

A virtual meeting of the Seal Parish Council was held on THURSDAY 12th November 2020 at 7.30pm

Present:

Mrs F Weston
Mr R Bourne
Mr C Tavare
Mr A Bulleid
Mr Michaelides
Mr T Martin
Mr Spencer
Mr Penn
Councillor R Hogarth
Councillor J Thornton
Councillor R Gough

Also present the Clerk

ACTION

Apologises: Mr Brown

The minutes were signed at the last meeting, two cheques were cancelled and are in receipt of cheque number: 006002 and 006006

Declaration of Interest - None

KCC Matters – Councillor Gough matters

New and high priority outstanding issues for the PC for discussion

Childsbridge Lane Railway Bridge traffic counts were completed just before second lockdown. Whitney Gwillim is looking through the data and will report to the parish council. The parish council requested at the last meeting two additional locations for Zambra Way to be placed where our current poles exist and which KCC could use for their equipment.

RG

Ongoing highway matters

A25 SID column needs to be reinstated; this is currently on hold due to COVID-19 as traffic counts are required. No update

**Pending CV-19
Traffic count**

Gulleys in Underriver House Road – last stretch of pipework not flowing properly, Councillor Gough raised this with Emily Kinsella in mid-October but not sure whether anything was acted upon. The clerk reported that there is still one drain blocked.

RG

Road sign reinstated on Carters Hill, One Tree Hill, although there is no road sign heading towards Sevenoaks, Fawke Wood Road, third sign missing for Underriver and a couple of verge markers require reinstating. Simon Hawkins checked Carters Hill sign and reported it was upright and a further 2 damaged verge markers will be required and will raise a job and get them replaced.

RG

Black metal bollard outside Seal Kebab Shop requires attention.

Zambra Way grass verge – Councillor Gough has been in contact with Landscapes, the mowing was stopped for a while as the ground was water-logged and doing more harm than good.

RG

At the junction of Childsbridge lane the drains are blocked opposite Meadow Lane side. There is a gully in Zambra Way and the road has dipped and needs resurfacing. The general drainage is better but at the corner of Zambra Way there is nowhere for the water to go. Councillor Gough will raise with Emily Kinsella.

RG

Highway Schemes

Bank Lane requires surface repairs at the junction of Bank Lane and Mill Lane where the friable surface on a steep slope is dangerous, at Riverdale farm where accumulated debris from running water narrows the road on a blind bend and pushes traffic into the middle of the road, and on Mill Lane where a utility trench is eroding because of surface water. Councillor Gough said that Bank lane is not at the levels yet to be patched but will try and get them monitored for action at a later date. New houses at the Tonbridge and Malling end of Bank Lane have installed a kerb.

RG

Copse Bank/Ashplatt Footpath

The maintenance on Copse Bank footpath which links with Trinity School work is still outstanding from the July meeting and there is £10,000 in the budget to carry out the clearance work immediately as mud and leaves are accumulating.

RG

Bentleys Meadow

The Parish Council have organised to start weeding the planters with 2 other volunteers. No further update to report.

A25 temporary relaxation of HGV Vehicles

A resident reported a lot of traffic through the night on the A25 thought to be due to the relaxation of drivers' hours under COVID-19 but is ongoing. Councillor Gough to follow up due to the increase vehicle noise on A25 which causes huge impact throughout the ward. No further update.

Other Matters Requiring Discussion and Action**Highway Improvement Plan**

A separate SHIP speed HIP has been produced by Mr Brown and Mr Haslam. This is currently on hold following the new successor and will look to arrange a meeting with Whitney Gwillim, KCC.

Whitney Gwillim would be happy to set up a virtual meeting to discuss the HIP with Councillor Gough, clerk and other parish councillors awaiting to hear of a possible date.

MB

A resident has asked whether double yellow lines could be considered in Church Road/Zion Street on the corner. As vans are parking on the corner and effecting visibility. The Seal village parish councillors will view the area and comment at the next meeting. Photos were forwarded to Councillor Gough last week and there have been reports of an abandoned vehicle which Sevenoaks District Council are trying to get rid of. It was proposed that there should be clearer signs on the main High Street in Seal indicating where the nearest place is to park. It was agreed that it is very short walk to the shops and village hall. More could be done to promote businesses in the centre of the village. Councillor Thornton said that Seal undersells itself - other villages have white gates and a welcome sign. These and a new sign on an existing post if possible these could be included on the HIP. Councillor Gough will look into it further, he has paid for other parish council gates in Crockenhill and Otford but some time ago and would update us going forward.

ALL

RG

Councillor Gough reported at the last meeting he would use his connections with Network Rail to find out who the Parish Council can speak too about a footbridge. He has emailed the parish council regarding contacts and wishes to be included in communication but if anything didn't materialise then he would look at other avenues.

