

A meeting of Seal Parish Council took place on Thursday 11th July at 7.30pm in Underriver Village Hall.

Present

Mr. C Haslam (Chairman)

Mr. O Boorman

Mr. R Bourne

Mr. T Bulleid

Mr. M. Kay

Mr. A Michaelides

Mr. M Penn

Mrs. R Stiasny

Mrs. L Talbot (taking minutes)

Also present Councillor Gough, PC. T Costin (for part of the meeting) and one parishioner.

Absence: The Clerk

Parishioners question time

- Mr Talbot, UVA welcomed the Parish Councillors to Underriver. He said the final part of hall refurb took place last August with internal painting throughout – new colour!!
- There had been a number of Community events. The latest a couple of weeks ago we joined up with St Margaret's & ran a Caribbean Night which we were very lucky with the weather. All the events were well attended.
- Elizabeth Shirtcliff set up a Soups and Puds over the winter which was well received and planned for later in the year.
- You may be aware, last October when the SEW main water pipe burst on the far side of green. The wet weather following delaying the reinstatement, the groundworks are now completed, however still waiting for the gates to be replaced, just heard that they are planned again for Saturday.
- SPC have been a huge help this year with the village green as the weather has caused major issues:
- In January, a large beech tree on the green next to the road was blown over on to the road, the clerk very quickly had it cleared, however the fence was damaged when it fell and there has also been some damage to the churchyard verge where traffic drove over it to get by. It would be good if these could be repaired now that the SEW groundwork has been done.
- The potholes were a major issue in the spring, particularly bad in Underriver due to laying water, however big thanks to Mr Boorman who through liaising closely with KCC got them repaired a lot quicker than other areas.
- SPC Barrier Flower Basket is always commented on by villagers – so thank you for that too.

- The Chairman welcomed PC Tom Costin who asked if the Council had any issues. He was informed about the continuing problem of vehicles turning right out of Zion Street particularly at peak times. He said if he was in Seal he would look at the problem. He confirmed if safe to do so residents could record vehicle number plates, take videos and photos of the vehicle then upload them or ring 101, where if the number plate was clear it would be followed up. He said they had good results from speed enforcement in Childsbridge Lane and would be visiting again soon. There had been a spate of bicycle and motorcycle thefts in the area, some had been recovered. He was made aware of drug dealing in the area and again requested times and vehicle registrations to be reported. He was thanked for making a difference since being in our area.

1 Apologies: Mr Ratcliffe, Councillor Thornton and Councillor Hogarth

2 Minutes of the last meeting

The Chairman proposed “That the Standing Orders be suspended to deal with the June meeting minutes”. This was agreed unanimously

The Clerk had circulated a set of minutes that were not checked by the Chairman and needed a number of amendments. He proposed “That he produce an amended set of minutes and circulate to Councillors by Monday for agreement as a true record”. These would then signed at the September meeting. This was agreed by the Council.

The 7th May 2024 Parish Council meeting minutes and 15th May 2024 Annual Assembly minutes that had already been agreed by the Council previously, were signed.

3 Declarations of Interest – None

4 Clerks report

Recycling Area – Seal Recreation Ground

The clerk has been in contact SDC regarding the recycling area and the main issue at this moment is a shortage of their staffing resources, namely drivers, which they are trying to address, as this will return the collection services to weekly, which will greatly assist in all bins being emptied and with subsequent issues with fly tipping. The commercial fly tipping is the other issue, the enforcement team are trying to address with the evidence collected from the site. *This would be discussed in more detail later in the agenda.*

Zambra Way Litter Bin

In regards to the litter bin for Zambra Way, SDC have confirmed that as we have requested the bin, the PC will have to pay the emptying costs going forward and the PC will have to decide whether they still want to request the bin. *Councillors had already agreed paying for emptying of the Zambra Way bin when the bin was originally agreed. The Clerk was requested to order this bin from SDC without further delay.*

Sevenoaks Greensand Common – Job Description

In response to the email received from SDC, regarding the job description and they will try and include our comments along with everyone else’s thoughts.

