

A meeting of the Seal Parish Council was held on THURSDAY 11th January 2024 in Seal Pavilion on Seal Recreation Ground at 7.30pm

Present:

Mr Michaelides

Mr Boorman

Mr Penn

Mr Bourne - Chairman

Mrs Talbot

Mrs Stiasny

Also present the clerk, Councillor Gough and Councillor Thornton

Parishioner's question time.

3 parishioners attended the meeting.

One parishioner had volunteered to look at the ash trees on parish council land to see if any had ash dieback. She has received the information and will report back at the next parish council meeting.

She mentioned that she had attended the previous meeting and wanted to amend the Parishioners Question Time minutes to take out the word "only" in the last paragraph and amend the area of commons in Sevenoaks District from 3000 to 300 hectares.

1 Apologies: Mr Bulleid, Mr Haslam and Councillor Hogarth

2 The minutes of the last meeting were amended as follows:-

Remove the word "only" in the parishioner's comments and amend the area of commons in Sevenoaks District from 3000 to 300 hectares.

Item 7.1 Greensand Common - Mrs Talbot said that there were 2 votes against the funding proposal.

Item 9 The Staffing Committee agreed the minutes but the confidential minutes were deferred to the staff committee.

The Council agreed for these changes to be made and signed.

3 Declarations of Interest - None

4 Co-option of Councillor for Seal Ward

Mr Michaelides proposed that Mr Radcliffe be co-opted as a member of Seal Ward and this was seconded by Mrs Talbot and agreed unanimously.

5 Clerk's report

Seal Croft Cottages - KCC Highways Manager will arrange for a site visit at Seal Croft Cottages, to investigate the condition of the land currently considered to be publicly maintainable highway. They will check the area for potholes and any which are deemed to be safety critical will be repaired. There is some doubt about the ownership of the laybys and the highway manager will be arranging for a definitive plan to be provided, to ensure that the correct owners are identified for future maintenance responsibilities. With regards to the request for new kerbing, Kent County Council do not install new kerbs to protect private verges.

It was reported by a resident that the steps leading down to the layby at Seal Croft Cottages are in need of repair, and having had a site visit there was a lot of moss and leaves which required removal. Our Contractor has cleared the site and will in March put some cleaner down to prevent further moss.

Godden Green Pond - Earl Bourner from KCC will look further into the question regarding the pond and whether it is KCC responsibility. KCC do not own the pond and under Law have a right to discharge into the pond, but they have set a precedent by paying for these works in the past. He is chasing the cleansing of the silt trap.

Childsbridge Lane - The Chairman has updated me that the middle lines in Childsbridge Lane and the Zebra Crossing have been repainted.

6 KCC Matters – Councillor Gough’s matters

Godden Green Pond - Councillor Gough will speak to KCC to find out about payment.

It was discussed that the chairman should write to KCC/SDC and suggest that they budget a small sum every year for the work on the pond. They have previously paid for the whole process and the PC cannot see why this precedent should change.

The Clerk to write to Knole Estates, requesting clarification on who is responsible for maintaining the pond and requesting contribution to the recent and future costs.

It has been reported to SDC that the fence around the pond is dangerous.

The Clerk to arrange for the removal of the disused duck house on the side of the road.

Wildflower verges – KCC had a site visit, and the area has been cut, but not by KCC or the PC. Our meeting with them will have to be delayed until the wildflowers have grown again. The PC would like the verge opposite White Rock Pub cut as soon as possible to allow the daffodils to grow.

The Knole area double yellow lines have been reinstated.

Childsbridge Lane zebra crossing has been repainted and middle road lines completed.

A25 SID post - Mr Butler to contact the PC to arrange inspection of the site and installation of bracket for the mobile SID unit. Councillor Gough said he would chase.

Carters Hill - The gulleys adjacent to the Forge have been filled in and therefore causing flooding.

Mrs Stiasny asked about the salting on roads in rural areas and requested what the process was to add new routes for salting as the roads have changed in the last 15 years. Councillor Gough will find out the process.

Councillor Gough reported On the Sevenoaks Local Plan KCC Division, and that there are a lot of distressed constituents living near the proposed Rugby Stadium.

KCC have opened a Winter Project Scheme to help with the cost-of-living crisis.

