

A meeting of the Seal Parish Council was held on THURSDAY 9th September 2021 in Stone Street at 7.30pm

Present:

Mr Bourne
Mr Haslam
Mr Martin
Mr Penn
Mr Spencer
Mrs Weston – Chair
Mr Boorman

Also present the Clerk

1 Apologies

Mr Michaelides, Mr Bulleid and Councillor Gough

2 The minutes of the of the last meetings were agreed and signed.

3 Declarations of Interest - None

4 Clerk's report

The Clerk is awaiting a further communication from Greg Thompson of Network Rail on the railway bridge.

Also awaiting further communication from Kemsing Parish Council to set up a meeting regarding the HIP. There has been a change in committees on Kemsing side and we await to hear further.

The Resident who raised the issue with the SU17 footpath to be extended to Park Lane, has said unless there is a particular interest then it's not worth making a claim and therefore, he will not be progressing at this stage. Mr Michaelides also agrees and therefore will also not progress in a separate application for a new footpath along Woodland Rise.

Tony Fish our Tree Warden has pointed out that there are about forty-five dead or dying elm trees spread along the eastern boundary of the recreation ground. Given that any that are alive at the moment will no doubt become diseased, we should look into having them inspected by a tree surgeon to see what the best course of action would be.

Over the summer holidays the Pavilion was decorated and completed in good time for Preschool.

Mr Brown has resigned as Councillor and we wish him well for the future, a vacancy has now arisen for Seal Ward.

Mr Boorman would like to join the planning committee.

The Clerk has been notified that R Abel will be retiring 31 March 2022 and she will need to find a new contractor to maintain our areas in our parish

5 KCC Matters – Councillor Gough matters

Ongoing highway matters to be progressed outside the meeting. Items are listed in the Appendix and verbal updates given to the Clerk.

The Parish Council would like to thank Councillor Gough for warning bollards on Mill Lane and resurfacing at the junction of Carters Hill and Bank Lane and a new drain in Bank Lane.

The Parish Council has had a resident report that cyclist are coming down Carters Hill at great speed which could cause problems with oncoming traffic. The parish council is concerned about the safety issue and would welcome KCC's response on the matter.

5.1 Seal Primary School

Councillor Gough to follow up KCC's signed copy of the Walking Bus agreement. The clerk has had a response from Councillor Gough who is trying to get an update from the legal side.

ACTION: Councillor Gough

6 Other Matters Requiring Discussion and Action

6.1 Working to improve decision making through working groups

A paper setting out working arrangements through working groups was approved with updates.

The updated working party paper will be emailed to all Councillors with minutes.

ACTION: The clerk

6.2 Underriver Recreation Ground

The Parish Council discussed the condition of the path at the back of the village hall and agreed it should be reported to KCC as it is a Public Footpath.

6.3 Shared Enforcement Van

Proposal to investigate an enforcement van. - No update given.

ACTION: RB

6.4 Traffic around the Fawke Common entrance to Knole Park/Carters Hill

An Experimental Traffic Regulation will place parking restrictions of heritage double yellow lines at the marked four locations detailed on the plan circulated where there are junctions and the southern access to St Julians Road and partially on Fawke Wood Road. It is proposed that these could be made permanent at the end of the 18 month trial period. This will come into effect from 13 September with lining works taking place on 13 September, weather dependent. Notices should be placed on site.

6.5 Climate Change

Mr Penn gave an update on the installation of 2 Electric Vehicle charging points and the cost involved.

Mr Penn said we should prepare a survey to go out to all residents in Seal and the clerk would forward an outline map of Seal. Possible locations for the survey to be placed were mentioned including the shops and the library which has now opened.

ACTION : Clerk/MP

6.6 Website/Email Hosting

As discussed at a prior meeting, it is recommended by KALC that all parish councillors use a dedicated email address for parish work. The main reason for this is that from time to time councillors will communicate directly with the public and therefore it is seen as more professional for emails to come from a Seal Parish Council email address. Following the upgrade to the website, we have the ability to set up dedicated Seal Parish email address for all councillors. Feedback showed that some councillors do not want a Seal Parish Council email address, so the options are:

1) use the current email address.

2) the individual councillors to set up a new dedicated email address themselves.

or 3) the Clerk can arrange via Jane (web developer) to have a Seal Parish Council email address set up for members.

Each Council member should confirm to the Clerk via email which option which they would like to progress with.

ACTION: ALL

6.7 HMS Seal Memorial Garden

Mr Tavare's paper updated the Council on progress made, since the last meeting. £850 was approved by the Finance Chairman for cutting back vegetation on the memorial garden. The expenditure costs (£ ex VAT) agreed so far, and within the £10,000 budget are:

1041.88	2 x Glasdon Lowther Heritage benches (1 more to be paid for by Village Hall)
2411.85	5 x Glasdon Phoenix benches (3 more to be paid for by Village Fund)
1446.75	Inscribed HMS Seal Memorial Garden oak bench
850.00	Cutting back vegetation in Memorial Garden
850.50	Lectern HMS Seal history display
540.00	Possible excess cost of 4 th Picnic bench (excess on top WBF allocation)
tbc	11 x Concrete bases and installation

The clerk had contacted Rob Crouch for a quote for the installation of each bench, which was £350 per bench approx. This brings the total to £10,990.98. It was agreed that Mr Tavare would be asked to look at whether the cost could be brought down to within budget, for instance whether the village associations could pay for the installation of the picnic benches. If not, the Parish Council would be happy to pay £1,000 extra if required and this was approved by the Council.

