



Coxheath Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes for the Annual Parish Meeting of Coxheath to be held in the Small Hall, Coxheath Village Hall, Coxheath, on Thursday 28th April 2022 at 7.30pm.

The meeting was Chaired by Coxheath Parish Council Chairman Clive Parker.
Minutes were taken by Irene Bowie Clerk to Coxheath Parish Council
In Attendance : 26 members of the public.

1. Welcome by Cllr Clive Parker (Chairman of Coxheath Parish Council).
The Chairman extended a warm welcome to all who attended.
2. The minutes of the 22nd May 2021 were agreed as a true and correct record of the meeting.
3. Police Representative's and Community Warden's Reports. No reports.
4. County and Borough Councillor Report.

Cllr Simon Webb .Maidstone Rural West Residents' Update 2021/22

Dear Resident,

It has been my privilege to represent you at County Hall for the last 12 months. The learning curve has been high, however, meeting many residents and liaising regularly with Parish Councils has been extremely worthwhile. KCC is continuing to make Kent a great place to live, despite the financial challenges and rising demand for our services creating additional pressure.

The COVID pandemic has caused many people significant upheaval and sadly we have lost many relatives due to the virus and its variants. The government has given KCC additional monies to support the most vulnerable and also many of its residents. To this end KCC Members were given £6,000 to distribute as they saw fit to support people within their division. Below is a list of the projects I have supported. I am also allocated a Members grant of £10,000 per year and I have been very careful to allocate some of the funds to support a wider range of projects.

Although receiving a better-than-expected settlement for the forthcoming year, pressures coming from a combination of factors, including rising prices, the rising demand to support both our elderly residents and the most vulnerable young children has given KCC a shortfall of many million pounds. The resulting cost cutting measures agreed for the budget to discretionary services has caused concerns, many of these service cuts and the respective details are currently out for consultation. Please ensure your voice is heard and respond.

I sit on four cabinet committees, which give me a broad section of work to complete, these:-

Adult Social Care (vice-chair of this committee), Public Health. Audit and Governance, Growth and Economic Development

I would like to pay tribute to the Leader of KCC, Mr Roger Gough, who leads by example and continues to fight for our residents at both a local, regional and national level.

Examples of support provided in Maidstone Rural West: 2021/22 has seen a variety of projects being supported by the COVID RECOVERY Grant alongside the Combined Members Grants on behalf of the residents of Maidstone Rural West including:

Communities		
Applicant	Project	Amount
Nettlestead Parish Council	Additional sport equipment for use KGV Field, Nettlestead	£700.00
Hunton Bowls Club	Contribution to replacement mower	£650.00
21Together	Supporting vulnerable children for a Dinosaur Fun Day	£750.00
Yalding Pre-School	Replacing IT Laptop	£500.00
Dandelion Time, East Farleigh	Therapeutic Support Time for vulnerable young people	£2000.00
Linton Cricket Club	Replacement Nets for Youth Development	£1500.00
Covid Grant		£6000
Highways		
Area	Project	Amount
East Farleigh Primary School	To install a footpath adjacent to the front of the school to allow for parents, buggies and elderly people access to the school	£4320
West Farleigh Parish Council	Improve/support replacement of equipment on the sports field	£1000
Members Grant	There will be a roll forward of £4680 into the next financial year.	£5320

As a Member of the County Council, I welcome contact with residents, support groups and local business. The Member Grant will always be available to assist vulnerable groups, be they of any age and if I can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to be in contact with me.

Simon
 Simon Webb
 Member for Maidstone Rural West
Simon.webb@kent.gov.uk 07878018997

5. Report from the Chairman of Coxheath Parish Council.

Summary Report 2019 – 2022

Following the Covid-19 Pandemic, the absence of Annual Parish Meetings in 2020 and 2021, I now write to consolidate the actions of the Coxheath Parish Council over the last 3 years from April 2019 to April 2022.

Firstly, I thank all the members of the Parish Council for their support, hard work and dedication to the residents of Coxheath Village in such difficult times over the last three years. For myself, to continue to represent our Village as Parish Chairman, after 13 years now, remains a great honour. As always, the Parish Council members will judge my future in this role at the next Annual General Meeting on 24th May.

We have continued to work with the many organisations around the Village utilising our resilience for the continued benefit of the Village. The opportunity for formal meetings has been limited, although we did continue throughout 2020 and early 2021 with some virtual meetings using *Zoom*. Most memorable are the Village Hall liaison meeting held outdoors on the green in Hanover Road on Friday 03 July 2020 and the last AGM which had to be held in the Car Park on Tuesday 18 May 2021, following the Parish Elections. In the words of Nelson Mandela *“The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall”*.

