

SHOREHAM

Parish Clerk:

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COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of SHOREHAM PARISH COUNCIL

at Shoreham Village Hall on 4th March 2020 from 7:30pm

Present: Jonathan Histed (in the Chair)
A Hibbins, B Jeffery, N Powell and M Sheward

Also Present: 12 members of the public

District Councillor Irene Roy
County Councillor Roger Gough

Clerk: Sarah Moon

Question Time:

1. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cockburn, Councillor Hubble and Councillor Blamey and from District Council John Edwards-Winser.
2. There were no disclosures of interest.
3. The minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 10th February 2020 (copies previously distributed) were agreed.
4. **District/County Councillor Reports**

District Councillor

The District Councillor spoke about the issue of light pollution. Any particular cases would be covered by the Environmental Act and Sevenoaks District Council have a department which can assist with such issues. Defining light pollution is however tricky. Overtly bright lights are often simply poorly directed and simple adjustments could make significant impacts. The first port of call would always be to approach the property owner directly. If that does not work, the team at SDC should be contacted and they would make an assessment as to whether they considered it problematic. The District Councillor suggested putting an article in the Shoreham Gazette, asking people to look at the brightness of the bulbs they use and to check whether the lights are properly directed. Not only can excessive light be a nuisance to neighbours, it is also a huge problem for wildlife and habitats.

County Councillor Roger Gough

- Highways related issues at Romney Street, which have been caused by the recent redevelopment of the caravan site, have left the area susceptible to flooding. KCC have attended the site and laid extra kerbing, which appears to have addressed this particular problem.
- Preston Hill finally been transferred back to Kent Parks from the Property Division of KCC.

- Creation of the new Boys Grammar School Annex is still on track for 2021.
- A couple of reports relating to Coronavirus have been received from the Director of Public Health. KCC have asked for specific advice on business continuity, particularly with relation to social workers and community wardens. If cluster outbreaks occur within villages, this would be dealt with by national government, using the police or army.
- £10m has been set aside for the pothole blitz. In the long term, the amount of money allocated to Highways for resurfacing and drainage has been increased substantially.

5. Chairman’s Report

The Chairman reported that he had received an email from Mr Aslan, owner of the Garden House regarding Permissive Path 22. He confirmed that he had spoken to councillors about the fact that the path had been blocked and the signs vandalised. The signs have now been replaced but should this reoccur, it should be treated as criminal damage and reported to the police. Similarly, any blockages to the path should be reported to KCC.

6. Report from the Clerk

- The next PC surgery will be held at the Church Room on Thursday 5th March from 10.00am – 2.00pm.
- Confirmation of the precept increase has been received from SDC. The 8.24% increase requested equates to a monetary increase of £4.81 on council tax bills spread throughout the year (48p per month).
- The grant application for village sign is currently being considered by the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership.
- The annual playground inspection has been booked for March
- Freighter dates for the coming year are 4th April 2020, 18th July 2020, 17th October 2020 and 16th January 2021. Charges have increased by 3%. We are currently seeking an alternative location for the Well Hill collection as the current site is privately owned.
- Rent letters for allotments will be going out shortly. No increase in the annual rent is planned.
- The Clerk confirmed that she attended the open day of new learning space at the village school and that ‘Shoreham Parish Council’ had been engraved on the plaque in recognition of its donation of £500 towards the project.
- The Clerk requested whether her final week’s holiday entitlement could be taken week commencing 16th March. This was granted.

7. Broadband Upgrade

No update was given as no members of the Broadband Working Group were present at the meeting.

8. Traffic and Parking

- The results of the Traffic and Parking Survey as collated by the Clerk were discussed. The Chairman explained that the reason the survey was distributed in the Gazette and not on line was to ensure that all households received a copy. 150 completed surveys were returned out of 577 distributed, an uptake of 25%. It was decided that there was enough of a mandate to pursue the first five measures listed in the table below and that a meeting of the Traffic and Parking Working Party be arranged to discuss how best to progress this. The Clerk was also requested to put together rough costings for each of the measures.

1)	Do you support reducing the speed in the village to 20mph	142	95%
2)	Do you support minimising HGV access to the village (except	148	99%

	for access)		
3)	Do you support reducing the speed on the A225 from Otford to the bridge at Preston Farm to 40mph	116	77%
4)	Do you support adding a new 'Free Parking 500m' sign at the North East end of the village	137	91%
5)	In addition, which of the following remains a concern		
a)	George bends	111	74%
b)	Pinch point at bridge	78	52%
c)	Pinch point at allotments/lack of pavement	73	49%
d)	Additional passing place on High Street	77	51%
e)	Insufficient parking in the village	95	63%
f)	Too many visitors in the village	78	52%
g)	Would you sacrifice village green spaces for more parking	40	27%