ACTION CT

6.8 Bentleys Meadow

Mr Tavare has conducted weeding in this area and has proposed to the clerk that he recommends that we cancel the ongoing cultivation licence for the planters to be approved by the Council.

The Chairman read Mr Tavare's comments that the planters are so full of deep-rooted weeds that despite trying to dig out the complete roots they have just grown back. The only solution is for KCC to take over the planters and apply weedkiller (which we are not legally able to do) as required. SPC could then pay for the plants to go in the two bare planters, as previously agreed. Mr Bourne proposed that we cancel the licence and this was seconded by Mr Haslam and agreed unanimously.

6.9 Wildflower Project

The Chairman read Mr Tavare's update.

Planned expenditure

200.00	Seal Primary School 150 wildflower plugs
30.00	Seal recreation ground yellow rattle seed
60.00	20 x Volunteer and Events hi-viz jackets
88.00	9 x Rigid plastic 'DO NOT CUT' signs
tbc	Wooden posts

Expenditure proposed by Mr Martin and seconded by Mr Spencer and agreed unanimously.

Licences for Catts Cottage and Black Charles Barn Carters Hill in Underriver were also approved by the Council and this was proposed by Mr Bourne and seconded by Mr Spencer and agreed unanimously.

ACTION: Clerk/CT

6.10 Seal Recreation Ground

The Council discussed treatment for Japanese knotweed in the wooded area of the Recreation Ground and requested it is treated as soon as possible. Further work will be required next year and the contractor is preparing a programme for continued treatment.

The clerk had received quotes for the work Mr Martin offered to assist the Clerk in deciding which quote to go with and subject to this, the clerk was authorised to get it done as soon as possible. This was proposed by Mr Haslam and seconded by Mr Spencer and agreed unanimously.

The Clerk has asked Down to Earth to proceed with the work at a cost of £1,989 for a period of 5 years which includes additional treatments and management plan.

ACTION: Clerk

6.11 Seal Village

Following a Parish Councillors walk around Seal during August to look at potential improvements in the village it was felt that the proposed tree outside the Dentist would be better planted directly into the ground as it would need less watering. It was also pointed out that, that particular area is in need of tidying up and could be a potential site for some historical information signs. It is at the entrance of the village, on the route to the car park and it would be good to create a good impression. The clerk will discuss options with the Dentist and will report back to the Council. The Clerk mentioned that the parish council should draft an agreement.

ACTION: Clerk/CT/JS

6.12 History of Seal

The Chairman updated the Council with an update from Mr Tavaré who has had several discussions with local historian, David Williams, regarding his and other resources. The Parish Council should be thinking about how to safely maintain and store these resources now and in the long term. Mr Bourne suggested that information could be stored to the cloud and would help to support it. The library, for example, has one or two filing cabinets full of historic information. In the meantime, Mr Williams has agreed with KYN to run 2 history walks on the 12th and 26th of September. Please contact KYN for information on availability.

6.13 Welcome Back Fund Grant

In the absence of an August meeting the Finance Chairman and Chairman have approved a grant of £3,000 for further benches from the Welcome Back Fund. The clerk is in contact with SDC to see how it progresses.

Thanks were given to Mr Tavaré for taking this forward and an application has been made for 4 NBB Octagonal picnic benches in brown, to be placed on the recreation grounds in Seal (1), Bitchet Green (1) and Underriver (2). Any amount in excess of £3000 to be paid out of SPC benches/memorial garden budget.

If successful we could look to purchase a second picnic bench at a cost of £540 for Seal.

Mr Haslam proposed and seconded by Mr Penn and agreed unanimously.

ACTION: CT

6.14 Emergency Plan

The clerk invited the Council to consider whether we should create an emergency plan for the parish it was agreed that everyone would view the Ightham Parish Council plan and come back with a view at the next parish council meeting.

ACTION: All

6.15 Seal Pavilion

At the last meeting it was raised that the Parish Council should discuss a budget for a projector and screen to be agreed.

Mr Penn is looking at various different types of gadgets which connect to the projector and is still researching options and is confident that we can progress this further but will wait until he has all the research to present to the Council.

ACTION: MP

6.16 Open Spaces Society Grant A Green Appeal

Open Spaces Society are asking for a grant to help support local open spaces.

Given that we already pay for a membership for this cause and have supported Greensand Common for a cost of £4,000 the Parish Council will not be donating to this appeal.

