Land Side north of Chilton Avenue, River, Kent – *No comments.*

ii) DOV/20/00890 | Erection of a detached dwelling and garage (existing buildings to be demolished) | River Minnis Farm, Minnis Lane, River, CT15 7DN – *The Parish Council support the application in principle but would like to see clarification of the proposed use of the building shown immediately behind the garage block.*

iii) DOV/20/00954 | Erection of a single storey rear extension and dormer window (existing conservatory to be demolished) | 35 Deanwood Road, River, CT17 0NT – *No comments.*

iv) DOV/20/00944 | Beech – cut back overhang into 14 Kingston Close back to main crown and thin crown by 20% | 14 Kingston Close, River, CT17 0NQ – *No comments.*

b) Decisions made by Dover District Council: None.

80. RIVER RECREATION GROUND REPORT

i) Cllr. Dixon reported that John Hill is due to start work on converting the cottage in September with a plan to open the Coffee Shop in spring 2021.

ii) He thanked Pauline Beresford and Nigel Collor (as County Councillors) for their Members Grant funding to refurbish the 'Kick-About' goals, which are now back in use and popular.

- iii) Additional waste bin has arrived. There have been problems with the waste collection contract. We are asking for the cardboard bin to be replaced by another general waste bin.
- iv) The 'No Dogs' stencils have been repainted by DDC and are now much bolder.
- v) Cllr. Dixon will be meeting with John Hill to decide locations for the paving slab artwork to be displayed.

81. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

a) Financial Statement for July and August 2020

Financial statements for July and August 2020 had previously been circulated. Cllr. Dixon proposed that the statements be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr. Atkins and all agreed.

b) Approval of the Annual Governance Statement

The annual governance statement was discussed. Cllr. Dixon proposed that the statement be approved. This was seconded by Cllr. Beresford and all agreed.

c) Approval of the Accounting Statement 2019/20

The financial statement for 2019/20 was discussed. Cllr. Atkins proposed that the statement be approved. This was seconded by Cllr. Beresford and all agreed.

d) Membership of Action for Rural Communities in Kent

A brochure for membership of Action for Rural Communities in Kent had previously been circulated. This was discussed and it was agreed not to seek membership of the organisation.

82. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

a) Dover District Council – Solar Together Scheme

A 'group buying' scheme has been launched by DDC to enable local residents interested in solar power to get panels at a cheaper price.

b) KALC – Current Courses

Notification has been received that KALC will now be running their 'Dynamic Councillor' training course online. Cllr. Atkins is going to attend and Cllr. Jones will check if he is available.

c) Kent Highways – Tree maintenance

Notification has been received of maintenance works on trees in Lewisham Road and Coxhill Gardens.

d) Email regarding Recreation Ground toilets

An email has been received commending the Parish Council on the cleanliness of the Recreation Ground toilets and also that they have been open when many others have remained closed.

e) Survey on roads enforcement and safety

Notification has been received of a survey on roads enforcement and safety. Clerk is to circulate details to all councillors.

83. ANY ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a) Cllr. Eyre-Jackson thanked those people who had sponsored her for the Co-op Virtual Run.

b) The Royal Oak pub is has now reopened.

c) The DDC Joint Transportation Board is due to meet this week and will discuss the Lower Road double yellow and the Kearsney Abbey car park.

Meeting closed at 8.50pm

Appendix

Report from District Councillor Beaney

Coronavirus

Dover District Council Community Hub provided a seven-days a week service to support the most vulnerable members of the community during lockdown, with everything from hot meals, to collecting shopping and prescriptions, and befriending services for those isolating at home alone. Over 24,000 contacts were made between March and July.

The council now considering applications to its general Community Grants Fund, which includes £27,500 allocated by the Council, along with a £12,500 contribution from the Dover District Lotto. The council was also in charge of administering the Government's various business grant support and relief schemes and I know from speaking to some of them, people were actually quite impressed with the speed with which they did sit - For a council, anyway. In the end grants totalling over £24 million were delivered to over 2,100 local businesses.

The council also launched The Back to Business Hub on 15 June to provide proactive support to help local small and medium size enterprises re-open safely as lockdown restrictions started to ease.

On top of these things the council also had its statutory services to deliver. I was pleased that refuse collection continued without any reduced service, where we understand there were certain service reductions elsewhere in the county like in Canterbury. On fly-tipping I personally raised a number of incidents reported in Alkham and was one of those publicly calling for KCC's recycling sites to reopen, as I didn't see why they couldn't operate within social distancing rules. With the council leader and the local MP our area led the way in terms of pressure on this and I'm pleased KCC eventually listened.

Public parks were kept open so people could continue to get out during lockdown, and I'm pleased to see other things now return like the re-opening of the mobile café and temporary toilet facilities at Kearsney Abbey.

Housing

Plans have been approved for a £3m project to build 24 properties as interim accommodation for local people who find themselves temporarily homeless. They include 8 one-bedroom flats at Stockdale Gardens in Deal, and 16 studio flats at Kimberley Close in Dover. Both are brownfield sites owned by the council and the project forms part of the commitment to reduce the reliance on B&B accommodation which has proved a significant cost.

Plans have also been agreed to build 26 new council homes at Napchester Road in Whitfield. Permission for the housing, an access road and associated enabling drainage works has been granted. Work is underway to progress the highways designs, the appointment of a main contractor, and the transfer of the land. In the end there should be four-bedroom houses, Ten three-bedroom houses, Four two-bedroom houses, Eight two-bedroom flats, Two one-bedroom flats.

Social housing is a focus and despite the Covid-19 budgetary pressures I'm told the money set aside for directly delivered projects is still there and that the council is looking at some 80 small sites across the district.

Local Businesses

There are currently 24 small businesses trading in the Dover Co-Innovation Hub (the old Dover Co-op Building). It took a while but the first business to start trading from their own premises was Angela Hoskins who opened her Preloved Plus store at 2 Cherry Tree Avenue. And now we've got the Gaby Redman Design Studio, selling upcycled home décor, which moved into 7 Cannon Street in Dover on August 1st.

I really liked this project and visited when it first started so I'm really pleased to see it actually starting to work in terms of its original aim. I know the council is looking at other uses for that

building but I understand it's also looking for new premises so that the shopping centre can continue.

Financial impact and recovery

As you can imagine the financial implications for the council from Covid-19 have been profound, with everything from extra homelessness to business rates, loss of income from the leisure centre and loss of parking income.

Budgetary pressure was expected to be between £3 million and £9 million, with only about £1.25 million being given in support by central government.

The plan was to offset this with a mixed approach. The council has decent reserves so transferring some of these and borrowing a bit more against assets like the new leisure centre. A review is also underway looking at capital projects in the pipeline which haven't yet started.

The financial plan also includes £2.5 million set aside currently dubbed as a town centre regeneration fund but I understand the intention is not necessarily to only support town centre businesses. It was about putting money aside knowing businesses of all types could have a rocky road ahead and ensuring we are ready to support them. But I understand exactly what the schemes will be is still very much up for discussion.