

A meeting of the Seal Parish Council was held on THURSDAY 8th February 2024 in Seal Pavilion on Seal Recreation Ground at 7.30pm

Present:

Mr Michaelides

Mr Boorman

Mr Bourne

Mr Haslam (Chairman)

Mrs Talbot

Mr Bulleid

Mrs Stiasny

Mr Ratcliffe

Mr Ryan

Mr Kay

Also present the clerk, Councillor Gough and Councillor Hogarth

Parishioner's question time.

2 parishioners who attended were co-opted. 1 parishioner attended and asked if we would consider a request for a PROW which would join the newly diverted footpath/bridleway SR161 at Rambles Wood which connects to SR160 and follows through to near Spinners Wood and links to SR163 which would be a proposed extension pathway on Fawke Common and she asked whether CIL funds could be used for this purpose. She also may need further discussion on the properties and land etc near the ash trees.

1 Apologies: Mr Penn and Councillor Thornton

2 The minutes were amended to include 2.8% increase and for Mr Ratcliffe to be included on the present list as he was co-opted, and this was agreed and will be signed at the next meeting.

3 Declarations of Interest - None

4 Co-option of Councillors for Seal Ward

Mr Ryan and Mr Kay were co-opted as members of Seal Ward, and this was agreed unanimously.

5 Clerk's report

Underriver

We now have a new defibrillator which is back in the telephone box and can be used for an emergency.

There have been problems with blocked drains in the village which has caused flooding from the Church to the Forge, and this has been reported to KCC, and the Drainage Team are involved, an Inspector has visited the site and will monitor the situation.

UVA have contacted Southeast Water, and it has been reported that they are due to work on the village green this weekend. The footpath style will be repaired in Spring by Rob Crouch when the weather will be warmer and the ground dryer.

There is a manhole on the grass verge by the village sign that is overflowing, and we have been in contact with WKHA who have confirmed that there is a job outstanding with the council cottages which the cesspit compressor not working, and they have arranged for the contractor to attend which may be contributing to the issue. It was agreed at the Council meeting to get in

touch with WKHA further and if the work is not done it will be reported to Environmental Agency.

Southern Water have visited the site and put a rod in the manhole and no ammonia has been found it is fresh water, which will be reverted back to Southeast Water

Unfortunately, due to the storm the PROW noticeboard broke as the legs are rotten and will be repaired by the volunteer who kindly volunteered to refurbish the noticeboard.

Seal

The defibrillator cabinet has been tampered with and having had a site visit and our 1st responder has checked the defibrillator, and is working fine, the cabinet door has been placed back on, although it is broken on one side, it can still close and open. It will require a new cabinet at some point in time.

Godden Green

We have now received payment from KCC of £3,000 for Godden Green Pond. The Clerk to check with KCC that the silt trap has been cleaned. The clerk reported that the remains of the old duck house have been removed.

6 KCC Matters – Councillor Gough’s matters

Wildflower verges – KCC had a site visit and will find out what the next stage is with Kent Wildlife Trust, as they have already had a meeting. Councillor Gough said that the White Rock pub will be cut soon, and it was requested they leave the daffodils and cut around them as we don’t want them cut down.

A25 SID post - Mr Butler has been in contact with Mr Donlan thought that we were going to remove the bracket at Stone Street and put on the A25. Mr Bourne was told that we shouldn’t remove the bracket, but Councillor Gough advised that we can change it and will have this confirmed.

Carters Hill - The gulleys adjacent to the Forge have been filled in by Gigaclear Contractors and causing flooding. Lewis Sutton has asked Streetworks Team to request Gigaclear to dig out the gulleys that they have filled in with earth.

Also in Carters Hill – Blocked drain opposite Church, KCC said that they were done in July, although the PC confirmed they weren’t completed and Councillor Gough confirmed that KCC will get this done.

By the village sign in Underriver there is a manhole that is overflowing and is causing further flooding adding to water on the road.

Salting on roads in rural areas – Mike Payton reviews every year, there is no capacity to add new roads. There may be an opportunity to extend an existing route, and this should be addressed with Mike Payton.

7 District Councillors Report

Councillor Hogarth reported there is a Boundary Review within the District, which will start this year and run through to 2025 for the District Council wards. There will be a briefing to the Parish Council.

In Bloom competition starts again and the closing date is 1 April. Seal Allotments has won an award before in the past and if you are interested then please contact to Councillor Hogarth.

Each parish can nominate an individual to represent their activities on the Sevenoaks District Arts Council. If you are interested in performing arts, please contact the clerk.

8 Other Matters Requiring Discussion and Action

8.1 HR Services

The Parish Council signed the direct debit with Peninsula.

8.2 Godden Green Pond

Mr Haslam reported that there are 2 wooden post that are rotten and a 2-bar fence around the pond, which require repairing and has been in contact with SDC to repair it. It was also discussed we contact Knole Estates regarding the maintenance of the pond as it is common land.

8.3 Streetlight

A resident has asked whether an additional streetlight could be placed opposite 3 Park Lane, various problems have occurred, Highways Working Group will add a record of the requests to be included in the HIP as an appendix. The clerk has asked Streetlights to clear the branches around the light. Mr Haslam will write to the resident about the speed bumps and 20mph in the area.

