

Chairman's report September 2013

Planning

There were a number of questions outstanding over the planning process when the recent application at Brooklea was approved following intervention by Cllr Ward after recommendation to refuse by the planning dept. What hadn't been appreciated, was where planning departments decisions are to refuse or are conflict with public opinion, then these are recommendations only. Final decisions are made by Councillors, sometimes but not always, at Local Committee meetings. Cllr Ward's opinion as to whether a 41% increase in the size of the barn / office was 'materially larger' differed from local opinion and indeed the planning department. Unlike Waverley, GBC do not have any written guidelines around this. Unwritten guidelines are in the region of 20% for large buildings such as barns and 40% for domestic. Either way, the building fell outside the norm, but Cllr. Ward gained support from other Councillors who wished to support the application on the basis of its use as a small business.

The hierarchy & settlement paper was released. Compton village is unlikely to be hit with a quota for new builds as it ranks fairly low, being without a school, shops or Dr.s or railway. Guildford residents group have raised questions about the rationale used citing other regions where service levels play a less important part.

Other planning points (Blackwell farm, enforcement at Sheep farm) will be covered in the planning report.

Horses

There was a great deal of concern over the welfare of horses kept on land rented by Tom Price. This was because horses were not being 'cared for' several had died and during the hot period, there was no grass, a lot of ragwort and one of the water troughs was also temporarily out of action. The catch 22 situation of having to wait for evidence before anything concrete could be done, was too much for some, who went ahead and fixed the trough. Improvements in the weather have helped and the situation is being monitored by RSPCA and police and trading standards. There have not been any recent reports of horses dying and a recent visit by Price's girlfriend, could be a good sign, although the ragwort is still present and as it goes over, is even more toxic, which is an added concern.

Van

The van parked on the Green for several weeks has now gone. The questions remains as to whether a sign is needed that stipulates 'No parking without a permit' or 'Parking without a permit will result in prosecution'? TBD with GBC / police as to what is permissible?

Memorial

Tree survey

CSW - 6 awaiting training. Matt Redfern has been informed. I am still waiting to hear about use of the VAS in Down Lane

V Hall

Following a wall of silence from the solicitors CPC instructed some time ago, we were left with no choice but to seek alternative legal advice in order to conclude the matter. The Village Hall Committee had engaged a solicitor from ACRE who specialized in Village Halls whereas the CPC solicitor was a property solicitor and each took very different approaches.

To conclude the matter, CPC took advice from Roger Taylor, who specializes in Parish Council related matters. CPC is a custodian trustee only and therefore has no responsibility, other than to see that the charitable objects are upheld. As advised, the Village Hall has been removed from the asset register and Members of the Village Hall Committee have been informed.

It was not legally possible to be a 'sleeping landlord' which would have given some financial protection to the hall, instead, the Village Hall Committee will be responsible for all aspects of the hall, including fund raising, when needed.

There are aspects of the 1934 conveyance document that still need updating and the Village Hall Committee are dealing with this. Cllr. Peter Graham is now a trustee on the Committee and will continue to report to CPC. As both Trustee and Councillor, Peter will not be able to vote, should CPC at any time need to make decisions relating to donations for the Hall.