

A meeting of the Seal Parish Council was held on THURSDAY 9th November 2023 in Seal Pavilion on Seal Recreation Ground at 7.30pm

Present:

Mr Michaelides

Mr Haslam (Chairman)

Mrs Talbot

Mr Bourne

Mrs Stiasny

Mr Boorman

Also present the clerk, Councillor Hogarth, Councillor Gough

Parishioners Question Time

There were 6 parishioners attended the meeting, one parishioner discussed the job description on Greensand Common and the work involved, there are 3000 hectares of commons in Sevenoaks District, they include Bitchet Common, Fawke Common, Godden Green and Seal Chart in Seal Parish. Over the last 5 years, Heritage Lottery funded the project, which finished in June, which 15/20 volunteers help to improve twice a week bridle ways and footpaths. This is an important project which finished last Summer and to keep the project going it requires funding for a Project Manager, and with SDC funding, they would look to split the remainder funding between the three Parish and Town Councils, and this would be a commitment for 4 years.

Another parishioner attended to state that it is the District Council who has statutory duty to regulate the commons and it is for public recreation and not only for wildlife.

The members of the SVF discussed the memorial tree to be positioned at Seal Recreation Ground. They would look to keep a planter outside the dentist forecourt with flowers/shrubs.

1 Apologies: Mr Bulleid, Mr Penn and Councillor Thornton

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

3 Declarations of Interest - None

4 Clerk's report

It has been reported that the volunteers did an amazing job to clear the vegetation at Godden Green and the residents thanked the Parish Council and were pleased with the outcome, as we have had ongoing rain which has filled the pond with water. It was reported by a resident that the drain pit at the bottom of the lane to the clinic is the main inlet for sediment and should be cleared.

A resident has reported a near miss on the railway bridge Childsbridge Lane, school children are walking along it and was surprised that this bridge has not been widened or a footbridge placed there.

Having attended the clerk's forum, we have 2 new beat officers for Seal & Weald, which are PC Nick Hubbard and PC Tom Costin who we welcome to our Parish. Any urgent issues please contact csu.sevenoaks@kent.pnn.police.uk.

Tarmac would be happy for members of the Parish Council to visit the Sevenoaks Quarry site followed by a presentation, equally happy for a more formal meeting if the Parish Council considers this to be appropriate. Next year Tarmac would be happy to present something at our Annual Assembly.

We have been advised by Castle Water Limited that the bills will be monthly in arrears.

5 KCC Matters – Councillor Gough’s matters

- Godden Green Pond – A resident had reported whether the silt trap in the road that feeds directly into the pond will be cleared as well as the one in the middle of the green, Councillor Gough reported that KCC had visited the site, and no further work is planned. The flooding was due to the gulley’s full and have been cleared. Councillor Gough will speak to KCC to find out about payment.
- Wildflower verges – KCC to quote for cutting wildflower verges and seeding on Childsbridge Lane. Councillor Gough has spoken to Robin Hadley who is due to meet us by the end of the month on the verges. Mr Boorman has not been informed.
- Knole area double yellow lines to be reinstated – There is a job on the system but no completion date.
- Childsbridge Lane patching and zebra crossing to be repainted – this should be completed soon.

Pilgrims Way East is causing a lot of closures and work is being scheduled to have a road closure on 25th and 26th November, no access through it near Tudor Drive
Councillor Gough said he would check to see when work is being done on reduction of speed on A25.

6 District Councillors Report

Councillor Hogarth would encourage everyone to take a close look at the Local Plan Consultation as it will impact on Green Belt and the wider issue, even if it is not for Seal, it is good for the wider public.

7 Other Matters Requiring Discussion and Action

The Chairman rearranged the agenda to discuss items 7.1 and 7.3 and closed the meeting, he opened the meeting for the public attendees to discuss with the Council.

7.1 Greensand Common

The Parish Council discussed the funding request and Mr Michaelides proposed to pay £2,000 a year to support a Project Manager post for the Sevenoaks Greensand Commons for the next four years and this was seconded by Mr Stiasny and majority agreed. 4 votes for, 1 against and 1 abstain. Mr Boorman asked for it to be noted he voted against the proposal.

7.2 Street Naming Consultation – Mills Crescent

The Parish Council discussed the consultation, and the Council asked what the developers long-term plans are as this is the first stage of two planned, could we consider continuing the numbering or consider Mills Close.

7.3 Seal Village Fund

SVF Committee have asked the Parish Council whether they would give permission to plant a hornbeam (Carpinus betulus ‘Charteuse’) in the recreation ground, it was agreed to position the tree in between the garage and youth shelter and it will have to have protection, height 3 to 4 metres. Mr Bourne proposed to allow a small native tree to be planted and this was seconded by Mrs Talbot and agreed unanimously.

7.4 Seal Croft Cottages

A resident has reported that cars are being parked on the grass verge opposite the cottages and this is causing the grass to deteriorate. The Clerk will write to the residents in concern.

7.5 Underriver Village Association

UVA have asked to replace the broken gates maintained by the Parish on the Recreation Ground and make the gateway slightly wider (about 1ft) as it is quite narrow. They have also asked to cut the hedge back from the gate to the footpath in line with the sign. Mr Bourne proposed to pay £1,335.41 for the Underriver gate and this was seconded by Mr Boorman and agreed unanimously.

7.6 Citizens Advice North & West Kent

Mrs Talbot proposed to donate £500 and this was seconded by Mr Michaelides and agreed unanimously.

7.7 Community Ownership Fund.

Mr Haslam discussed a potential opportunity in Godden Green, similar to the one at Bitchet Green on the land opposite the Bucks Head Pub for parking. Bitchet Green still requires further work, if the common land is resurfaced, Knole Estate has asked the Parish Council to consider insurance cover and maintaining the land.