8.4 IT Services

The Parish Council to consider two costings £10.30 for Microsoft 365 Business Standard for the clerk instead of the Personal Version which is due to be renewed in February and £4.80 per user for Microsoft Business Standard Basic for those Councillors who would benefit from this service such as the Chairman, Chairs of Committees and those who run a working group as required. These Prices are excluding VAT. The Parish Council discussed this and thought it would be appropriate to wait until Mr Penn can report back on his findings for auditing the clerk's PC, therefore the clerk will renew her personal version. There was discussion about email addresses and SharePoint for those Councillors who require it. Mrs Stiasny and Mr Haslam will write a set of requirements for Mr Penn to include in his assessment noting the urgency of email requirement.

8.5 St Lawrence Villages Association Noticeboard Refurbishment –

St Lawrence Villages Association have requested funding for the refurbishment of the noticeboard on the wall of the Old Farm in Stone Street.

Craig Spence has quoted £138.93 to remove the door, make a new one & paint.

The box would then be sanded and painted in situ on the wall and then the new door would be installed. He is only charging for materials, not his labour, as his contribution to the village. It was proposed for £138.93 to be paid and this was seconded by Mr Bulleid and agreed unanimously.

8.6 Sevenoaks District Arts Council

We are looking for volunteers to join from Seal and Underriver from our Parish. Please contact the clerk if interested.

8.7 Administration

The Parish Council considered and agreed the Financial Regulations and appendix for SPC Investment Strategy, an alteration was made in 2.4 "The Finance Committee, shall review the estimates (Precept budget) and submit them to the Council, normally no later than the end of October in year as draft" and this was approved subject to this change proposed by Mr Haslam and seconded by Mr Michaelides and agreed unanimously.

The Parish Council will review the Grant Award Policy and seek advice to be deferred to the next meeting. It was also proposed that we add an addition to the policy i) the applicant will be encouraged to attend the Annual Assembly in May to report how the grant has been spent.

Mr Michaelides gave a brief update on the changes made to the Financial Regulations, which were timing and budget, the CCLA deposit fund account to transfer to and from the account and changes to direct debits. CCLA is set up for public sector and is invested in low risk funds and there is a small risk but we can set up other accounts in the future. Bear in mind we are holding public money. There is no limitation with withdrawal. It was proposed by Mr

Haslam to keep £20,000 in the current account and transfer the rest to CCLA and this was seconded by Mr Michaelides and agreed unanimously. It will be monitored annually with a review and at the start of April we will have further precept money which can cover the cost of expenditure.

8.8 CIL Contributions

The Parish Council to plan for expenditure for Payment A £2,975.64, it was agreed by the council to use CIL contributions for Godden Green Pond and the replacement window in Seal Pavilion out of the other additional funds.

9 Staff Committee

The Council noted the minutes of the Staff Committee meeting on 11th January 2024.

10 Action Plan

We have discussed the action plan and added ACV, Community Assets and to register land beside Church Road as this is used for the community.

11 Finance Report

The water consumption for the Cricket Ground in Seal Recreation Ground is no longer used, we have received an estimated bill, which is excessively high, and we agreed to remove the water meter. Mr Haslam proposed to remove the meter for the Cricket Ground, and this was seconded by Mrs Talbot and agreed unanimously.

Cheques signed February 2024

Cheque No	Payee	Amount	VAT Reclaim	Description
006602	RWE Rural Services Limited	£264.00	£44.00	Fallen Tree in Underriver Recreation Ground
006603	Clerk expenses	£51.50	£8.58	Broadband
006604	Caretaker	£31.20	£5.20	Caretaker Training Course Working at Heights
006605	Sevenoaks District Council	£32.80		Refuse Collection
006606	Kent Wildlife Trust	£2,000.00		Sevenoaks Greensand Common Donation
006607	Clerk			Salary
006608	Inland Revenue			Deductions
006609	Caretaker			Salary
006610	Kent County Council			Pension Fund
006611	Cancelled Cheque	£0.00		Cancelled
006612	Peninsula Business Services Limited	£206.31	£32.78	HR Services

Direct Debits Received to date

Payment Date	Payee	Amount	VAT Reclaim	Description
24/2/2024	Npower	£370.09	£17.62	Streetlighting
1/2/2024	Siemens	£94.50	£18.90	Photocopier rental
1/2/2024	Siemens	£40.00	£8.00	Annual Service Fee

25/1/2024	SEFE	£195.66	£9.32	Seal Pavilion Gas
13/2/2024	Castle Water	Current Balance £109.37 to pay £633.61	£126.72	Seal Cricket Ground Water usage charges Reflects 1 August 2023 – 31 December 2023
16/2/2024	Castle Water	£157.59	£13.04	Seal Pavilion Water
20/2/2024	British Gas	£336.20	£16.01	Seal Pavilion Electricity
Credit				
13/2/2024	Castle Water	£627.35CR		Seal Cricket Ground Refund from estimated invoice Reflects 1 Aug 2023 – 31 December 2023

Bank Reconciliation :

As of 31 January 2024 Business Reserve: £180,760.16

As of 29 January 2024 Business Current Account: £121,644.56

12 Items for Information only

13 Planning

The Council received and noted the minutes of the planning committee on 11th January and 22nd January 2024 the responses to planning consultations submitted after those meetings which have been circulated.

The Next Parish Council meeting will be 14th March at Seal Pavilion at 7.30pm.

Matters for Information Only

Citizens Advice have asked whether we would apply for a grant for the Winters Project Scheme which would give the community a virtual terminal to make a video call to call to staff on a mobile device. We would have to look at a community space for them to be able to use the tablet. The application would be for £1,000 the deadline is 1st March 2024. This would be subject to approval and Mr Haslam will lead on it.

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 10pm.