The Parish Council have liaised with Sevenoaks Town Council over writing a joint letter from their Chairmen to the KCC Chairman on the reduction of speed on the A25, The parish council are awaiting communication from STC, whether the speed limit could be changed and cycling routes /pedestrian routes. Councillor Hogarth mentioned he would support 30mph.

Clerk

Traffic around the Fawke Common entrance to Knole Park

A meeting took place between Knole, SDC, Mrs Weston and Andy Willmore of the commons project to discuss the parking issues along St Julians Road, at the Fawke Wood Common junction, and other areas. All agreed it is a serious problem, and something needs to be done about it. The Parish Council is against double yellow lines due to urbanising an otherwise very rural area, and although Knole thought tree trunks along the verge might help, concern was expressed that people would park elsewhere so alternative parking arrangements need to be in place before prevention measures are installed. Knole owns Redlands, their lease comes up for renewal in 2021 and it might be possible to make car park space in Redlands. This is a year off and in the meantime there continues to be an issue. The meeting felt quite positive in that least there was a possible option in the longer term, subject to planning. All agreed that people need to feel that it is a safe place for gathering and enjoying the park. It was also agreed by all parties that any new arrangement should include measures to reduce the speed of traffic along St Julians Road and KCC should be asked to address this as an urgent safety matter. There are families, dogs, horse-riders and cyclists gathering to enjoy the Park and Commons and traffic is far too fast. Mrs Weston had suggested other examples of traffic calming such as at the New Forest retained the rural nature of the area but make it clear that speed needed to be reduced right down. The overall feeling from those at that meeting was that at this stage we couldn't do much about the issue at the moment and hoped that with winter coming and lockdown easing in the New Year that matters would calm down a bit.

FW

Discussion ensued and it was pointed out that there is a particular issue at the Riverhill end with traffic backing up onto the main road and double yellow lines at this point are not so obtrusive as it is slightly more urbanised. They can then be enforced but falls under Weald parish and different County Councillor. Signs on the road helped in the last lockdown as parking in Sevenoaks was free. This is not the case now although

SDC Town Car park is free on Sundays which can be used for alternative parking but there is now generally a problem at other times, and this will increase particularly with the Christmas holidays coming up. Temporary measures over Christmas period and cones could stop people parking. It was queried whether SDC could have a parking area dedicated to Knole which is free to walkers. This wouldn't be Blighs car park but people would be directed to the town car park which is a lovely walk down to Knole. SDC would be asking for temporary measures using some cones for a temporary fix. The issue is that people are now coming from out of town from South London, having discovered the walking through lockdown and there is a lack of understanding about the need to park sensibly leaving access for servicing emergency and agricultural vehicles. There is quite simply a lack of parking space now.

FW

Seal Village Hall

The Parish Council are supporting discussions around the future management of the Seal Village Hall. Mr Davies is stepping down as Chairman and Mr Brown will take his place with the support of Mr Tavare. Huge thanks go to Mr Davies for all the work he has done for Seal Village Hall and for him continuing as Honorary Treasurer. A couple of meetings have taken place with Mr Tavare and Mr Brown and others for an informal chat. If any resident would like to become a Committee member and are interested in the Village and activities, please contact the Chairman of Seal Village Hall. The Committee requires new ideas to drum up support and interest from local residents so that it becomes a real asset to the immediate village community as well as to groups from outside the village. A questionnaire for both the village hall and the recreation ground is being prepared to gain ideas from local residents. It was agreed that it would be good to have discussion groups with teenagers after lockdown to see what their interests are. Councillors should send their comments on the questionnaire to Mr Tavare and it can then be circulated as widely as possible using different means.

MB/CT

The Parish Council is reviewing its website and it was agreed that it would be good to have a section on all the halls in the Parish including the Seal Village Hall. Mr Brown was thanked for all the work he has undertaken so far in progressing renewed interest in the village hall.

Seal Recreation Ground

A need to replace the basketball/netball facility on the recreation ground led to a discussion about sports and other activity provision on the ground. This basketball facility would be aimed at younger people, other options available would be table tennis, gym equipment, cycling in the wooded section. Sport England can fund getting people active dependant on what we would like to provide. There are options such as a half a court to practice shooting for netball. The Bat and Ball multi use facility is open for all to use with some exclusive use and some charges for certain activities. A draft questionnaire, to be combined with one on the village hall, is being prepared to gain knowledge from the residents of Seal on such facility for the Recreation Ground. Comments to be sent to Mr Tavare so he can progress circulation of both the questionnaires.

CT

All

Website Accessibility and Upgrade

A subcommittee of Mr Bourne, Mr Brown and the Clerk had looked at the options for upgrading the Parish website. All agreed that this should be done at a cost of £1,000 plus VAT. Discussion took place over the different options and it was left to the sub-committee to make the final decision. Mr Penn proposed and Mr Michaelides seconded and it was agreed unanimously.

