

BOBBING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH MEETING

Held on Wednesday 7 June 2023

Present: Cllr. G. Randall - Chair
Cllr. P. England – Vice-Chair
Cllr. G. Herbert 6 Residents
Cllr. P. French
Cllr. A. Gladwin
Parish/Swale/Borough Cllr. M. Baldock
Samantha Gray, Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair formally welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Parish/Borough Cllr. Cavanagh and Borough Cllr. Hunt.

2. Chairman's Review

Parishioners will be aware that the Parish of Bobbing covers various communities including Howt Green, Rooks View, Archers Park, Key Street, Keycol, Bobbing Hill and parts of both The Grove and the Meads development. It is unusual, for what is a relatively small Parish, in that as far as councillor representation is concerned it is divided into three wards. The Meads has two councillors, The Grove has four councillors and the rest of Bobbing has three councillors. Since its conception in 1895 the Parish has seen many changes including the almost complete demolition of its central village area to make way for the Sheppey Way, Keycol roundabout and eventually the A249 dual carriageway running through it. Therefore, the Parish is left with no real centre, is very divided and indeed some residents seem unaware that they actually live in the Parish. This certainly does at times create some problems for the Parish Council in trying to get their priorities right.

The year under review (2022-2023) at least started without the restrictions that Covid had imposed on the meetings in the previous year much to the relief of many. However, some changes that had come in under Covid still existed. Many council officials were now working from home and many meetings were still conducted over the internet. Getting information was at times quite frustrating.

During this year our Parish Clerk took maternity leave and we are delighted that things went well for her. We were able to get the services of a temporary clerk during this time and it worked quite well though we certainly missed our regular clerk.

As statutory consultants for planning applications we were asked to comment on 25 planning applications during the year. Once again most of these were straight forward with quite a few residents extending their properties. Planning applications often attract a larger attendance at meetings from the general public and when the public seats start filling up you know it is going to be an interesting meeting. However, all were conducted in a very proper manner which does help in coming to a decision. There is though, an ongoing planning application to build 2500 houses in a community village in the Parish. This will be ongoing for a number of years and will no doubt take up much meeting time. Meetings have already been held between the Bobbing Parish Council and surrounding Parish councils as all will be affected by such a large development. To celebrate the Queens Jubilee the Parish council in cooperation with the three schools in the Parish supplied various things for the pupils as suggested by the schools. These included marked water bottles, storyteller chairs and various books as requested.

Defibrillators have been supplied by the Parish to Archers Park business area and the Grove Dairy Business Park, Bobbing Hill. Negotiations are ongoing to supply another to the Gadby Road shopping area.

There is some concern that there appears to be an increase in criminal activity in the Parish albeit minor in most cases. Regular reports from the PCSO officers for the area seem to confirm this. There are also changes afoot regarding our PCSO officers many who have been around for some time and are familiar with the area. As from June a new Neighbourhood Policy Model is being introduced. Full details are yet to be announced.

The usual problems have been discussed at the Parish meetings during the year. Most of these revolve around traffic problems. The Parish has some of the busiest junctions in Kent and there has been an increase in traffic during the year which has been compounded at times by the work being undertaken at Stockbury roundabout. Parking in the area and on certain developments has been the subject of a number of meetings with Kent Highways. The junction with the Bobbing Apple on the Sheppey Way has also been the subject of a number of meetings and it would appear that funds have been found to make some changes which could help alleviate the problem. It is hoped that work will commence later this year. Money is always short in discussions with KCC. The Parish is also aware that we have very high pollution levels.

At last, there seems to be a solution put forward with regards to Simpsons railway crossing. The Parish Council is aware that not everyone is comfortable with the changes to be made by Network Rail, however, it is quite clear that they have no intention of opening the crossing again.

Lastly after many years I am retiring from the Parish Council this year. Parish Council work is at times very frustrating and sometimes it feels as though there are problems which just do not seem to have an acceptable solution. However, there are some decisions made by the Parish Council which do affect the local community in a very positive way which can be very rewarding. Like all Parish Councils in the area Bobbing has had considerable problems in attracting people to volunteer to become councillors. This has been particularly highlighted in the recent local elections. Hopefully this will be resolved over the next months and people will come forward. Meantime I would like to thank the Clerk and all the councillors for their efforts during this last year and wish them well for the future of Bobbing Parish Council.

Robert Ball

Council members proposed a note of thanks to the outgoing Chairman for all his years of service to Bobbing Parish Council.

3. **Hall Review**

Over the last year the hall is suffering from the economic effects of the Covid pandemic, a lot of the clubs and social groups were not able to meet but slowly this is beginning to turn a corner, the regular hirers of the hall have continued to hire the hall but with reduced attendance numbers. The hall has gained a new hirer, a keep fit group run by the NHS. All of the refurbishment work has now been completed.

4. **W.I. Review**

Bobbing WI meets every second Wednesday of each month, except August. We have a lively group of ladies, and over the past year we have gained new members and lost a few older ones, with a steady membership of 27 to 30 members.

The group has spent the year on a variety of activities, we have joined the country in celebrating the Queen's jubilee and her passing and of course the Coronation of our new King. We have enjoyed many speakers over the year ranging from our community, with the foodbank, to the history of the Royal Variety Show, we have made bunting, and practiced crochet squares, and of course have had many events where we have enjoyed each other's cooking talents at our birthdays and harvest celebrations. We have also had a very timely talk from KCC to help keep us safe whilst driving in the winter conditions.

Our future programme includes some practical demonstrations and a talk on Tax and toyboys, which I'm sure will be very enlightening! As an organisation we will also join with other neighbouring WI groups and enjoy a Coronation tea and celebration later this month, and we will host our fund-raising event in November, a lively murder mystery evening open to anyone.

New members are always welcome, either contact myself or our secretary, or just turn up at any meeting at Bobbing Village Hall.

Yvonne Herbert
President

6. **Questions/Comments from Parishioners** – None received.

The meeting closed at 8.03 p.m.

These minutes are certified to be a true and just record.

Signed: _____ Date: _____