- The results of the speed survey conducted by KCC on the A225 were discussed and it was RESOLVED that the Parish Council should challenge the recommendation to not decrease the speed limit to 40mph and to continue to pursue a reduction based on the following arguments:
 1. KCC state that there is 'little evidence of vulnerable road users'. This is false. There is a bus stop opposite the station which means that school children need to cross the A225 to access it. Since the bus service ceased to serve the village on a daily basis, people wishing to use the bus, now have to use this bus stop too. Many of these people are elderly with limited mobility and cannot move across the road quickly when a car comes around the bend at speed. There are also entrances to public footpaths on either side of the road. Walkers, both local and visiting, using footpath SR22 have to cross the A225 which bisects this public right of way.
 2. The results of the survey do not take in account the topography of the road. It is for example, very dangerous turning right out of Station Road onto the A225 as there is a bend to the left around which cars appear suddenly at high speed. There have been numerous near misses on this junction where a southbound vehicle has been travelling too quickly and nearly hit a vehicle pulling out to turn right. There are houses on this road with access paths. Some of the paths provide access to 3 or 4 properties and pulling out of these onto the A225 is equally as treacherous with the current speed limit set as it is.
 3. The argument that people respect a 60 mph limit but may not respect a 40mph one is a nonsense. How can this be known?
 4. Shoreham Parish Council has also undertaken a survey and 77 % of people questioned consider the A225 to be a dangerous road and would support a reduction from the national speed limit to a 40mph zone. We therefore have a mandate to pursue a reduction.
 5. There is pressure from Government to provide more sustainable methods of transport and to get people out of their cars. There is a bus stop on the A225 but many people are too scared to cross the road to use it. Cycling along this stretch of road is also very dangerous. A reduction in the speed limit would make this road safer and would encourage it to be used as a shared space for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users as well as motorists.

With these points in mind, it was RESOLVED that the Traffic and Parking Working Party meet again to draft a case against KCC's recommendations and in favour of a reduction to 40mph. Any case built must show actual rather than anecdotal evidence and might involve statements from schools, Go Coach and the Community Rail Partnership. A starting point could be the 20mph review paper and its criteria for

implementation. It was also suggested that Farningham Parish Council be contacted as they have recently implemented a 40mph limit on the A20.

9. **Play Area**

The quotes for laying bark chippings around the tractor in the play area were discussed. It was RESOLVED to accept the quote for £722 and that the Clerk request that the work be undertaken as soon as possible.

10. **Walnut Tree Trust**

Although a communication has been received from the Charities Commission, no reply has yet been composed. The tenants have also stated that the Trustees have asked a surveyor to attend the properties to look at what maintenance work is required but the Parish Council have not been informed directly of this.

11. **Light Pollution**

The effect of light pollution emanating from several properties in the village was considered. Some of the properties in question are private residences and others are business premises. Shoreham village enjoys 'dark skies' and indeed this is mentioned in the Sevenoaks District Council Conservation Appraisal. Bright lights within the village and surrounding area are therefore considered a public nuisance and have an adverse effect on wildlife and habitat. Certain measures such as looking at the height of the lights as well as the direction in which the lights are pointing could be looked at and in most cases, turning the lights down or changing them for less bright ones would rectify the problem. The Clerk was asked to write to business owners requesting that they look at their lights and consider whether they would be able to make them less obtrusive. Private residents should be asked to do the same via an article in the Gazette. One of the main culprits is the Rangers Hut in Andrews Wood and the Clerk was asked to send details of this to Cllr Irene Roy who would speak to SDC directly about this.

The issue of security however, should also be taken into account when considering these measures and the Clerk was asked to invite the police to come and speak on this matter at the Annual Parish Meeting in April.

12. **Correspondence/Information**

- a) A letter has been received from the owner of the Garden House, Shoreham stating that vandalism to both the signs provided by KCC and to the footpath PP22 itself has occurred.
- b) A request for the purchase of 10 litter grabbers has been received from a resident who is organising a litter pick at Well Hill. The Clerk confirmed that she had directed the resident to Dunbrik Depot, where this equipment can be loaned free of charge.
- c) An email has been received from a local resident who is concerned about possible illegal poaching around the village. The resident has requested that the Parish Council write to the landowner, asking whether he has granted permission for such activities. The Chairman agreed to contact Mr Muscat to ascertain whether he had granted permission for such activities. If he has, then he should be asked to reconsider. If he has not, then the Clerk was asked to put the contact details of the wildlife crime unit in the Gazette and ask that people call this number should they witness any suspicious activities.
- d) Shoreham Almshouses have informed the Parish Council, that, in accordance with the charity's objectives, they shall from now be distributing a total sum of £500 per year to individuals in need of financial assistance.
- e) A request for financial assistance has been received from the Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group (last year they were given £50) . It was RESOLVED to give another £50. The Clerk was asked to include a reminder about this service in the next edition of the Gazette/Post.
- f) A request for financial assistance has been received from the Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance. It was RESOLVED to give £250 to this cause.

13. **Financial Matters**

- a) Payments as per the schedule, were authorised.

14. **Dates of next meetings** (all starting at 7:30pm unless otherwise stated)

- a) Planning (if required) and Amenities : Wednesday 18th March 2020, Shoreham Village Hall
- b) Planning (if required) and Council : Wednesday 1st April 2020, Shoreham Village Hall
- c) Planning (if required) : Wednesday 15th April 2020, Shoreham Village Hall

The meeting closed at 9.25

Sarah Moon, Clerk to Shoreham Parish Council