

# *The Wincheap Society*

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## **Minutes of the Committee Meeting of The Wincheap Society at 7.30 pm on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2017 at 6 Victoria Road, Canterbury (Thanks to Ed)**

Present: John Osborne (Chairman), Ed Craven, Gillian Bull, Pat Marsh

1. Apologies for absence: Nick Eden-Green
2. Minutes of the last Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2017

The Minutes were signed as a correct account.

3. Matters Arising
  - i. Wincheap Playground

Ed attended the first meeting of the assessment panel last week. There were six designs and the attendees selected two to go forward. Ed thought the process was very efficient. The issues of toilets and refreshments have been brought up, but CCC is unlikely to accept either, as any shelter may be misused.

The public consultation will consist of a focussed local consultation together with information on the Council's website and Facebook and Twitter pages. The local consultation will take the form of a consultation event held with pupils at Wincheap Primary School (daytime event), and on the same day (evening) an event held at the Jubilee Hall for local residents. Residents have been invited by letter, which includes all the relevant information, and John has written to members inviting their comments. The date of the local consultation is Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 6 pm - 8 pm. Information on the residents' consultation event has also been disseminated via the CCC website and social media.

In addition, CCC will carry out some one-to-one consultation with local nurseries and known local groups such as the Wincheap Society and any other local residents' associations. This is a tried and tested means of consulting on play area refurbishment. The consultation period will be between 6th and 17th March.

CCC tree officer Aidan Potts is dealing with the removal of the Wellingtonia and is making the necessary preparations with permissions etc, due to the area being a Conservation Area. He is also liaising with tree surgeons over a timetable for removal, as it may have to be done in stages.

The back gate matter has yet to be progressed, although Rebecca has had a meeting with the Listed Buildings officer during which it turned out that the wall is not actually listed;

it is, however, in a conservation area. There is no budget for making a back entrance to the playground so no decision has been made on this. If many residents put forward this idea, it will have more chance of success.

CCC will redo all the paths and put benches in.

ii. Litter Campaign

Nick arranged a very well-attended litter pick on 28<sup>th</sup> January. Apart from members of WinSoc and other residents of Wincheap, there were also members of the Litter Roundtable committee taking part, such as Prof. Richard Norman. Sian Pettman very kindly provided refreshments at the end.

A huge pile of full sacks was produced and several photos were taken. One of these appeared in the Kentish Gazette, accompanied by an article on the litter pick. John wrote a letter to the Gazette thanking everyone and pointing out that Station Rd East was back to its badly littered state again after two weeks.

iii. Former Lotus House Application

Declined.

iv. Quinn Estates

Gillian had attended the stakeholders' meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> January and reported back. The Quinn delegation appeared to be genuinely anxious to inform the stakeholders how far they had progressed with their pre-application plans. Useful maps and plans were provided for all those attending which Gillian showed the Committee. (The maps are attached to the paper version of these minutes.)

Quinn were a little defensive responding to some stakeholders' comments, even when these were proffered by way of additional information, being a little over-anxious to emphasise how many of their decisions have to be made within the requirements of county and national regulations.

With regard to the feasibility of a rail underpass, Quinn produced a rough figure for the cost of this: £8-9 million, of which actual construction would cost about half. Major expenses and reimbursements in the order of £2-3 million would arise with Network Rail and Southeastern for a period of track possession. Approach road construction and traffic management would generate similar expenses. The underpass would require lowering road levels, and it is uncertain how this would impact on the water table. The issue is whether this is the best use of such a sum. Neither Quinn nor Nick Eden-Green are wedded to the "underpass solution". How much of this expense would fall to the developer(s) is quite unknown, and the issue of which of the City's developers should

contribute has not been addressed. The problem is that the current bridge is not a solution as lorries regularly crash into it and the railway line has to be closed as a result.

Concerning the Wincheap roundabout / gyratory, KCC is looking for a solution, with developer contributions, and the level of these has yet to be discussed with Quinn. Nick pointed out that increased traffic down Pin Hill would result from the proposed developments in south Canterbury, but there has been no coordination of developers' plans by KCC/CCC. Quinn said they are negotiating only with KCC. There was some discussion of cycle paths and access in the area of the roundabout.

Further to their discussions with KCC, Quinn are again meeting with council officers, who regard the underpass plan as "aspirational", but see a traffic lights control system at the roundabout as a viable option. However, Quinn do not know, and need to know what KCC wants developer contributions to be, so that Quinn can cost theirs.

Proposed changes to the road system shown on the map provided were discussed, including:

- problems with access to Wincheap from the south side by residents' cars when a one-way system;
- the current dangerous cycle path "system" being made additionally dangerous if diverted to a Wincheap relief road through the retail estate and at the Morrisons car park entrance;
- how traffic exiting on the new slip road will get onto the A28 westbound, as traffic currently exiting Morrisons car park and taking that direction already backs up to the entrance roundabout while waiting.

