

SUTTON BY DOVER PARISH COUNCIL
<http://suttonbydoverparishcouncil.org.uk/>

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes

Held remotely using the Zoom platform

Tuesday 4th May 2021 7:00 pm

1. Present and Apologies B Merriman (Chair)
 G Akhurst
 G Smith
 A Calthorpe
 K Little
 No Members of the public
 KCC Member Steve Manion
 S Smith (Clerk)
Apologies: H Densham
 D Willet
2. Approval of the minutes of the APM meeting held on 21 May 2019
The minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting by Cllr Merriman
seconded by Cllr Little and all members voted in favour
3. Declarations of interest
None
4. Matters arising from previous APM minutes
None
5. Chairman's Report
Attached
6. Questions/Comments from Local Residents
None
7. DDC and KCC reports
Not included because of purdah period relating to local council elections
8. Any Other Business
None
9. Meeting finished at: 7.12 pm

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2021

COVERING THE PERIOD APRIL 2020 – MARCH 2021

Good evening everyone and welcome to the Sutton by Dover Annual Parish meeting.

The Parish Year

Well what a year it has been for everyone with the arrival of Coronavirus, the way the Parish Council operated changed dramatically in April 2020 when we were in the throes of the first lockdown. I can hardly believe we have had a whole year of

virtual Parish Council Meetings, and I for one will be delighted and relieved when we can hopefully soon return to face to face meetings.

It was with great sadness that in April the Parish Council learned of the death of ex Cllr Ron Little. Ron was a much valued member of the community, he was a Trustee of the Community Hall and for over 47 years an active Parish Councilor. A memorial plaque in Ron's memory was commissioned by the Parish Council and attached to a planter donated by the family and sited next to the bus shelter.

Unfortunately due to the pandemic all of our usual community activities had to be cancelled during 2020/21. No spring litter pick, no autumn apple day, no official turning on of the Christmas tree lights on Three Horseshoes Green. Although a book and toy swap was set up in the bus shelter, which proved very popular during lockdown, this has now reverted to a book swap only library.

The new play equipment financed by SPARC was installed in the spring, but again due to the pandemic and in line with Government guidelines this had to be taken out of commission before it was ever able to be enjoyed. Once central Government allowed outdoor play equipment to be used again the PC risk assessed the situation and installed guidance notices on the safe use of the equipment. An informal reopening took place in August and I have to say the play equipment has been a great success, I can't think of a time I have visited the playing fields, when there have not been children using the equipment and having a good time. SPARC also raised funds for a new bench for the playing fields. The PC would like to acknowledge all the good work carried out by members of the SPARC committee in fundraising and thank them for donating the new play equipment. The PC have continued to review the Covid safety aspect of the play equipment in line with changing government guidelines. The Parish Council also purchased two new picnic benches and a new rubbish bin now sited in close proximity to the play equipment which will hopefully make this whole area a much more user friendly place for families to visit. An additional reconditioned bench will also be installed shortly.

Sadly, despite notices, there are still a small minority of people walking their dogs on the playing field and not keeping them on leads and/or clearing up after their pets. Consequently the PC have applied to DDC for a Public Spaces Protection Order for this area. The PC will continue to monitor this health and safety issue and DDC will be patrolling the area more frequently.

Our grass cutting contractor Colin Little has maintained our public areas beautifully and his introduction of a new cutting regime in the playing fields, leaving certain areas unmown allowing wild flowers and grasses to grow during the late spring/early summer has met with the approval of many Parishioners.

In August the PC delivered a leaflet to every household in the Parish outlining concerns about the proposed new freight hub at Manston, and the impact large low

flying aircraft would have on the Parish. Thankfully the Secretary of State's decision to approve Manston as a freight hub has been overturned in the High Court. Currently it is not clear if that means an end to the matter or if the application will be resubmitted.

The Parish Council's new website went 'live' on 24 August so we now have a new website which complies with the Government's accessibility laws and in my mind is more visual and more user friendly. I would also like to confirm the Parish Council is constantly reviewing the storage of data held to ensure it meets Data Protection Regulations.

Last autumn three new allotments were formed in the community orchard. The fruit trees in the community orchard were professionally pruned in February and the PC hope to hold a number of community activities in the orchard later this year.

Following the new regulations relating to BREXIT border control and covid testing from 1 January 2021, little or no disruption to traffic affected the Parish. The same can't be said for the rubbish littering the roadsides, especially the A2, A20 and A256. DDC have informed us a contractor has been appointed to deal with the matter and hopefully we should see improvements shortly. Fly tipping, what can I say! It is becoming more and more of an issue, all fly tipping can be reported to DDC via their website, and happily I have to say clearance is usually dealt with promptly.

February saw the Parish in the grip of snow for a short period, high winds caused drifting, making some narrow lanes impassible. With the thaw came the inevitable potholes, KCC have been given a considerable amount of money to deal with these and Parishioners are urged to report any potholes directly to KCC via their website.

The number of planning applications dealt with by the PC during the year have been steady and on the whole applications were for additions and extensions to existing properties and were supported by the PC. New builds were all looked at on their suitability in line with the existing Village Design Statement (VDS) and taking the current village confines into account

There are two sites in the Parish which are yet to be developed. The former East Studdal Nursery in Downs Road (10 houses) has outline planning permission and land adjacent to the Homestead, Homestead Lane (4 houses) has full planning permission. The PC continue to follow up planning breaches with DDC planning enforcement department. All current planning applications and resulting decisions can be viewed on the Parish Website.

The PC responded to the consultation on DDC's Draft Local Plan in March 2021, there were no additional sites highlighted in the Parish for development and we are currently awaiting DDC's review of the village confine boundaries.

The 2020/21 accounts are currently being prepared and will be with the internal auditor later this month. The audited accounts together with the Annual Report will be presented at the June PC meeting for approval.

I would like to remind everyone that Parish Council meetings usually take place on the first Tuesday of each month with the exception of August, but future types of meetings, dates and venues may continue to vary due to the ongoing changes in Government's Coronavirus guidelines. Councillors welcome the attendance of members of the public to all meetings whether face to face or virtual. If you subscribe to the Parish Website you will be notified when new articles are posted including agendas and minutes.

To Conclude

On behalf of the Parish Council I would like to thank the following people:

Sue Smith our Parish Clerk, Sue does an excellent job despite its many challenges, she is always on top of things and we value her greatly.

Claire Inglin for acting as our internal auditor.

Steve Manion, DDC and KCC. Steve is always at our meetings, shows a great interest in the Parish and has helped with advice and funding for which we are grateful.

Nick Kenton DDC. We are grateful to Nick for keeping us informed as to matters affecting our Parish.

A special mention must go to all those Parishioners who have supported friends, neighbours and the community in general during what has been unprecedented times, including during the snowy weather.

Finally, I would very much like to thank my fellow Councillors for their support to me and their continued commitment to this community.

Thank you.