Capital Grants

The clerk responded to the letter which was sent from SDC regarding the Capital Grants which we had an opportunity to benefit from grant funding from Government’s UK Prosperity Fund to support our priorities. The grant of £4,000 has been made available to support the capital project and therefore SDC have requested that planning permission is approved before money is released. *Mr Bourne who was dealing with the planning application and grant had not been kept up to date by the Clerk. The Chairman said the Clerk must copy Councillor in on any emails sent on their behalf and the replies.*

5 KCC Matters – Councillor Gough reported:-

- Carters Hill – The gully that was blocked outside Deane House had now been completed.
- Carters Hill – Update on the manhole and ditch that requires dredging. KCC would be contacting the landowner.

- Childsbridge Lane cleaning out gulley's near the bridge - He reported these had been done, however the Chairman said as of yesterday, at least 5 had still not been done. Councillor Gough to follow up.
- Ash Platt footpath – KCC had contacted SDC and the path had been done.
- Carters Hill Verge opposite White Rock Pub – this verge is on the urban mowing schedule and the next cut was due 19th/29th July. There would then be two further cut this year.

Councillor Gough suggested that Mrs Talbot copy him in on the HIP reply to KCC, as he may be able to help with a small amount of funding. He would also follow up on the replacement PROW map required at Godden Green.

6 District Councillors Report - None

7 Report Other Matters Requiring Discussion and Action

The repair to the Godden Green noticeboard was raised again as after months of chasing it had still not been repaired. Clerk to be asked to get this done quickly.

7.1 Seal Croft Cottages Extension to parking bays - 9-12 Seal Croft Cottages

The Chairman said this had been agreed at the last meeting with the council and was not required to be discussed further. A letter will be prepared for the Clerk to send on her return from holiday on the 15th July.

7.2 Administration - Parish Council Community Grant Form

The Chairman had still not circulated a draft grant application form to be approved. He said this would be circulated before the next meeting.

7.3 Wildflowers

Mr Boorman was still waiting for quotes for the collection of cuttings to be completed by Autumn for the wildflower verge in Childsbridge Lane.

7.4 Highways Improvement Plan update 2024

The HIP had been circulated to Councils, along with the working group report with the proposed changes. These included new priority order, updating comments and seeking costings on some of the projects to be considered. The recommendations were noted and agreed by the Council. They will now be returned to KCC, with a copy to Councillor Gough. In addition, some other issues were raised by Councillors that were not appropriate for the HIP. These included overhanging hedges, trees and vegetation over the highway, these have been reported and landowners have been sent letters.

7.5 Godden Green Bench

Since the agenda was sent out Mrs Talbot has obtained prices for a new bench, including delivery, fixing, installing and a small plaque. Mr Boorman proposed that the Council purchase a new bench, at an installed cost of £850” Seconded by Mr Bourne

This was agreed unanimously. The Clerk will be asked to action this quickly.

7.6 Seal Recreation Ground - SDC recycling area and rubbish bins

Mr Kay updated the council on the ongoing issue of commercial waste at the recycling bins. There was still a problem over SDC keeping the recycling area clean and tidy, although they had been out recently and thoroughly swept the area. He had looked at other recycling sites and they definitely seemed to be kept cleaner than ours. He regularly phoned SDC on a Monday morning regarding their overflowing black rubbish bins and they did respond and empty them. Our own rubbish bins had no lids and were often overflowing or emptied by foxes, causing rubbish strewn all across the recreation ground. He requested that the Staffing Committee looked at the frequency of litter picking by the caretaker, as it was not being carried out often enough to keep up with the current problem.

Mr Kay proposed “That the Parish Council purchase 3 replacement litter bins with only a small hole to put rubbish through, which would hopefully then be fox proof” seconded by Mr Boorman. This was agreed unanimously.

The Chairman said that the Clerk should write to Councillor Hogarth and Councillor Thornton explaining the issues caused for the Parish Council having the recycling bins on their land. If the area is not maintained to a high standard by SDC it becomes an eyesore in the Conservation Area and removal may be required. When the area was originally put in SDC did undertake to keep the area clean and tidy, it was swept and cleared regularly.

