

DUNKIRK ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of meeting held at Dunkirk Village Hall on 23 May 2016

Present: John Peto (Chair), Jeff Tutt, Vaughan Howland, Phillippa Clarkson,
Paul Mellett, Stephen Hitch, Louise Blackshaw (Clerk)
5 parishioners
Michael Walter (for item 2)

1. Introduction

John Peto welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. John introduced Michael Walter who had been the Warden of Blean Wood Nature Reserve for 30 years.

2. Presentation by Michael Walter

Michael gave a very interesting talk on the changes in bird population and bird numbers on the reserve during the years he worked there and in comparison the changes we have seen on birdlife in our gardens. He answered a number of questions on bird habitats and also discussed other aspects of the Blean Wood reserve.

John thanked Michael for attending.

3. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18 May 2015

The minutes of the previous APM were agreed and signed.

4. Annual Report of the Parish Council

John Peto introduced the members of the council and thanked them for their work and assistance during the year.

John gave a report on the activities of the parish council over the previous year. Key points were:

Flooding

Dawes Road had been closed for several months due to subsidence being caused by water getting beneath the road and removing some of the foundations. The road is now open and works have been completed, however the parish council feel the work is substandard and will not solve the problem. A meeting had taken place with KCC Highways where these concerns were raised. The engineers explained that the funding available for the scheme was not sufficient to provide a more robust scheme. It is hoped however that some of the flaws in the work undertaken (such as the holes in the pipes to drain the water away being insufficient) will be remedied.

Flooding and water run off on Boughton Hill – this has been an ongoing problem and various investigations have taken place during the year. Water coming off the hill was tested and believed to be chlorinated which pointed to a leaking fresh water pipe. Later in the year further investigation took place and a blocked drain was cleared of tree roots which seems to have partly solved the problem, however there is still a problem when there is heavy rain and this will continue to be monitored, however KCC drainage engineers seem reluctant to look into the problem further.

Parking

Two schemes are currently being discussed and public consultations taking place.

Parking along the stretch of road between Staplestreet Road and the bus stop at the bottom of Boughton Hill has caused problems with sightlines for those pulling out of Staplestreet Road and Horselees for many months. Public consultation is taking place on a scheme to install yellow lines along this stretch.

We are also working with Boughton Parish Council to support a proposal to reduce the speed limit between The Street and Boughton Hill to 30mph. Both parish councils have contributed towards the scheme and the signage is expected to be installed shortly.

Planning

Swale Borough Council Local Plan: the proposed plan is currently with the independent examiner before it is finally adopted. As part of this, Swale's Local Development Forum recently decided on proposals for housing land that will be included in the new Local Plan. For Dunkirk it has been agreed that there is now no additional land within the Parish designated for development other than those areas already identified and those proposed for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Mast: The most recent application for two dishes was refused, however we have now been made aware that this decision has been reversed and the applicant has been advised they could go ahead without listed building consent and enforcement/legal action would not be taken. The parish council have concerns about the way this decision was made and are raising this with SBC.

5. Statement on the Parish Council accounts for Year ending 31 March 2016 and financial plan for the current year

The Clerk gave a verbal update on the previous year's accounts and the budget for 2016/17.

The Precept (funding from Swale Borough Council) and Lighting Grant for 2016/17 remains the same as 2015/16.

Streetlighting is one of the main areas of expenditure with approx. £4k being spend on electricity and maintenance during the year.

The council have been successful in obtaining several grants during the year which has helped with some initiatives undertaken:

- Crime prevention scheme UV Pens which were delivered to all households
- New Village sign outside the village hall
- Neighbourhood Watch signage for the schemes being set up
- WW1 war memorial website

Our thanks go to Cllr Andrew Bowles and George Bobbin for authorising these grants from their Members localism budgets.

A detailed copy of the accounts is available for anyone who wishes to inspect them. Details are also available on the website.

6. To receive any reports or comments on the Parish Council activities by any Borough or County Councillors present

Cllrs Andrew Bowles and George Bobbin had sent their apologies to the meeting.

7. To invite any questions from the public

The following issues were raised by parishioners present:

- (1) Hedge Cutting – the hedges in various locations were becoming overgrown – in particular along parts of Dawes Road and the Thread Lane junction. These will be looked at and the owners contacted. A Slow sign or change in priority for the Dawes Road/Thread Lane junction was suggested – this will be raised with KCC Highways.
- (2) Courtenay Road – the condition of the road is poor with lots of potholes. Several years ago it had been suggested it would be resurfaced but nothing had happened. JP explained that KCC Highways have a limited funding available which has to be spread throughout the county and unfortunately this funding is usually only sufficient for urgent work for roads in a dangerous condition.
- (3) Dawes Road – as reported earlier, the parish council had raised their concerns about the work being undertaken, but the limit on KCC funding again had meant a less expensive scheme had been agreed otherwise the work would not have taken place at all.
- (4) Parking at junction of A2 – parking at this junction is becoming frequent again. This should be reported to the police if it is felt to be dangerous.
- (5) The latest position on the proposed development on London Road by Quinn Estates. To date we have not been advised of a planning application being submitted. Once an application is submitted the parish council and nearby residents will be consulted in the usual way and will have an opportunity to submit their comments to Swale before the application is determined.
- (6) Berkeley Close/Stoney Road Footpath to Woodchoppers: The condition of the path is poor making it very muddy. The path is used frequently by local residents to reach the bus stop. The ownership of the path is not known, however the parish council will consider what they may be able to do to improve its condition.

8. Close

John Peto thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Louise Blackshaw
Clerk to Dunkirk Parish Council

Signed

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Chairman

Date