Increasing housing numbers continues to be a focus in Coxheath. In this period the limited developments dating from 2013 at Clock House, Linden Farm and Older’s Field have been completed, along with MBC’s promoted developments at Willow Grange and Forstal Lane. Further calls for sites in 2020/21 by MBC had at one point identified land for potentially a further 1,000 dwellings in Coxheath. Following objections raised this was reduced to 100, of which 70 were in East Farleigh? However, further debate continues over the re-introduction of Beacon Park, off Heath Road at Linton Crossroads and partly in Loose Parish, along with a possibility of further housing on Forstall Lane / Stockett Lane. Both these sites had previously been excluded?

In this period the Parish has finally achieved the major objective of providing the multi- use games area (MUGA) next to the Village Hall. Land as public open space had been offered by the Rankin’s some 10 years ago and funding mainly from outside sources covered around 75% of the cost. This asset is now well used by residents after some early issues relating to anti-social behaviour. Should any new clubs wish to book time slots to use this facility please let me know.

The Parish Council has continued with between 10 and 12 members out of a compliment of 13. The elections in 2021 saw Cheryl Skinner leave, recently having moved to Essex, and John Wilson return to East Farleigh Parish Council. The 2021 election saw 10 members re-elected uncontested and left 3 vacancies of which 2 have now been refilled by co-option. We welcome Rob Mickleburgh from Linden Meadows and welcome back Gordon Down who leads the Coxheath Litter Team. Very sadly March 2022 saw the death of Rodney Divall, our previous Vice Chairman from 2009-19 and Chair of the Planning Committee from 2016 up to February this year. Val Page has stepped in to fulfil this important role and continues to lead the Traffic and Community Safety Group.

Irene Bowie continues as our Parish Clerk and RFO having joined us in January 2019. Transformation has taken place, albeit a very slow process with the Bank. This transformation takes on board technology, eliminates a lot of paper and provides an accessibility regulation compliant and up to date website through Hugo Fox.

Works by Kent Highways has seen the Heath Road surfacing upgraded and the new more visible Zebra Crossings installed in the Village Centre. Future works will include asking Kent Highways to review and upgrade the 30-mph vehicle actuated signs and assess where new Village Gateways signs might be installed. We continue to press our MBC Councillors to make safety repairs to the scout hut car park which is used by both young and old for meetings and other activities. At present MBC are stating no funding is available and despite offers from the Parish Council they cannot complete this work.

A new group was formed in 2021 to address Environmental Initiatives led by Ernie Small. This

group has been established to progress a Wilding Expanding Regeneration Policy (WER), supported by the Woodland Trust, to directly see how Coxheath can help address Climate Change issues. Trees store carbon, reduce flood risk, support wildlife, give us food and medicine and a whole lot more. Early actions are to manage the Landscape of the Beacon Field, promote further tree planting in and around Coxheath, and to register such under the Green Canopy Register being promoted during the Platinum Jubilee Year celebrations.

Around the village our thanks again go to David Mann who continues to maintain Huntington Green, as well as providing us with floral displays in the baskets and planters throughout the summer. In the last year we have also engaged Bartlett Tree Experts to survey the Tree Stock at both the Village Hall Land and Beacon Field. These surveys have identified 6-, 12- and 24-month priorities which have / are being addressed as part of our ongoing long-term Land Management Plan.

The unwanted MBC play areas at Whitebeam and Fairhurst Drive are still being pursued with a view to taking them over on a leased basis in perpetuity. The Recreation and Youth Group led by Elizabeth Potts has seen the completion and opening of the new Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), adjacent to the Village Hall Car Park

Moving on to financial matters, at the time of writing, the accounts from the last year are still to be checked and closed for audit. Income was increased to just under £98,000 with a Parish Precept of £90,000. At the same time spending was up on the last year at just over £82,000, with the balance going to future working group set asides and maintaining the Parish Reserves balance. Reserves equal to the current Parish Precept are retained and the Parish Working Advisory Groups maintain their own budgets, with funds carried forwards each year to pay for both ongoing and future Projects. A further breakdown of expenditure on items around the Village is given at the end of this report. Coxheath, now classed as a Rural Service Centre by MBC, has maintained the Council Tax Parish Element of the Band D rate within 2.5% increases over this period whilst seeing the Tax Base increase from 1,647 to 1,944.

The Village News magazine previously circulated to the whole Village has remained absent in the last year and still needs to be reintroduced. This publication depends upon an editor being found along with input from local people as well as the current Parish Councillors. Despite eight expressions of interest over the winter an Editor remains to be found. The magazine, along with the new Village Website and Notice Boards around the Village, continue to be the primary means of communication to all residents.