RB/MB/Clerk

Sealcroft Cottages

Land at Seal Croft Cottages – A meeting had been held with the Landowner to look at the boundary of the land alongside Childsbridge Lane bridge. The fence had been put up where it is to prevent vans from parking. The actual boundary was readily acknowledged and a written agreement between both the landowner and the parish council to confirm this and the owners' willingness to move the fence if necessary.

CIL Spending Board

Councillor Thornton outlined the process for applying to CIL, explaining that it is competitive and quite complicated. SDC have a view on priorities. The funding is suitable for significant infrastructure projects that benefit local people and are in particular near to new developments. The proposal for a pedestrian crossing at the railway bridge would be a suitable project and there maybe others. Mr Haslam offered to attend the next meeting on 10th March at 7pm to understand better the process with a view to the council putting in a bid in the next round. Mr Hogarth sits on the committee and is happy to help as appropriate.

KALC AGM

An Annual General Meeting is scheduled for 28 November via Zoom, 2 Councillors to attend and book through their website. Mr Penn was able to attend and will book via their website.

Verge Cutting and Wildflowers

Mr Tavare, Mrs Weston, Ashley Walmsley of SDC and Andrew Wilmore Kent Wildlife Trust and local resident, met at Godden Green to look at having a section managed for improved wildlife. All are very much on board. There are neighbouring councils who have really good ideas, for instance people in the allotments at Kemsing and it would be good to work together.

Items for information only and updates if necessary

Park Lane

Park Lane, Column 30 work to commence 12 November for groundworks to be completed.

Seal Recreation Ground

Seal Recreation Ground is one of the hotspots for Nitrous Oxide and Police will be patrolling the area and if you see any evidence please report to the Community Safety Unit.

Councillor Vacancy – Seal Ward

At present we have an opportunity to become a parish councillor and have two vacancies available. If you are interested in becoming a parish councillor, please contact the Clerk.

Greensand Project – Bitchet Common

A walk organised at Bitchet Common will be arranged in the spring subject the COVID-19 restrictions at the time.

Planning

The Council agreed the Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings on 8th and 26 October 2020.

Mr Michaelides proposed and Mr Penn seconded and this was agreed unanimously.

The Council ratified the responses to planning application consultations submitted after these meetings. Mr Michaelides proposed and Mr Penn seconded and this was agreed unanimously. There will be a short meeting of the Planning Committee after the Council Meeting for which an agenda will be circulated.

Accounts and cheques

006007	Kent County Council		Pension Fund
006008	Mrs C Boland		Salary
006009	Mrs C Boland	£150.00	Petty Cash
006010	Mrs C Boland	£53.39	Zoom and Broadband
006011	Inland Revenue		Deductions
006012	Mrs C Farrow-Ward		Salary
006013	Mr J Boland		Salary
006014	Mr A McFadyen	£95.00	Heating
006015	Streetlights	£2,190.42	Streetlighting
006016	Richard Abel Landscapes	£1,801.12	Mowing
006017	Castle Water Limited	£15.52	Water rates
006018	Sevenoaks District Council	£32.80	Refuse collection
006019	Seal PCC	£600.00	Donation
006020	J C Peacock & Company Limited	£190.34	Salt Bin
006021	A S L Limited	£33.00	Photocopier
006022	CPRE	£36.00	Membership
006023	Kent County Council	£2.95	Stationery
006024	Sevenoaks District Council	£420.00	Sacks
006025	Community Heartbeat Trust	£97.20	Defib
006026	Kent County Council	£104.60	Cleaning
006027	Spy Alarms Limited	£476.40	CCTV and alarm maintenance

AOB

A black bag of household rubbish is being placed beside SDC bins, SDC empty the bins but these bags are being placed after they have just been emptied. The Parish Council have reported to Enforcement Team who will be taking appropriate action.

Due to lockdown the residents have missed various pubs in our parish, and we welcomed pubs opening once lockdown had lifted. The Parish Council/UVA would like to put an application together for White Rock Inn in Underriver and Bucks Head, Godden Green as Community Assets.

UVA/RB

Mr Haslam will look at Borough Green railway and KCC own land and we would need to consider landowners.

CH

The budget which we would have normally approved at this meeting will present in January so we can get the precept exactly right to have an impact on council tax amount Band D. If anyone has any comments in the meantime would be happy for your comments.

AM

Matters for Information Only

Please see the parish council website for latest M25 planned roadworks

Please see website for further information on health advice, financial advice for residents and waste and recycling services and residents who are vulnerable <https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20069142/>

KCC advice on Coronavirus updates

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/coronavirus>

Main source of advice for Coronavirus

www.gov.uk/coronavirus

A reminder to report all Highway issues direct to KCC 03000 41 81 81
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem> –

A reminder to report problems on PROW to 03000 41 7171 8am-8pm Mon-Friday.

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/public-rights-of-way/report-a-problem-on-a-right-of>

Please report street light outages in Seal (other than on the A25) to the Parish Council.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm