

COXHEATH PARISH

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Meeting No:	APM 2018
Date:	Tuesday 15 th May 2018
Venue:	Small Hall, Coxheath Village Hall, Stockett Lane, Coxheath
Present:	Cllr Clive Parker (Chairman of Coxheath Parish Council); Anyes Reading (Dandelion Time, West Farleigh); PCSO Jasmine Pay (Kent Police); Cllrs Rodney Divall, Gordon Down, Cheryl Skinner, Chris Bird, Jan Webb and Elizabeth Potts (Coxheath Parish Council); Cllr Richard Webb (Maidstone Borough Council and Coxheath Parish Council); Cllrs Emily Fermor and Lottie Parfitt-Reid (Maidstone Borough Council); Mary Wright (Coxheath Ladies Group); Keith Ferris, Jean Stead, Gwen Hawkes and Sheila Scott (Coxheath Residents Village Hall); Chris Baker, Terry Moyle and Ann Perriman (CALARA); Stephen Poole (Holy Trinity Church – Beacon Men’s Group); Barbara Appleton (Coxheath Preschool); Sally and Gavin McDermid (Hands Off Coxheath) ; Margaret Poole (Mothers Union); Amanda Bird and John Bushnell (Coxheath Badminton Group); Hilary Carter (Coxheath Gardening Club), Paul and Eleanor Friday (Maidstone Gym Club) and Geoff Cook (Coxheath Scout Group).
In Attendance:	Terry Ketley (Parish Clerk) and 7 residents.

The meeting was opened by the Chairman of the Parish Council at 7.30 pm.

1. **PRESENTATION BY DANDELION TIME**

Anyes Reading gave a short presentation on the aims and objectives of Dandelion Time, a small charity based in West Farleigh. She explained that the charity was farm-based and had been in existence for fifteen years with the express aim of helping traumatised children and their families to cope with their difficulties through exposure to animals, woodcraft, harvesting and cookery. Families attended the charity, based in 11 acres of countryside, for a period of eight to twelve weeks during which time they would have a number of sessions lasting 2 – 3 hours per visit. It was hoped that between 100 and 150 families would be helped each year. The annual running cost of the charity was approximately £500,000 and like so many charities it relied heavily on public donations. Residents were invited to attend open days, which were held on the last Monday of each month.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Val Page and Keith Woollven (Coxheath Parish Council) Adam McKinley (KCC Community Warden), Janet Greenroyd (KCC Community Warden Service), David Harper (Coxheath Bingo Club), Sarah Holman (Coxheath Primary School), Rev Peter Callway (Holy Trinity Church), Rev David Jones (Coxheath Parochial Church Council), Ron Hickman (Coxheath Gardening Club), Colin Leith (Coxheath Twinning Association), Peggy-Anne Flaherty (Thursday Club), Rev Eileen Doyle (Mothers Union), Alasdair Smith (Coxheath

Twinning Association), Ruth Lang (Coxheath Primary School PTFA), Moira Walter, John Williams and Brian Mortimer.

3. POLICE REPRESENTATIVE'S AND COMMUNITY WARDEN'S REPORTS

PCSO Jasmine Pay presented a report from Kent Police. She highlighted the following issues :-

- A total of 63 crimes had been recorded in the Coxheath area since August 2017, many of which related to theft or criminal damage;
- She expressed her support for the youth club initiative and confirmed that she attended youth sessions whenever she could;
- She worked very closely with the Community Warden and held joint monthly surgeries, usually in the Coxheath Café;
- Kent Police had targeted Huntington Road and Amsbury Road following complaints about nuisance motorbikes;
- The Police had worked hard to target antisocial behaviour offenders, including taking persistent offenders to the police station;
- Particular attention had also been paid to cases of domestic abuse and fly tipping in the area.

Adam McKinley presented his annual report by e-mail, stressing his six main priorities – domestic abuse, antisocial behaviour, substance misuse, road safety, serious and organised crime and safeguarding vulnerable people. He had tried to be proactive in helping vulnerable members of the community on a wide range of issues and had also given a number of talks to village organisations on subjects ranging from road safety to 'Stop the Scammers'. He had also been instrumental in helping to set up a youth club in the village, which had a registered membership of 30 young people.

4. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 16th MAY 2017

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16th May 2017 were agreed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Due to the indisposition of the County Councillor, no report had been presented.

7. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

First and foremost, a sincere vote of thanks was recorded to Brian Mortimer, for his 22 years of dedicated service to his community as a ward Borough Councillor.

Cllrs Richard Webb, Emily Fermor and Lottie Parfitt-Reid then highlighted a number of issues, including:-

- After the recent elections, Maidstone Borough Council remained in the situation whereby no political party had overall control of the Council. Within the next week the newly constituted Council would meet to determine the identity of the Leader of the Council and elect the chairs of the respective committees;
- A major issue was the current state of minor roads in the borough. Plans were being considered to use powers whereby the Borough Council would instigate repairs to potholes and send the bill to Kent County Council;
- An exercise was under way to deal more effectively with fly tipping and to strengthen the presence of litter and dog waste bins;
- The opening hours at the Tovil domestic waste refuse facility were to be extended on Wednesday and Thursday evenings;

- Section 137 funds, garnered by Maidstone Borough Council, from recent and current housing development in the ward would be passed to Kent County Council to undertake surveys for the improvement of traffic flows at Linton crossroads.

8. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Chairman, Cllr Clive Parker, tabled his report. He drew attention to the following points:

- During the year since the last Annual Parish Meeting, the Parish Council had lost the services of two Councillors – Denise Taghdissian and Marilyn Hansford – and so there were now two vacancies to be filled by co-option;
- The Parish Council continued to work in close co-operation with bodies such as Kent Police, the Community Warden Service, the Church, the Primary School and the Village Hall Management Committee;
- Cllrs Richard Webb and Chery Skinner had organised the popular annual ‘Christmas Lights and Carol Singing’ in early December, where mulled wine and mince pies were enjoyed by all concerned ;
- The Chairman praised the work of the Coxheath Speedwatch Group and David Mann, who had produced yet another superb display of floral planters and baskets throughout the summer;
- The Chairman also thanked Cllr Gordon Down and his group of volunteers, who undertook twice monthly litter picking sweeps around the village. He urged everyone to look after and care for their village and to support this initiative;
- The Council was still looking for someone to take over the responsibility for editing and publishing the quarterly ‘Village News’ newsletter, following the departure of Denise Taghdissian;
- The Chairman reminded residents once again that along with Boughton Monchelsea, Coxheath levied the lowest precept out of the six rural service centres and four larger villages in the Borough of Maidstone.

The Vice-Chairman, Cllr Rodney Divall then introduced a brief report summarising planning activity during the year. There had been a total of 25 planning applications considered during the year, 21 of which were recommended for approval (or had no objection raised against them) and 4 of which were recommended for refusal. Key issues arising during the year were outlined as:-

- It had been another very frustrating year in the context of the Coxheath planning issues. Maidstone Borough Council had continued to take little or no notice of Parish Council recommendations and had often ‘ridden roughshod’ over the views of the community;
- This was particularly evident in the handling of the outline application for up to 210 new dwellings on a site off Forstal Lane. The Parish Council presented a robust case for planning permission being refused, particularly on the question of access and inadequate highway infrastructure, but despite their best endeavours and opposition from several hundred residents. Outline permission was granted;
- Work had now started on the new housing development at Linden Farm in Stockett Lane;
- The growth of the gypsy traveller site at Forstal Farm was a cause for concern. Coxheath was talking to a number of other parish councils in the area to try to establish the planning authority’s policy and stance on gypsy traveller sites in general;
- The most recent cause for concern was an application for the siting of a new medical centre outside the village boundary, which could result in the future closure of both surgeries in Coxheath.

9. REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES

a. CALARA (Coxheath and Loose Active Retirement Association)

Chris Baker reported the strength of the organisation remained unchanged and there was still a short waiting list to join. He still had concerns over the prominence of the CALARA section on the Parish website and wondered whether it would be possible to incorporate a calendar of events.

b. Coxheath Gardening Club

Hilary Carter reported that the Gardening Club continued to flourish with a programme based on local visits to gardens and a number of guest speakers on various topics at their meetings on the second Tuesday of each month. New members would be very welcome to add to the existing core membership of 15 residents.

c. Coxheath Residents Village Hall

Jean Stead, Secretary, Coxheath Residents Village Hall reported that various improvements and refurbishments had been achieved including the installation of a defibrillator courtesy of the 'Inner Wheel' (the ladies branch of Round Table), the upgrading of CCTV cameras and the construction of a cupboard for the use of hirers to store items for regular use, in the Small Hall. In the near future, it was hoped to decorate and modernise the toilet facilities in the older part of the building.

d. Hands Off Coxheath

Sally McDermid explained the origins and aims of the pressure group, 'Hands Off Coxheath'. The Group was anxious to fight against unnecessary and inappropriate development in Coxheath and, wherever, possible worked in conjunction with the Parish Council on planning issues. It was hoped that a liaison group could now be established to monitor developments on the Clockhouse Farm site, similar to the one formed on Willow Grange.

e. Coxheath Speedwatch

In the absence of Nigel Flint, John Bushnell reported that Speedwatch continued to monitor speeds of vehicles through the village on a regular basis and where necessary passed on information of excessive speeding to the appropriate authorities. At present, there were only seven volunteers and so if anyone wished to join the group, they would be welcome.

f. Coxheath Preschool

Barbara Appleton reported that the Preschool now had full attendance on most mornings and was generally very busy. She thanked the Parish Council for their financial support of the 50th anniversary celebrations in June.

g. Coxheath Ladies Group

Mary Wright confirmed that the Coxheath Ladies Group continued to meet regularly on the first Thursday of each month, enjoying an extensive programme of activities and a good attendance.

h. Maidstone Gym Club

Paul Friday reported that the Gym Club now had 60 members and held gymnastics sessions in the main hall three times a week. Standards were high with one club member winning a gold medal at the South East Regional championships.

i. Beacon Men's Group

Steve Poole confirmed that the Beacon Men's Group continued to offer activities for men under the auspices of the church. There were regular breakfast meetings and a range of other activities, including Petanque and a forthcoming boat trip on 2nd June 2018.

j. Coxheath Scouts

Geoff Cook explained that since it was the Scout Group's 40th anniversary, they hoped to organise a project to smarten up the Scout Hut. There were currently 22 children in the Beaver colony, 24 in the Cubs and 16 in the Scouts. Boys over the age of 14 years were left to organise their own group and activities to learn a greater degree of self-sufficiency. It was hoped to open a new Beaver section in the near future, due to increasing demand.

k. Holy Trinity Church

Rev Peter Callway and Sandra Baker (in her capacity as a Churchwarden) explained that Holy Trinity Church was anxious to work with the Parish Council and the local community. A 'Tiny Tots' Club was held on Thursday lunchtimes and a 'Seekers Club' held also on Thursdays but after school. There were monthly Church coffee mornings held at the Scout Hut on the mornings of every second Saturday of the month. The Church Fete would be held on the afternoon of Saturday 2nd September 2017.

l. Coxheath Badminton Group

Amanda and Chris Bird confirmed that the Badminton Group had been re-convened. Interested parties should contact them for further information.

m. Coxheath Guides

Hilary Carter reported that Coxheath Guides continued to flourish. The guides had pursued a wide range of activities. There were currently 3 packs of guides and waiting lists of 30 for the Rainbow group and over 20 for the Brownies. The chosen charity to be supported in the current year was Medical Protection Dogs.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.25pm, when light refreshments were served.