8 Action Plan

It was agreed that the Action Plan was becoming full of items that were either not being updated, actioned or no longer being followed up. Councillors agreed that they would look at the action plan and send to the Clerk an update/action or ask for items to be removed giving a reason why, before the end of August. These changes would then be circulated and presented to the September meeting.

9 Finance To receive Bank Reconciliation as of end of May 2024

Councillors were very surprised that they had not received an up-to-date reconciliation which included June payments. At the last meeting it was agreed that an up-to-date bank balance would be presented at each meeting. It was agreed that the Finance Chairman would discuss with the Clerk a number of requirements on input and presentation of information to the Council. It should also include a to do list, should the Clerk not be available.

10 Accounts and Cheques

The Finance Chairman agreed the cheque list. The cheque for £67,473.00 was the last payment to make up the amount transferred to CCLA as agreed in February 2024 minutes. He was asked how long it takes to withdraw money from CCLA, he was unsure and would find out. He confirmed that the CCLA money is invested in the money market such as Gov bonds and is low risk investment.

The cheque list was approved by the Council.

Cheques signed July 2024

Cheque No	Payee	Amount	VAT Reclaim	Description
006682	Mrs C Boland			Clerk Salary (July)
006683	Cancelled cheque	£0.00		
006684	Cancelled cheque	£0.00		
006685	Kent County Council			Pension Fund July

006686	HM Revenue and Customs Only			Deductions July
006687	Mrs C Ward			Caretaker Salary July
006688	Kent County Council			Pension Fund August
006689	HM Revenue and Customs Only			Deductions August
006690	Mrs C Boland			Clerk Salary August
006691	Mrs C Ward			Caretaker Salary August
006693	Spy Alarms	£306.00	£51.00	Emergency Lights and CCTV repair
006694	Mr M Penn	£8.00		SIM Data for Wifi – Seal Pavilion
006695	Sevenoaks District Council	£184.80		Refuse Collection
006696	Cancelled cheque	£0.00		
006697	CCLA Investment Management Limited	£67,473.00		Investment Account
006698	Mrs C Boland	£41.00	£6.83	Broadband
006699	MDH	3310.80	551.80	Parish mowing Inv. 3115 dated 10/6/24 £1655.40 Inv. 3142 dated 4/7/24 £1655.40

Direct Debits Received to date

Payment Date	Payee	Amount	VAT Reclaim	Description
11/6/24	Yu Energy	£232.70	£11.08	Seal Pavilion Gas for the period April - May
Credit				
17/5/2024	Castle Water	£556.22		Refund

11 Items for Information only

KSS Air Ambulance Charity thanked the Parish Council for their generous grant donation.

Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group thanked the Parish Council for their kind donation towards their cause.

Family Fun Day – Seal Recreation Ground Tuesday 30th July – See SDC website for full details on all days out

12 Planning

The Council received and noted the minutes of the planning committee on 13th June and 24th June 2024 and the responses to planning consultations submitted after those meetings which have been circulated.

The Chairman suspended Standing order so that the meeting could be extended past 9.30pm.

Meeting closed to the public

13 Peninsula HR Services

Mrs Stiasny gave an update to Councillors on the usefulness of Peninsula's input to date, following on from her email of the 8th July amending the agenda item.

The Staffing Committee seek Councillor's agreement to agree an extra payment of £995 + VAT to be made to Peninsula as an external HR facility. This payment will be made in relation to further work being carried out to help us to make the administration of the Council more efficient and effective. A short discussion took place. Mrs Stiasny proposed "That the Parish Council approve that a future payment of £995.00 plus VAT be made to Peninsula to support HR services, as an external HR facility", seconded by Mr Bulleid. This was agreed unanimously.

The Chairman had sent a "Thank You" card to Anne Le Bas on behalf of the Parish Council. She had played such an active role within the community for many years and worked well with the Council.

Meeting closed 9.45pm