7 District Councillors Report

Councillor Thornton reported - The last local plan consultation focused on making the best use of land within our urban areas (i.e. outside of the Green Belt), including on brownfield sites. The latest local plan Regulation 18 Part 2 was publicised, and this focussed on whether they agree to protect green belt and whether building on greenbelt will benefit those communities. It was a huge publication, reached groups for example, young adults at school, 6th formers, the rail station using the QR code, retired people and others. Had over 4000 responses, still need to meet housing needs.

SDC have had a proposal for a WASPS Rugby Stadium.

Mr Bourne asked whether SDC could help with the plans for Bitchet Green car parking. The Parish Council will need to sign an agreement with the estate, and it will require plans for the road and kerbing etc. which Cllr Thornton would be happy to pass on to someone who could help in SDC if she can.

The double yellow lines in St Julians and Fawke Wood will require sweeping as we need to keep the entrances to the park clear. The Parish Council requested more enforcement in that area.

8 Other Matters Requiring Discussion and Action

8.1 Seal Library

The Parish Council agreed that we will not be approaching KCC to allow parking in the car park for the village when the library is not in use.

8.2 Seal Pavilion

Mrs Stiasny updated us on the heating and as the quotes were a lot higher than expected, a short-term fix would be to replace like for like or low temperature touch radiators. The whole project to replace the heating will be transferred to a new Pavilion Refurbishment project.

8.3 Community Award Scheme

The Parish Council agreed to adopt the scheme and agreed a nominee. This was proposed by Mrs Talbot and seconded by Mr Boorman and agreed unanimously.

8.4 IT Services and Support

Following on from last meeting Mr Penn updated the Council that he has a list of 4 companies who he will now contact to quote on carrying out a full audit of the PC IT system and any recommendations for changes. He will report back on the quotes once he has received them.

8.5 Assets of Community Value

Mr Bourne proposed that the PC apply to renew the ACVs on the Five Bells Pub and Seal Library in Seal as a community asset and this was seconded by Mr Michaelides and agreed unanimously.

The Clerk to ask Margaret Carr at SDC about the process of renewing these ACVs.

8.6 Highways

Mrs Talbot was disappointed that she had no response from Councillors on Highway matters in the Parish and therefore she and Mr Boorman provided a list of work that is required and is ready for their meeting in Spring.

8.7 Reserves/Deposits Funds

Mr Michaelides updated the Council that to make payments out of the current account we need 3 signatories as per our Financial Regulations. If we open a deposit account with CCLA, the PC will be transferring money regularly between deposit and current account. As the PC are only transferring between two of its own bank accounts, there should only be one signature required. The PC will need to change the Financial Regulations to state this as it is a different account. The Council agreed that it should be operated with only one of the authorised signatories signing. Therefore, the Council instructed the Clerk to open the account with CCLA.

8.8 HR Services

Mr Bourne proposed to consider engaging with Peninsula Business Services Limited to review all HR practices to assist councillors and the clerk to improve performance and be more effective as a Council, cost is £2,070 +VAT for a 1 year agreement and this was seconded by Mr Boorman and agreed unanimously. The Chair of the Staff Committee will initially lead on this.

8.9 CIL Contributions

The Parish Council to plan for expenditure for Payment A £2,975.64 and consider the schedule of payments in CIL contributions. The Clerk will ask SDC whether expenditure can be spent on the Godden Green pond and a replacement window in the Seal Pavilion.

The Clerk to send out CIL spending guidance notes to all Councillors and update the CIL schedule to show the expiry date and balance remaining of each CIL payment received.

9 Tarmac Greatness Quarry Steering Group

Mr Michaelides attended the committee meeting which represents Tarmac, SDC, STC and effected Parishes, Otford and local residents. There were also a couple of residents from Seal but lacked residents in Greatness. They updated issues on planning applications, Section 106 was being negotiated, the money for that was to update Bat and Ball junction. They didn't know whether that will solve the congestion problem, Mr Haslam was there as a District Councillor who meet quarterly. It's a good way to keep in touch, and what their plans are for water facilities, we don't want noisy sports for residents in new homes. A lot of discussion on phasing and what stage improvements are on Bat and Ball, not much impact on residents. The bridge was mentioned and is being considered plus the cycle route is in the plans and whether we could do something for pedestrians and whether we could put in a footbridge.

10 Action Plan

To remove the EV Charging Points as no funding on schemes and to remove the A21 meeting on air quality. The Heating System requires a group to project manager this along with the insulation of the building.