With regard to the link to Thanington Park, Quinn's detailed map of their proposed development was discussed. They propose works access from the western, Milton Manor Road, end throughout the 4-5 year build, but will commence building at the eastern end of the site and work west. They will require any use of Pentland's access routes for their site. Quinn explained that they have altered their ground plan to allow for a future road link with an east-west road through the Pentland site.

Additional stakeholders' comments included the need for a surgery in the middle of the whole Thanington area, as expanded. There is a fear that the current split between old and new Thanington will be made triple with the new developments, and that close liaison with the residents should be maintained to ensure that does not happen.

As regards public transport, there will be more buses and a bigger Park and Ride, but it is not clear where this will be.

Future meetings: Quinn's application will probably be presented within the next month. It was agreed that Quinn will convene the next meeting with stakeholders when they have news to discuss.

v. Clean Air Campaign

Canterbury Clean Air has contacted volunteers, who will monitor air quality first in the St Dunstan's area as a pilot from 4<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> April.

The Green Party is organising an action day on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March from 1 pm to 4 pm at St Dunstan's level crossing. They will be handing out leaflets and stickers to drivers waiting when the gates are down, requesting they turn off their engines.

4. Finance

Another signatory is required for cheques as Eddie is now often away and John is the only other signatory. We will discuss this when we have more committee members present at a meeting.

We still have the funds in our account for the resurfacing of Hop Garden Way but still no date for the work.

5. Committee membership

Glenda Shepherd, a friend of Debra's, is willing to come and join us.

6. Obituaries - Deaths Recorded Since Our Last Meeting

**Sir John Hurt**, English actor for stage and screen (simply the greatest actor in the world – David Lynch); **Mary Tyler Moore**, American actress (*Dick van Dyke Show*, *Mary Tyler Moore Show*); **Babette Cole**, English children's author and illustrator; **Dick Bruna**, Dutch author and illustrator best known for *Miffy* children's books; **Sarah Coward**, English writer and stage and radio actress (Caroline Sterling in *The Archers*); **Alan Simpson**, English scriptwriter (*Steptoe and Son*); **Peter Skellern**, English singer-songwriter (*You're a Lady*); **Steve Hewlett**, British print and radio journalist (Radio 4's *The Media Show*), who took part in a series of interviews with Eddie Mair on PM about his cancer treatment; **Sir Ken Morrison**, English businessman, Life President and former chairman of Morrisons; **Desmond Carrington**, Radio 2 presenter; **Tara Palmer Tomkinson**, English socialite, television personality, model, and charity patron; **Gerald Kaufmann**, British Labour politician, MP from 1970 until his death in 2017; **Al Jarreau**, American singer and musician (*Breakin' Away*)

7. Any other business

- i. Michael says the website needs modification. We will invite him to a meeting when he comes back from his trip.
- ii. Pat attended the information event organised by the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) and Kent Federation of Amenity Societies (KFAS) *Delivering Effective Partnership Working in Kent's Communities 2017* on 28<sup>th</sup> February. She produced a report which is in the Addendum to these minutes.
- iii. Caroline Galbraith will be the new Wincheap correspondent for the Gazette.
- iv. It was agreed we would not take any specific action about the proposal to close the Heritage Museum. However, we could encourage members to sign the ipetition:  
[https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/save-canterbury-heritage-museum?utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=pet\\_share\\_button](https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/save-canterbury-heritage-museum?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=pet_share_button)
- v. Next Generation Dance Studio is planning a Quiz Night to raise money for their Disney dance trip and new mirrors for their studio. They will let us know the date.

8. Date of next meeting

Monday, 24th April at 7.30 pm at 53, Wincheap

## **Addendum**

### **Delivering Effective Partnership Working in Kent's Communities 2017**

(Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) and Kent Federation of Amenity Societies (KFAS) Information Event – Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017)

## **Background**

The *Localism Act 2011* has now passed its fifth anniversary and, whilst many will point to the success of Neighbourhood Planning, several of its key components, including the devolution of services and greater community involvement, have yet to be fully delivered. More recently, the *Cities and Local Government Act 2016* enabled further powers and decision-making to be devolved to principal authorities.

The event was to look at progress to date and a number of themes which could encourage greater engagement in devolution between principal authorities and Local Councils and community groups. The aim was to support more effective delivery of community resilience and development. A further impetus was the ongoing and

wide-ranging discussions across Kent, which could potentially result in different models of local government at principal-authority level emerging within five years to achieve greater efficiency.

