



# COMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Compton Parish Council held on

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at 7.00pm**

At **Pucks Oak Barn** for the transaction of the under mentioned business

**Present:** Cllrs F Curtis, P Graham, K Patel, J Parsons, K Stevens  
Sgt S Barwood  
5 members of the public  
The Clerk, Mrs J Cadman

Cllr Curtis PROPOSED that Cllr Stevens take the chair for the meeting. This was SECONDED by Cllr Patel, with all in favour

- 26/15 **Apologies for Absence:** all members were present.
- 27/15 **Declarations of interest:** Cllr Stevens declared a personal and pecuniary interest in Blackwell Farm, as a close neighbour and as a member of the Save the Hogs Back Campaign.
- 28/15 **Minutes of meeting held January 2015:** were agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.
- 29/15 **Report from the Police:**  
Sgt Barwood reported as follows:
- a) There had been two reports of vehicle crime in the area.
  - b) There had been one non-dwelling burglary. A quad bike and a motorcycle had been stolen, both had been recovered and an arrest had been made.
  - c) There had been a theft of a patio chair and criminal damage to a patio window.
  - d) Cllr Curtis advised that an estate car had been seen in a field trying to round up some horses. The horses had seemed to be scared. Sgt Barwood said that there had been a couple of issues around horses recently, one of which had been a number had been running loose in Down Lane. The problem the police had was trying to find out who was responsible for securing the land that the horses are on, and the police are doing some work on securing the fields themselves. Sgt Barwood asked people to report any horse incidents to the police.
  - e) The police wished people to be aware of the current problem with shed break-ins, which had increased across the borough. The police are offering advice on how to secure sheds.
  - f) Cllr Curtis advised that a lorry had gone off the side of the road in the Avenue. Sgt Barwood confirmed that the police had not been advised, and agreed that this meant that incidents like this would not be taken into account by SCC when targeting roads for improvement, but pointed out that it was only necessary for people involved in these sort of road traffic accidents to exchange insurance details, as they were not a police matter. She took note of this incident.
- 30/15 **Reports from County and Borough Cllrs:** No member of County or Borough Council was present and no report had been received.
- 31/15 **Public Forum:** No matters were raised.
- 32/15 **Matters Arising:** All matters arising were covered by the agenda.
- 33/15 **Members report: Local Plan:** Cllr Stevens report is attached to the minutes.  
Cllr Stevens advised that there was unlikely to be a new Local Plan until 2017 at the earliest. She said that if a developer put forward an application in the meantime, it would be judged against the 2003 Local Plan and a developer could argue that this is outdated and should not be used. However, she also pointed out that Compton Parish lies within the Green Belt, and there are laws to protect the Green Belt, so developers would have to prove "exceptional circumstances" in order to build here. Cllr Stevens added that of the planning decisions taken locally only around 1% of are overturned on appeal.

34/15 **Members report: Highways**

- a) *Traffic Calming in Down Lane:* Mr Miller explained that SCC had to use its budget for the Quiet Lane scheme by the 31<sup>st</sup> March, or lose it. There were a number of items under the scheme that it had not been possible for them to implement, but they had promised that these would be done later. The paintbrush gateposts have been installed, although the ones at the Compton end of Down Lane are rather obscured by the hedge.

The other part of the scheme was the installation of a walkway between the Chapel and the Gallery, which is intended to slow cars down. There is some concern that the walkway looks like the road has been dug up for utility work and reinstated with a different coloured tarmac, rather than a walkway, and some sort of demarcation or signage is needed. However, SCC are keen to 'declutter' the area, so will not support this. A meeting will be held with SCC in the middle of April to discuss this.

SCC are undertaking a survey to ascertain whether the quiet lanes installations have made any changes in motorists' habits, and this will be taken into account when decisions are made about further measures.

- b) *Speed limits through the village:* Mrs Eyles asked if there was any plan to impose a 30mph speed limit in the Avenue. Mr Miller advised that the forthcoming meeting would review all speed limits, and that the next project would be the Street.
- c) *Hogs Back:* Closure of the Hogs Back road gap to East Flexford Lane: SCC had written to the residents of East Flexford, notifying them of the proposed closure, but not to those in Monkshatch, who would be equally affected. An alternative to closure would be to have better signage, and SCC has agreed to look at this. There was a suspicion that this closure might be part of a bigger scheme, as there seemed no logic in closing this gap, but not the other two gaps in the same stretch.
- Cllr Stevens advised that there had been a move 18 years ago to close all the gaps on the Hogs Back, on the grounds of safety, and it had been decided that the existing gaps were the minimum required to service the area, particularly bearing in mind that there is a care home in Flexford Lane, and ambulances might be called out on a regular basis.