11 Accounts and cheques

Cheques signed January 2024

Cheque No	Payee	Amount	VAT Reclaim	Description
006574	Jane Haselden	£150.00		Website Oct, Nov, Dec
006575	Richard Abel Landscapes	£462.00	£77.00	Planters
006576	Caretaker			Caretaker Salary
006577	Clerk			Clerk Salary
006578	Inland Revenue			Deductions
006579	Kent County Council			Pension Fund
006580	Jane Haselden	£150.00		Website July, Aug, Sept
006581	Spy Alarms Limited	£120.00	£20.00	Emergency lights
006582	Automated Systems Group Limited	£11.31	£2.26	Photocopier
006583	M&S Electrical Services Limited	£254.74	£42.46	Repair Security Lights
006584	C J Gray Plant Hire Limited	£7,200.00	£1,200.00	Godden Green Pond
006585	Safeplay Playground Services Limited	£1,129.99	£188.33	Playground repairs

006586	SLCC	£188.00		Membership renewal
006587	Kent County Council	£490.80	£81.80	Archives
006588	Citizens Advice in North and West Kent	£500.00		Donation
006589	MDH Horticultural Contractors	£1,152.00	£192.00	Hedge cutting, fallen tree leaves clearance
006590	Sevenoaks District Council	£476.70	63.05	Refuse Collection and Dog Waste
006591	Starboard Systems Limited	£673.92	£112.32	Scribe renewal
006592	Clerk	£200.00		Petty Cash
006593	K C Davies Limited	£30.00		Window Cleaning Seal Pavilion
006594	Flare Electrical Contractors Limited	£399.98	£66.66	ECIR Seal Pavilion repair
006595	CSG Global Education Limited	£251.65	£41.94	Cleaning materials and stationery
006596	Streetlights	£115.50	£19.25	Streetlighting
006597	CSG Global Education Limited	£7.08	£1.18	Cleaning material
006598	Clerk expenses	£103.00	£17.16	Broadband, Nov, Dec
006599	Spy Alarms	£54.00	£9.00	Emergency Lights – Battery
006564	Cancelled Cheque	£0.00		Cancelled
006600	Mr Marco Arpino	£140.65	£23.44	Window replacement
006601	Spy Alarms Limited	£318.00	£53.00	Fire Alarm – call points

Direct Debits Received to date

Payment Date	Payee	Amount	VAT Reclaim	Description
6 th Jan 24	British Gas	£281.01	£13.38	Seal Pavilion electricity
26 Dec 23	Npower	£333.73	£15.89	Streetlighting
20 Dec 23	British Gas	£257.62	£12.27	Seal Pavilion Electricity
25 Dec 23	SEFE Energy	£183.98	£8.76	Seal Pavilion Gas
16 Oct 23	Castle Water	£559.49	£93.25	Seal Cricket Ground
16 Jan 2024	Castle Water	£153.70	£12.57	Seal Pavilion
19 Dec 2023	Castle Water	£147.87	£12.05	Seal Pavilion
19 Dec 2023	Castle Water	£23.38	£3.90	Seal Cricket Ground
19 Jan 2023	Castle Water	£23.61	£3.94	Seal Cricket Ground
25/1/2024	Npower	£343.84	£16.37	Streetlighting

12 To agree the budget

Mr Michaelides proposed to approve and adopt the budget 2024/25 expenditure of £156,066.81 and this was seconded by Mr Penn and agreed unanimously.

13 To agree the Precept

Mr Michaelides proposed to approve and adopt the precept for 2024/25 of £82,520 and this was seconded by Mr Penn and agreed unanimously.

14 Items for Information only

14.1 Street Naming Consultation - Mills Crescent

Sevenoaks District Council decided that a new road name is required and have chosen Sparrow Close.

14.2 Seal Recreation Ground

It has been reported by a member of public that there seems to be dog fouling in the recreation ground. The Parish Council would like to remind all dog owners to please pick up their dog mess and pay attention to the signs in the recreation ground. It was suggested to place on website and social media about dog fouling as children use the recreation ground for sports and clubs etc.

15 Planning

The Council received and noted the minutes of the planning committee on 9th November and 27th November 2023 the responses to planning consultations submitted after those meetings which have been circulated.

Meeting to be closed to discuss the Clerks Salary Review and approve the clerks pay increase as recommended by the Staffing Committee

16 Clerk Salary Review 2023-2024

To receive the recommendation of the Staffing Committee about the NALC Local Government Services pay agreement 2023.

The Next Parish Council meeting will be 8th February at Seal Pavilion at 7.30pm.

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 at 9.30pm