The issues to be addressed were:

- How best can Local Councils and community groups achieve cohesion and take advantage of the existing and new powers to improve their communities?
- How will the possible reorganisations and/or sharing of services in principal authorities across Kent affect the local level, whether parished or not?

Initial discussions have highlighted the opportunities for Local Councils and community bodies to become involved in localised service delivery, from physically providing a service to controlling a virtual budget.

It seems clear that, even where service devolution is not on the agenda, Local Councils and community groups will have a greater front-of-house role in ensuring local democracy and community identity remain intact.

### **Notes on the event**

It was pointed out that the UK is one of the most centralised states in Europe. 91% of income raised by government goes to Westminster.

As is well known, local government grants from central government have been reduced by 40% over the last five years and will be reduced to zero in the near future. The grants have been replaced by the New Home Bonus, which is supposed to give more money to councils to provide services for new households. In Kent 80% of the Bonus goes to Local Councils and 20% to the County Council. Local Councils will also keep 100% of business rates levied in their District.

The point of devolution of power in local government is to deliver services in the best and most efficient way. The structure within which this is carried out is irrelevant. We shouldn't be wedded to any particular model.

It was felt, however, that we need a small-scale strategic body but local delivery of services (eg youth clubs, libraries). KCC shouldn't be delivering such services. We should have a genuine two-tier system (or a three-tier one if we include town/parish councils).

If powers are devolved to town/parish councils, we will need more information on the advantages and disadvantages of this. The key is to identify what is important to a local community – this will be different everywhere. Soft landscaping (eg soil, trees, plants, flowers, and colour schemes) is an example of an area which can often be devolved to

town/parish councils. Tourism can also be successfully devolved (cf Faversham). It was thought local planning concerns could also be devolved to town/parish councils.

It is vital to understand what is involved if the provision of any local service is taken on by a town/parish council, as well as how much money and how many staff will be required. KALC has an excellent website and will be able to provide workshops and training and guide neighbourhood planning. Windsor is a model for a town council delivering services in the best way. However, the funding of town/parish councils for delivering local services is key to their success.

NB: Many parishes are too small to have people who will take on a lot of responsibility for delivering services. However, parishes can form clusters – area-based panels with equal power with the Local Council. According to Paul Carter, KCC Leader, this system works well in Wiltshire and Cornwall.

It was pointed out that Canterbury Area Members Panel (CAMP) is now open to real community input and has led to a greater influence of the community on Council decisions. However, CAMP currently has no power and is a purely advisory body.

Sevenoaks is now fully parished with 30 parish councils, some with as few as 300 residents, others with 3,000. They have taken over blocks of services, such as public health (adapting housing, recreation centres, parks); some highways services, such as patching potholes; sports development; and economic development. A community infrastructure levy has been introduced, with 25% given to each parish, regardless of whether or not they have a neighbourhood plan. This new arrangement in Sevenoaks is apparently working well and many attendees were interested in having this best practice spread across Kent.

The proposed merger of four East Kent District Councils (Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet) was discussed at length. A decision on whether to go forward to a public consultation on this will be taken by each District Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. The final decision will then be made in July. The haste in implementing the merger is dependent on the 2019 local elections. There are currently 96 senior posts in the four District Councils; 38 would go in the merger, so there would be a significant reduction in highly-paid management posts (each paid just under £200,000). It was claimed that £42m can be saved overall with the merger.

One key point in the proposed merger would be how the four Local Plans would amalgamate, especially where new housing would go. There is currently often a conflict between the Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans, as the requirement is to build double the number of houses that have ever been built in a Local Plan period. There are also huge financial consequences for a District Council if it is to refuse a developer's plans and has to fight an appeal.

Another thorny problem is the governance model for any merged District Council. Canterbury now has a committee system, whereas the other District Councils have the Strong Leader + Cabinet model, the latter being central government's preferred model.

John Walker of KFAS pointed out the democratic deficit which would result from the large reduction in councillors and the huge increase in the number of residents each would then represent.

There was brief discussion of setting up unitary councils in place of Kent County Council. The differences between West Kent and East Kent were noted. Interesting examples were the fact that social care payments in West Kent are £46 higher than in East Kent and that Council Tax housing bands each cover a large range of house values across the county.

Ian Davison of the Kent Association of Local Councils, Surrey Hill Solicitors, gave a practical guide to devolving services, covering the following topics:

- Why do principal authorities want to devolve services?
- Approaches
- Charities and parish councils
- Why should the Council want to go for devolution?
- Decision-making
- So you want to go ahead
- Taking on the service – what next
- Need advice – just ask via KALC

Mr Davison recommended the following publications:

LGA/NALC, *Modelling devolution, 2012-13* (a series of case studies)

Cornwall City Council, *Common issues – shared solutions, 2004*

Pat Marsh