6.17 Citizens Advice Bureau in Sevenoaks and Swanley (part of Citizens Advice in North and West Kent)

The Parish Council agreed to support this, subject to the Finance Chairman agreeing, with a donation of £500, in recognition of the increased workload as a result of Covid.

6.18 West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association

The Parish Council agreed to support this, subject to the Finance Chairman agreeing with a donation of £250.

7 Accounts and Cheques

Cheques signed in August 2021

006131	Clerk		Salary
006132	Caretaker		Salary
006133	Inland Revenue		Deductions
006134	Clerk expenses	£63.39	Zoom and Broadband
006135	Kent County Council		Pension Fund
006136	Richard Abel Landscapes	£1,862.25	Mowing
006137	Streetlights	£243.30	Streetlights
006138	Castle Cleaning Services Kent Limited	£360.00	Bus Shelter and Gate
006139	Sevenoaks District Council	£32.80	Refuse

Cheques signed September 2021

006140	Clerk expenses	£63.39	Zoom and Broadband
006141	Kent County Council		Pension Fund
006142	Clerk		Salary
006143	Inland Revenue		Deductions
006144	Caretaker		Salary
006145	Kent County Playing Fields Association	£20.00	Subscription
006146	Richard Abel Landscapes	£2,054.93	Mowing
006147	Mr A Mcfadyen	£125.00	Heating
006148	PKF Littlejohn LLP	£480.00	Audit
006149	Spy Alarms Limited	£216.00	Emergency Lighting
006150	Streetlights	£99.00	Lighting
006151	Sevenoaks District Council	£398.80	Refuse
006152	Kent County Council	£223.80	Stationery
006153	Martins Painting and Decorating and General Repairs	£3,683.57	Decorating
006154	T D Geer Limited	£195.42	Plumbing

8 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21

The Parish Council received the Notice of Conclusion of Audit along with the external auditor report and certificate published 10 September 2021.

9 Items for Information only

9.1 Councillor Vacancy

Two vacancies remain at present. The Parish Council is actively pursuing highway improvements, control of speeding, environment and carbon reduction schemes, and community projects. It wishes to recruit new Councillors and to work with those interested in these topics. If you would like to become a Parish Councillor or are interested in our work, please contact the Clerk on 01732 833360 or sealparishc@outlook.com

10 Planning

The Council agreed the minutes of the planning committee meeting on 8th and 26th July, and 23rd August, and ratified the responses to planning application consultations submitted after these meetings. Proposed by Mr Martin and seconded by Mr Haslam and agreed unanimously.

The parish council wrote to KCC, SDC and Tarmac seeking clarity about funding and timing of the Bat and Ball A25 improvement. – no replies received.

Mr Bourne had drawn Councillor Gough's attention to the withdrawal of Highways and PROW objections to planning application SE/21/01551 (change of use of a barn and land to B8 distribution uses) following 'considerable correspondence' about access to the site from the applicant's agent. On behalf of local parishioners Mr Bourne had asked that the KCC officers to visit the site to verify the information provided. Mr Martin had undertaken to submit a further response to the local planning authority, which was agreed by members of the Planning Committee present.

No planning meeting this evening, but draft responses were agreed by the committee.

Matters for Information Only

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/>

KMCCG COVID-19 Vaccination

<https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/your-health/coronavirus/covid19vaccine>

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 9.30pm

Appendix to Agenda – ongoing road items that need to be completed.

The Clerk updated the Council that Mr Haslam is the Group Leader of Highway Matters and will discuss a plan to take this forward with the clerk.

Seal

A25: The SID column needs to be replaced. Traffic counts are required but have been on hold due to COVID. No road sign heading towards Sevenoaks.

A resident has written to the Parish Council about the bad condition of small roads in Seal, in particular Church Road and Zion Street. Several residents from Johnsons Court use rollators or wheelchairs to get to the village shops, and potholes make it dangerous.

Yellow lines on the corner of Zion Street and Church Road: Councillor Gough reported that yellow lines on Zion Street will be included in the January 2021 consultation – **This is already one of our priorities on the HIP.**

A resident has reported a Park Lane wall has been damaged on over 10 occasions. Large vehicles are unable to get by where the lane narrows because cars are parked all day in the free bays. Councillors to decide whether we this should be raised as a priority or included in the HIP.

Flooding at Grove Lane and Park Lane from the pond. Emily Kinsella KCC Drainage works organised a CCTV survey on 4th January. The highway drains into the pond which drains to west but overflows with high levels of silt. KCC will contact the landowner.

Copse Bank footpath – Completed to a good standard, Parish Council asked whether this could be considered annually for general maintenance.

Rural

Bank Lane is made narrower on the bend at Riverdale Farm by deep accumulated debris at the side the road and by potholes, creating a hazard.

KCC's survey of two bridges on Mill Lane by Tumbling Bay, requires replacement of small slab extension on both sides of Tumbling Bay West, and on north side of Tumbling Bay East. Reflective warning posts were placed along the unprotected bank above the stream in June.