35/15 **Members report: Allotments and Environmental Projects**

- a) *Withies Pond:* Cllr Parsons raised the problem of the flooding in Withies Lane. A member of the public said that the Withies pond needed work from time to time, and a major project had been carried out on it by the McAlmont Trust some 15 years ago to improve the environmental habitat. Land and Water had not yet provided a quotation for work to the pond, but it was agreed to continue to pursue this, with the expectation that funding from the Parish Council would be supported by funding from the Loseley Estate and from SCC.
- Cllr Stevens PROPOSED the expenditure of £360 to Surrey Wildlife Trust for a wildlife habitat investigation, this was SECONDED by Cllr Graham, with all in favour.
- b) *Annual litter pick:* it was agreed that March was a good time for a litter pick, and the litter pick will be done in March in future years. There had been a good turnout of around 14 people, and a lot of rubbish had been cleared. SCC will clear the litter on the A3 in May.
- c) *Flood forum:* to be pursued.

36/15 **Members report: Youth and recreation**

- a) *Proposals for new playground equipment:* the Clerk had met with Sovereign Play Equipment to seek ideas for new playground equipment, and she tabled their proposals for a roundabout that would be suitable for disabled children as well as able bodied, and a zip wire for older children. The roundabout would be placed inside the current playground fencing, by moving the two small rocking toys further back in the area, and the zip wire outside, running down next to the side fence. The total cost, including safer surfacing, would be £15,910. Cllr Graham PROPOSED that this expenditure be agreed, subject to further quotations and the consideration of other ideas for equipment from other companies. This was SECONDED by Cllr Stevens, with all in favour.

37/15 **Members report: Watts Gallery and Cemetery**

- a) *Criteria for burial:* members discussed whether specific guidelines could be agreed to assist decisions around non-resident burial applications. As requests are so variable, it was agreed that it was best to avoid being too prescriptive and that applications should be individually considered. They were reminded that they would be consulted on applications that did not completely match the criteria, but which had mitigating circumstances. The Clerk was asked to report at the next meeting on the number

of plots left, both burial and cremation, and the number of burials each year at present.

- b) *Cemetery committee meeting*: the minutes from the meeting held Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February had been circulated. Members were concerned by the safety of the Beech tree, which has serious fungal problems and which overhangs the Chapel. The Clerk advised that the Custodian was keeping a close eye on this and taking professional advice on when it should be reduced or felled.

38/15 **Members report: Planning**

- a) List of approved planning applications had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- b) *Proposals from GBC to stop providing paper plans*: Cllr Graham reminded members that currently GBC send paper copies of planning applications and plans to him and he and Cllr Parsons review these and decide whether the Parish Council should make a response. He then circulates to members, and collates their responses before making a response to GBC.  
GBC had called a recent meeting, where it had advised that the Council proposed to stop sending out hard copy plans. The general feeling amongst parish councils had been that, although they recognised the cost of this practice, it would be very hard for councils, most of which did not have an office, to make effective responses when viewing plans online. At present, GBC proposes to put simple plans online from the 1<sup>st</sup> April, and move to putting all plans online from mid-July. GBC is offering parish councils hardware to facilitate this move and the Borough's IT expert will be writing to all councils, providing a list of what GBC can supply and offering advice.

39/14 **Members report: Village Hall**

- a) *Proposed meeting on car parking (agenda item 14/15 January meeting)*: it was noted that the Harrow is up for sale, so any discussions with the Brewery concerning car parking are on hold for the time being. Members agreed to meet at the Green the following week to review the parking options close to the Club.
- b) Cllr Graham reported that bookings were holding up well. He advised that the current constitution concerning Trustees would need to be revised at the AGM to bring it back into order.

40/15 **Village Sign**

Mr Sharples tabled his design, based on details from Watts Chapel. He had received a quote for the terracotta panels that would make up the centre of the sign from Mick Pinner at East Meon of £2,500. These panels would be cast, so that damaged panels could be replaced in the future, and would have a small roof to protect the panels from the rain and frost. Mr Sharples proposed using a Farncombe joinery company for the sign itself, which, and he hoped to work with them on creating the sign. The end result would incorporate elements of the style of the design proposed a few years ago by Chris Lovell, but would be less expensive at around £4,000. Permission would be needed from GBC to erect the sign and a site is to be agreed. Members received the design and concept with enthusiasm, and agreed that Mr Sharples should proceed with this. He was thanked for his work and vision.

41/15 **Annual Parish Meeting**

The meeting will be held in the village club, with the same planning as the first year, Leone will provide the food and all attendees will be given 2 raffle tickets to exchange for drinks. The theme this year is 'Compton Connections' and the intention is to get businesses to work together. There would be a short introduction and then a general talk about businesses in the village. There would also be a clear summary of the Local Plan. A board would be provided for comments, on post-it notes, and businesses would be encouraged to exchange business cards. *Subsequent to the meeting, no comments were received to a request in the Compton NEWS for input, and hence the intended interactive section of the meeting was omitted.*

42/15 **Finance**

- a) *Management accounts to 28<sup>th</sup> February* had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- b) *Schedule of income and expenditure to 28<sup>th</sup> February* had been circulated prior to the meeting. Members noted and approved the expenditure of £1128.24 for January and February 2015.

43/13 **Parish Council rights and duties**

Mr Haskin's comments following publication of the minutes of the January parish council meeting were noted, and formally refuted.

1. Concerning Mr Haskin's stated view that Cllr Stevens was acting unlawfully by commenting on the Local Plan, members noted the following:

*The Government has used the Localism Act to clarify the rules on 'predetermination'. These rules were developed to ensure that councillors came to council discussions with an open mind. In practice, however, these rules had been interpreted in such a way as to reduce the quality of local debate and stifle valid discussion. In some cases councillors were warned off doing such things as campaigning, talking with constituents or publicly expressing views on local issues, for fear of being accused of bias or facing legal challenge. The Localism Act makes it clear that it is proper for councillors to play an active part in local discussions and that they should not be liable to legal challenge as a result. This will help them better represent their constituents and enrich local democratic debate. People can elect their councillor confident in the knowledge that they will be able to act on the issues they care about and have campaigned on.*

2. The newsletter and website are operated by Compton Village Association and the Parish Council feed into them, but do not control them.
3. The Clerk cannot hold the database of those who subscribe to village updates as this could have data protection issues.
4. All meetings of committees and groups, whether formally constituted or otherwise, are either minuted or reported in full at Parish Council meetings.
5. Mr Haskin's concerns would have been addressed in full at the November meeting if he had not left the meeting before this was possible.
6. The Parish Council had taken legal advice on its position and that advice had been conveyed

The Parish Council has considered and addressed all points raised and now considers this matter closed. No further response will be made to matters previously raised.

#### 44/15 **Clerk's Report**

- a) *Parish handyman:* diary of duties carried out in February and early March had been circulated prior to the meeting. Members asked the Clerk to advise Peter that the pavement from Church Cottages to the Harrow is overgrown again. The Clerk would discuss with Peter the need for a bin, to be emptied by GBC, for waste arising from clearing pavements, etc. Members noted that lorries are damaging the grass verge in the Avenue, but agreed that there was no solution to this.
- b) *Parish Council elections:* the Clerk reminded the meeting that all papers need to be with the Returning Officer by the 9<sup>th</sup> April, and it was agreed to meet the following week to complete these.
- c) *Parish Online:* details of this online mapping service had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Curtis PROPOSED that the Council purchase a licence. This was SECONDED by Cllr Graham, with all in favour.

45/15 **Action list:** had been circulated prior to the meeting and was discussed. In particular, members discussed the suggested parking area on the village green and Cllr Parsons suggested that a small area of tarmac be laid opposite the village club, which could be used for 5 a side football and basketball when it is not needed for parking. The area would be fenced and gated so that it could not be used routinely. It was agreed to hold a separate meeting concerning this.

46/15 **Councillors business:** No additional matters were raised.

47/15 **Open Forum:** no additional matters were raised.

48/15 **Compton News:** the Clerk had noted the items for the Newsletter.

49/15 **Correspondence:** there had been no new correspondence.

50/15 **Dates of meetings:** Annual Parish meeting: Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April, Annual Meeting: 20<sup>th</sup> May.

Thanks were recorded to Cllr Parsons, who is to leave the Council at the May elections, for all his work over the past four years. He said that he would like to remain involved, which was warmly welcomed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.02pm