In closing my thanks go to our Borough Councillors for these years - Richard Webb, Emily Fermor and Lottie Parfitt-Reid and in the last year to Simon Webb as our new KCC Councillor - Rural West Division, as well as our new MBC Ward Borough Councillor. My thanks especially go to our Parish Clerk - Irene Bowie who has kept us all on board, well-connected via *Zoom* and whose procedural knowledge is invaluable.

Last but most importantly thanks to my wife Carol, who has also organised tonight's refreshments, and to my two daughters Charlotte and Natasha. Their unstinting understanding, support and patience is as always very welcome.

Clive Parker
Chairman - Coxheath Parish Council

Council Structure

The Parish Council has comprised the following Councillors:

2019-2020	2020-21 {Election deferred}	2021-22
Clive Parker – Chairman	Clive Parker – Chairman	Clive Parker – Chairman
Rodney Divall	Rodney Divall	Keith Woollven – Vice Chair
Keith Woollven	Keith Woollven	Rodney Divall {to Mar 2022}

Val Page	Val Page	Val Page
Cheryl Skinner	Cheryl Skinner	Elizabeth Potts
Elizabeth Potts	Elizabeth Potts	Cllr Richard Webb
		Ernie Small
Co-Opted members:	Co-Opted members:	Chris Bird
John Wilson - Feb 2019 {Vice Chairman}	Darren Carpenter - Mar 19 {Vice Chairman}	Darren Carpenter
		Gavin Crickett – May 2021
Cllr Richard Webb - May 16	Cllr Richard Webb - May 16	
Ernie Small - Oct 2016	Ernie Small - Oct 2016	Co-Opted members:
Chris Bird - Feb 2017	Chris Bird - Feb 2017	Gordon Down – June 2021
Gordon Down - Mar 2017	Gordon Down - Mar 2017	Rob Mickleburgh – Oct 2021
Darren Carpenter - Mar 19	John Wilson - Feb 2019	

The Parish Elections were deferred for 1 year owing to the Lockdown in May 2020. At the 2021 Parish Elections 10 Councillors were Elected Un-contested and two councillors co-opted as shown above. Currently 3 vacancies exist for Parish Councillors to be co- opted up to the next Parish Elections which will be held in 2024.

The full council has continued where possible to meet in the Small Hall at the Village Hall on the last Tuesday of every month (except December) at 19:30hrs, now at 19:00hrs from May 2021. During the Pandemic the High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) Policy, led by Public Health England, following Government Guidelines was introduced. This prevented meetings taking place and in the interim period 23 March 2020 to 27 July 2021 all meetings were held online using *Zoom*. Those members without internet access, including the Public, were included by being able to dial into the meetings by phone. This process allowed the Council to remain effective whilst protecting the Public, Councillors and Staff from the spread of Covid-19. To 16 April the Coxheath & Loose ONS Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) has seen 2,407 incidences of Covid-19 (some being multiple infections) out of an estimated population of over 7,500 people. However, the Coxheath & Loose MSA remain the fifth lowest area across Maidstone.

The public are welcome to attend all Full Council and Committee meetings and are encouraged to do so to bring to our attention any concerns. Public representations will be heard for a total period of up to 30 minutes before the start of the meeting, at the Chairman's discretion, depending upon the fullness of the agenda for the meeting to follow. Outline Agendas are posted on the Website & Notice Boards and the minutes are posted on the Council Website once approved at the next meeting. Bullet point summary sheets to the Press, introduced in 2009/10, are now discontinued.

Each year at the May Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, following the election of the Parish Council Chairman and Vice Chairman, Councillors are appointed to the following Committees and Working Advisory Groups. Each Group then has responsibility for its own budget for the year, including funds set aside from previous years.

For the period these were as follows:

Planning Committee	Rodney Divall – Chairman to Feb 2022 Val Page – Chairman from Feb 2022
Finance Committee	Clive Parker – Chairman
Recreation & Youth Group	Elizabeth Potts - Lead
Seasonal Events Group	Cllr Richard Webb - Lead
Traffic & Community Safety Group	Val Page – Lead
Environmental Initiatives Group	Ernie Small - Lead

Various other co-ordinating responsibilities are allocated to Parish Councillors, again on an annual basis and for the period these have included:

KALC / ACRK Representatives	Keith Woollven / John Wilson
Police Liaison / NH Watch	Cheryl Skinner
Footpath / PROW Co-ordinator	Clive Parker
Play Area Inspections	Rodney Divall
Business Liaison	Keith Woollven
Village Hall Liaison	Clive Parker & Elizabeth Potts
Village Centre / Street Scene	Val Page
Village Environment / Litter	Gordon Down
Speedwatch	Cllr Richard Webb / Chris Bird / Cheryl Skinner
Clockhouse / Linden Farm Liaison	Richard Webb / John Wilson
Village News Editor	Vacant
Website	Chris Bird
School Liaison	Rob Mickleburgh

Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee has continued to meet regularly throughout the period on a three-monthly basis, in February, May, August and November. Once again, no services provided locally by the Parish Council have been reduced. With the Parish Income increases continuing over a ten-year period based on a target 2.5% growth each year it has remained necessary to raise the Band D rate each year, as shown below.