7.8 Cyber Security

Mr Penn produced a report for the meeting and his recommendations were considered and it was agreed for Mr Penn to prepare a project brief as stated in his report and provide costings for Business 365. Mr Haslam attended the KALC conference and had an opportunity to get a free insurance risk for Cyber security, which we will not purchase.

7.9 Seal Pavilion

Mrs Stiasny discussed the quotes received and the work involved. She will meet with the Chairman to discuss further.

7.10 Wildflowers

Mr Boorman to update the Council regarding the cutting of the verge once a year and seeding at Childsbridge Lane and to renew licences on Catts Cottage, Black Charles and Seal Allotments verges. Mr Boorman has been in contact with the Landscape Officer, KCC about the verges and cutting etc. and has also explained that Underriver verge opposite the pub is no longer on the wildflower project. We still await to hear from KCC and therefore the licences will not be renewed at this stage.

ACTION: OB

7.11 Reserves/Deposits Funds

Mr Michaelides discussed the application form on the CCLA account. The clerk advised the Council that 2 or more authorised signatories should be operated by this account as per our financial regulations, there were discussion whether we should change our financial regulations and therefore this will be deferred until the next meeting for further discussion.

7.12 Remembrance Sunday

Councillors volunteered to lay a wreath at these locations: Godden Green – Mr Haslam, St Margaret Church – Mrs Talbot, St Lawrence Church – Mr Penn and St Peter and St Paul’s Church - Mr Michaelides

7.13 Seal Recreation Ground

The clerk reported to the Council the repair costs required following the ROSPA inspection and the Council agreed for the clerk to arrange for the work to be completed.

8 Action Plan

It was raised to consider a noticeboard for the Parish Council, notices and information in Seal Memorial Pavilion.

9 Staff Committee

The council resolved to agree to defer consideration for the minutes until January.

10 Accounts and cheques

Mr Michaelides proposes the cheques and direct debits and this was seconded by Mrs Stiasny and agreed unanimously.

Cheques signed November 2023

Cheque No	Payee	Amount	VAT Reclaim	Description
006554	Mrs C Ward			Caretaker Salary
006555	Inland Revenue			Deductions
006556	Mrs C Boland			Clerk Salary
006557	Kent County Council			Pension Fund
006558	St Lawrence Village Hall	£30.00		Hall Hire for Parish Council Meeting
006559	Cancel cheque	0.00		Cancel
006560	Mrs C Boland	£51.50	£8.58	Broadband
006561	Streetlights	£420.00	£70.00	Streetlight
006562	T D Geer Limited	£423.00	£70.50	Plumbing and heating for Seal Pavilion
006563	MDH Horticultural Contractors	£1800.00	£300.00	Parish mowing
006564	Richard Abel Landscapes	£462.00	£77.00	Planters for Parish
006570	M&S Electrical Services Lintied	£312.00	£52.00	Replace Meter box at Seal Pavilion
006571	Spy Alarm Limited	£592.80	£98.80	Annual Maintenance
006572	Edward Tyrrell (fencing) Limited	£180.00	£30.00	Fencing repair Seal Rec
006573	Mr J A Leslie	£52.95	£4.00	Gloves and Waders used to clear the Godden Green Pond
December cheques				
006565	Mrs C Boland			Clerk Salary
006566	Mrs C Ward			Caretaker Salary
006567	Inland Revenue			Deductions
006568	Mr J Boland			Holiday Caretaker
006569	Kent County Council			Pension Fund

Direct Debits Received to date

Payment Date	Payee	Amount	VAT Reclaim	Description
29/10/23	SEFE Energy	£85.88	£4.09	Seal Pavilion Gas
16/11/23	Castle Water	£504.26	£55.19	Seal Pavilion Water

17/11/23	Castle Water	£23.61	£3.94	Seal Recreation Cricket Ground Water
20/11/23	British Gas	£224.10	£10.67	Seal Pavilion Electricity
25/11/2023	Npower	£291.52	£13.88	Streetlighting
Credits				
23/10/23	Spy Alarms	£120.00	£20.00	Seal Pavilion

11 To agree the budget

The Council to consider the budget 2024/25 discussed at the Finance Committee Meeting. The Council will agree the budget subject to the tax base.

12 To agree the Precept

The Council to consider the precept for 2024/25, discussed at the Finance Committee Meeting. The Council will agree the precept subject to the tax base.

13 Items for Information only

13.1 St Margaret's Church

St Margaret's Church have thanked the Parish Council for the grant received of £575 towards the costs of maintaining the churchyard.

13.2 CIL Contributions

The Parish Council have received CIL contributions, payment A £6,813.90 and payment B £4,542.60 which in total received £11,356.50. It was asked for the Clerk to advise the schedule of payments which will expire to the Council at the next meeting.

14 Planning

The Council received and noted the minutes of the planning committee on 12th October and 23rd October 2023 and the responses to planning consultations submitted after those meetings which have been circulated.

The Next Parish Council meeting will be 11th January at Seal Pavilion at 7.30pm.

One of the parishioner's has asked the Parish Council whether we would be interested for her to report back to the Council on any trees which have ash dieback on Parish Council land. The Clerk will organise maps for her.

Consultations:

- National Highways and Transport Survey 2023-24 | Let's talk Kent. There are 6 surveys covering: accessibility, highways maintenance, public transport, road safety, tackling congestion and walking and cycling. The deadline for responses is 29th February 2024.

Matters for Information Only

A reminder to report all Highway issues direct to KCC 03000 41 81 81

<https://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.

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

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

Meeting closed 9.50pm