	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Parish Precept	£90,000	£87,000	£80,000	£74,500
<i>Tax Base – Currently 1,944</i>	<i>1,773</i>	<i>1,752</i>	<i>1,647</i>	<i>1,577</i>
<i>Parish Band D Rate – Currently 51.53</i>	<i>50.76</i>	<i>49.65</i>	<i>48.56</i>	<i>47.24</i>
MBC Rural Funding – PSS	£7,102	£6,865	£6,278	£5,269
VAT refunds from 2018/19	t.b.a.	Outstanding	Outstanding	£4,061 o/s
Other income – Field / VN	£360 o/s	Nil	Nil	£1,465
Other income	£320	£689	£685	£378
from Parish Reserves	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total Income:	£97,782	£94,554	£86,963	£85,673

Coxheath, along with Boughton Monchelsea continue to set a precept giving the lowest Band D Parish rates for any Rural Service Centre or Larger Village in the MBC area. MBC Rural Funding, via the Parish Services Scheme remains in place and has continued to increase each year. Parish Reserves, as recommended by the auditors and Local Government in General,

remain fixed at a sum equal to the current Parish Precept which for 2022/23 will become £100,175.

The long term set aside sums of £65,000 from Avanté and £10,180 from the S106 Linton for the recreational and amenity facilities planned for the Linden Farm multi-use games area are monies now spent. A new S106 sum of £19,380 from Londis held by MBC remains ringfenced possibly for improvements to the play areas at Whitebeam and Fairhurst Drive. Principal expenditure headings over the period April 2019 to April 2022 are summarised as an Annex overleaf.

Moving forwards the monthly account summary will show future reserves of £100,175. A new working budget for 2022/23 of £75,000 has been agreed at the February Finance Committee meeting. The balance of anticipated income will be allocated to the Working Groups to accrue with outstanding balances from previous years.

Future projects will include further refurbishments in the Village Centre, ongoing landscape improvements including tree planting at the Beacon Field and possibly the Village Green, together with the provision of support to any refurbishment works ongoing at the Village Hall & Recreation Centre.

C.N.Parker - 25 April 2022

6. Reports from Village Organisations and Representatives.

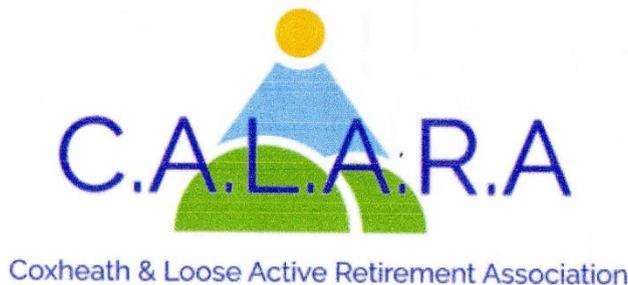
Brief Outline of The Beacon Men

The Beacon Men is a Christian outreach men's group based at Holy Trinity Church, Coxheath and is open to all men living within the United Benefice of Coxheath, East Farleigh, Hunton, Linton, and West Farleigh.

We have regular events throughout the year from straightforward pub nights to more adventurous activities such as clay pigeon shooting, go karting, and boat trips. There are also regular breakfasts with a Christian speaker. These speakers range from reformed gangsters to such people as the former body guard of Nelson Mandela.

Speakers do not always talk about Christian subjects. For example, we have a popular annual curry night where a local aviation historian has given riveting talks on Concorde and The Dam Busters. The next talk in November is likely to be on The Red Arrows.

For further information contact Steve Poole (Chairman.) 07904 212245



Coxheath and Loose Active Retirement Association (CALARA) is a club for retired residents (over 50) of Coxheath and Loose

We are based in the village hall for most activities

Our **main meeting** is the first Friday in the month with speakers and entertainers.

We have MONTHLY Lunches, Country Rambles and Strolls.

Weekly activities:

Monday - Exercise class – Elastixs
- Cribbage

Tuesday - Short Mat Bowls

Wednesday - Whist
-Line Dancing

Thursday

Friday -Art class
-Craft

There is a holiday planned for June

There are also day trips out and theatre trips being planned.

For full details see www.calara.org.uk

Verbal Reports were also given by:

Coxheath Pre-School
Coxheath Residents Village Hall
David Mann – Village Maintenance and Flower Displays
Coxheath Scouts
World Custard Pie Championship.

7. Public Questions and Comments through the Chairman.

Questions were asked regarding Planning Enforcement, Traffic through the Village, Parking Issues .

Signed :

Date: