

**Minutes of the 12th**  
**CLAYGATE VILLAGE MEETING**  
**7.45.00 pm on 24 May 2012 at Claygate Village Hall**

**Present:**

**Parish Councillors** Shirley Round, (*Chairman*), , Ken Huddart, Geoff Herbert, Anthony Sheppard, Kate Hallett, Alex Coomes, Noel Isaacs, Sarah Whittaker

**Borough Councillors:** (Alex Coomes), (Geoff Herbert),

**County Councillor:** Mike Bennison

**Parish Clerk:** Freda Collins

Approx.20 electors

The Chairman, Shirley Round, welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming to the meeting. She welcomed our County Councillor, Mike Bennison, and congratulated him on his recent appointment to Deputy Mayor of Elmbridge. She also welcomed Lesley Underwood (Elmbridge Borough Council) and Suzanne Parks (Mole Valley). She explained that Lesley and Suzanne will be speaking about the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Claygate and about the Neighbourhood Plan which is currently being compiled in Bookham.

**Item 1. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes for the last village meeting on 19 May 2011 were available at the meeting. They were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

**Item 2. Report of the Parish Council**

The Chairman, Cllr Shirley Round, gave apologies on behalf of Nick Hayes who is on holiday and Jimmy Cartwright who is not well. She asked the Clerk to record the best wishes of the meeting for Jimmy. She then introduced all the Parish Councillors who were present at the meeting. She pointed out that our three Bough Councillors Jimmy Cartwright, Alex Coomes and Geoff Herbert are also Parish Councillors.

She thanked all our volunteers, distributors and co-opted members. We hear so much about localism, and the big society but we already have it here in Claygate.

She then introduced the Chairs of the Parish Council committees to give their reports:

- Ken Huddart – **Highways and Transportation**
- Sarah Whittaker – **Environment**. Sarah took over the chair from Nick Hayes
- Alex Coomes – **Communications**; including the new website
- Noel Isaacs – **Planning**. Noel will introduce our speakers.

**Item 3. Report of the Committees**

**Highways & Transportation**

This committee is chaired by Cllr Ken Huddart who gave the report.

- i. The Committee primarily chases other organisations to do the things they should be doing!
- ii. Recent communications with SW Trains has resulted in a promise for more cycle stands, replacement of the missing bench and a refurbishment of the waiting rooms.
- iii. We inform SCC where local roads need mending. Cllr Bennison, who is on the Local Committee for Elmbridge, has been organising funds for repairs and patching. The situation has improved from that of three years ago.
- iv. The Street lighting is currently being replaced. Concerns have been raised about the style of lighting in Conservation Areas. EBC have negotiated with SCC to use a heritage-style light in the Conservation Areas.

v. SCC has mainly ceased its tree planting. CPC initially just replaced dead or damaged trees, but is now actively pursuing a tree planting programme. About 70 new trees have been planted by CPC with the valuable assistance of the Tree Wardens. In Foxwarren/Coverts Road both SCC and CPC planted trees. Suggestions for new sites are always welcome.

### Environment

This Committee is now chaired by Cllr Sarah Whittaker who gave the report.

- i. The Committee meets every 6 weeks and has a varied remit.
- ii. We have held two clean up days per year. The spring one is well attended as the Scouts and Guides join in, the other not so well attended. Because of this, and the fact that there does not seem to be so much litter in the village, it has been decided to hold only one clean day per year.
- iii. The Parish Council looks after some Highway Garden sites and these are regularly checked by Councillors or co-opted members. If work needs to be done, funds are allocated at the Committee meetings. Recently, money has been spent on the Firs verge.
- iv. We maintain a close cooperation with Claygate In Bloom and have just contributed towards new planters.
- v. We have a team of volunteers called the Green Team and we thank them for their work

If there are issues you may have which fall within our remit, please bring them to our attention.

### Communications Working Party

Cllr Round heads this team. Cllr Coomes is also on the team and has re-designed the website, so he gave the report.

- i. The new website will be a parish council website with links to other organisations. It has been designed to be easy to use with simple access. As it has been designed by a Parish Councillor this has saved some £500 on design fees. The Clerk will be trained to operate the site and upload agendas, minutes and other information. The new site has been seen by the other Parish Councillors who have given their feedback; it is hoped to go live on 4 June. If there are suggestions for changes, please let us know.
- ii. Three Couriers have been produced. The feedback on these has been very positive.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Coomes for all his work which has saved the Parish Council a great deal of money.

### Planning

This committee is chaired by Noel Isaacs, who gave the report

- i. There have recently been lots of changes in planning legislation. The Localism Bill came into force last December.
- ii. The new Act introduces the concept of a Neighbourhood Plan. CPC has voted to go ahead with a Neighbourhood Plan for Claygate, but we are now looking at what it will cost us in terms of money, manpower and benefits.

In order to understand more about the Neighbourhood Plan we have two speakers here tonight who will talk on this subject.

### **Item 4. Speaker –Leslie Underwood, Planning Policy Officer of EBC**

Leslie reminded the meeting that she had come to speak in Claygate three years ago when EBC were doing the Core Strategy. Elmbridge will be able to provide all the new houses required without having to build on Green Belt. The Borough will need to provide 3,375 homes in the next 15 years, 50-100 of these will be in Claygate. The numbers need to be estimated, otherwise the houses will be built and there will be no supporting infrastructure. The logic behind the Core Strategy is that EBC needs to plan for housing so that it can plan for the infrastructure.

The Neighbourhood Plan has come from the 'Big Society' concept. The Government feels that for too long, Planning has been imposed on people, and it thinks that people should be in charge of their own destiny by taking power away from the hands of the officials and putting it in the hands of the people. This will be the power to decide where new housing will be and what it will look like. It will, however, still have to be in line with national and local policies.

The Neighbourhood Plan gives the choice to be able to plan for the amount of development in the Core Strategy, or more development, but not LESS. The Government is committed to GROWTH. The people should be in control, but only over growth.

The Neighbourhood Plan would be a joint effort between the parish council, and the LA. The LA has no choice, it would have to help. The Parish council will decide what area it wants to cover (this does not have to be the whole parish), the LA then publicises this.

The procedure is that the Parish council would set up a Steering Committee, the LA would provide help and support such as:-

- i. Advice on procedures
- ii. Links to service providers- there is a list of statutory Consultees
- iii. Help with the evidence. The plan must be in line with the Core Strategy and must be evidence based, not just opinion.
- iv. Help with mapping, training, employment, housing, flooding, and noise
- v. Help with consultation procedures, cross-border issues and objections.

Once the Plan is complete; the LA will undertake a pre-examination to see if conforms to the Core Strategy. The plan will then be submitted for an examination. If this is successful, it will be put to a referendum. If it is accepted, then the LA will accept it.

The LA has to pay for the initial publication of the boundary, the pre-examination, the examination and the referendum. It is estimated that a Neighbourhood Plan will cost £20-60k.

Advantages of a Neighbourhood Plan:-

- i. it will be community led, so it will be owned by the community.
- ii. If development is put forward which is in line with the Neighbourhood Plan it is not likely to be refused.

Disadvantages of a Neighbourhood Plan:-

- i. EBC is undertaking Settlement ID plans at the moment. There is one planned for Claygate. The Neighbourhood Plan and the Settlement ID are similar, but it will take longer to do the Neighbourhood Plan. EBC will not do both.
- ii. It may be difficult to sustain interest in a project which will take two years plus to do.
- iii. Promoting growth will not appeal to many people.
- iv. If areas in Elmbridge vote to do Neighbourhood Plans and then do not complete them, they will not have a Neighbourhood Plan or a Settlement Plan producing a 'patchwork quilt' effect but with holes in it.

### **Speaker –Susanne Parks of Mole Valley**

There are only 230 organisations in the whole of England undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan and only 2 in Surrey.

The Mole Valley cannot meet housing needs within the Borough, so will have to take some land out of the Green Belt. The housing land availability assessment required quite a few houses in the Green Belt and in Bookham. As Bookham will be subject to increased housing anyway, it was decided to do a Neighbourhood Plan so that the people have some control over the development.

As one of the 'frontrunners' Bookham has received a £20k grant. They have already spent £1.5k on publishing and hall hire and as many people do not claim their full reimbursements, this figure could be higher. They estimate that evidence gathering and printing alone will cost £15k. There will be no further funding.

They have been working at the project for a year now, but as Bookham does not have a parish council, some of the work has had to be setting up because the group is a Residents Association. It has taken 6 months to get a 50% response for the 'Bookham Vision'. The Steering Committee meets every month and last for 2 hours and includes 10 people.

The Plan must be based on evidence and research. Evidence is required to show what is needed and that it will be viable to provide.

Problems encountered so far are:-

- i. Many service providers will not speak to Bookham (or even Mole Valley) as they are seen as too small to bother with as Bookham is planning for only 300 houses.
- ii. Some of the Green Belt will have to be used.
- iii. Usually the Borough Council has to deal with all objections, but now the Group has to deal with them. Local objections have to be dealt with at local level and this may prove divisive.

Anticipated problems:-

- i. If the community does not agree with the work done and the Plan, it will be refused at the referendum-wasting all that time, money and resources.
- ii. it will not be finished until 2014.
- iii. It may cost more than the grant of £20k.

The community must be with the Plan; they must not have false expectations or it will not be accepted at the referendum stage.

The Chairman then thanked the speakers for explaining the processes involved in compiling a Neighbourhood Plan. We now understand this will be an enormous task and although part of the Plan has already been completed in the form of the Village Design Statement an enormous amount of work will need to be undertaken if a Plan is to be accepted.

She stated that the Councillors have had the opportunity to ask questions in as much as their questions have been incorporated in these presentations and asked the meeting if they had questions for Lesley or Suzanne?

Q. Would both a one-bedroomed flat and a five –bedroomed house be deemed to be one ‘planning unit’?

A. Yes, they are both one planning unit.

Q What is the difference between a Neighbourhood Plan and A Settlement ID Plan?

A. The Neighbourhood Plan would be community-led and a Settlement ID Plan is Council-led.

Q. Who would approve the Settlement ID Plan?

A. This will still have to go through an examination, but not a referendum.

Q. How many houses will need to be built in Claygate?

A. EBC has estimated 50-100 houses in the next 15 years. Some have already been built or are being built. Twelve planning units are being built in Brookfield Gardens. But if 100 houses are built and then more sites come up the applications will not be refused. The 50-100 houses is a minimum number. It is important to be realistic about the number of houses expected to be built or the Council will not be able to plan for the appropriate infrastructure.

Q. Can the numbers go down as well as up?

A. If there not as many as expected in Claygate, EBC will have to see if elsewhere in the Borough can compensate.

Q. There is obviously a difference between Elmbridge and Mole Valley. The Design Guide obviously took a lot of information from the VDS which CPC prepared. Does the Neighbourhood Plan have teeth; can we achieve the same result from the Settlement ID without going through the process?

A. The implementation regulations have not yet come out.

Q. How will this process help solve the national homeless situation?

A. It has been estimated that Elmbridge needs 12000 affordable homes. To pay for these, 28000 market homes will need to be built.

Q. If we need to build 50-100 homes in Claygate and some of those have already been built, is a Neighbourhood Plan a lot of work for so few houses?

A. If EBC provide a Settlement Plan and it is not liked then EBC will get the objections, if CPC do a Neighbourhood Plan then all the objections will come to CPC.

Q. If we do a Neighbourhood Plan and it is refused at the referendum, what are the implications?

A. If Claygate goes ahead with a Neighbourhood Plan, then EBC will not start a Settlement Plan. So if the Neighbourhood Plan is refused at referendum, Claygate will be left with nothing.

*Comment from the Chair: Before committing to a Neighbourhood Plan, it may be best to watch the progress of the Settlement Plan.*

Q. Is ‘windfall’ housing enough to cover the numbers needed for Claygate?

A. All Claygate housing is ‘windfall’. The only larger site which may come up is the Telephone Exchange. We need to estimate correctly the amount of housing or there infrastructure will not be adequate.

The Chairman thanked the speaker again for the information provided which will help us decide whether to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan.

### ***Item 5. Presentation of the Brian Rhodes Community Cup***

The Chairman announced the nominees this year were:-

Robin Wilkinson  
Steve Wells  
Jehan Master & Rukshana Master  
Richard Waller  
John Cole

She then gave the reasons for the nomination of the recipient of this year's award:-

Over the years he has worked so hard for the community of Claygate as an individual outside the capacity of a councillor.

Though he is not a trader or shopkeeper in Claygate, he has been the driving force in galvanising the traders to keep the heart of Claygate vibrant so the community can benefit from using the shops. This has kept the heart of Claygate alive.

He was also the prime motivator in the Parking campaign to keep paid parking out of Claygate successfully. A difficult task that transcended party politics.

He has also tirelessly worked to bring to fruition the new Community Club House which will serve the present and future community well.

He has regularly opened his garden for the Claygate Gardens Trail raising funds for local charities.

A most deserving candidate for the Community Cup.

As well as being an EBC Councillor, his leadership of the Parking Campaign, organisation of the Celebratory party, helping and guiding the shops through these hard times to try and improve the business level in Claygate and involvement with the CRGT and the Cricket pavilion have all been well beyond the call of duty and in my view put him head and shoulders above any other likely contenders.

For working with the CRGT and also the leading light in the Claygate Cricket world towards securing the new Pavilion/Club House. Also for leading the campaign trying to stop the closure of Barclays Bank, the campaign to stop parking meters coming to Claygate and the campaign to keep Claygate shops viable through better usage. Also for lots of other Community work and being an Elmbridge Councillor.

This is a description of the winner of the cup for 2012, Steve Wells.

The Chairman presented the cup and Steve gave a short speech of acceptance.

#### **Item 6. Open Forum**

The Chairman announced that general questions would be taken.

Q: Can the trees in Rythe Road be pruned, and what has happened about ownership of the Rythe? At the moment each householder is responsible for that part of the Rythe passing through their property.

A: Cllr Bennison reported that SCC has a new contractor for all the trees in Surrey who gets paid by Weight cut. They are tending to chop off the top of trees and leave stumps. Cllr Bennison is trying to get the stumps removed. Cllr Bennison will see what he can do about the pruning. Cllr Sheppard will investigate the ownership of the Rythe.

Q: Tree roots are causing a problem with drains in Dalmore Avenue.

A: Cllr Bennison will take details and look into the problem.

Q: Cllr Coomes informed the meeting that he had received a letter from a person who wants to purchase the pharmacy Risdon. It is not generally known that the shop is up for sale. It transpires that Boots, who own both Wakefield's and Risdon, want to sell Risdon. Wakefield's deals with 5,000 prescriptions per week and Risdon deals with 2,500. A study has shown that 7,500 prescriptions would be too many for one shop, so Claygate needs 2 chemists.

Boots also own both pharmacy licences, but do not want to transfer the licences associated with Risdon. One theory for this is that they may want to use the license to open a pharmacy at the Surgery. If Boots keep both license this will stifle competition. Cllr Coomes has tried to speak to someone from Boots but has had no response. All three Borough councillors are united over this matter and Cllr Coomes has started a petition. He will find out if personal objections can be made about this matter.

It was noted that neither of the village pharmacies has wheelchair access and this should be addressed.

It was noted that Alan Rogers may be able to help; Cllr Coomes will be given contact details.

Q: Why is there only an answerphone at the end of the SCC pothole line?

A: There are many operators during office hours. Cllr Bennison will take details of any potholes at the meeting.

Q: The road surface at the bottom end of Foley Road is very poor, especially considering that this is a school road and children do cycle to school.

A: It was agreed that the surface is patchy, but none of the potholes are very deep. Cllr Bension confirmed that he is aware of this problem and had taken David McNulty of SCC on a site visit just recently. Cllr Bension is the Chairman of the Local Community and he has come up with a new concept on how funding is allocated. He now has money to do things which residents want doing, and not just what the Officers want doing.

Q: The planting of the verge trees in Dalmore Avenue has made a huge difference- thanks to the Parish Council. Parking, however, remains a huge problem. Parking on both sides of the road has resulted in the refuse collectors being unable to access the road, so the bins were not emptied, emergency vehicles not being able to gain access to the road and driveways being blocked. The residents have been in consultation with the CRGT and the sports clubs. The residents have also put out A boards informing people about parking. There has been little change since the Pavilion was completed. The problem is that the road is used by parents dropping off children, commuters and users of the Recreation Ground. Construction vehicles doing work in the road also adds to the problem.

A: Cllr Bension is in contact with the resident and has put forward various solutions such as making Dalmore Avenue a private road. The problem with many of the solutions is that they would be worse than the present situation. Many residents did not want yellow lines, but are now coming round to the idea that this may be the best solution. Nick Hayes, one of the Parish Councillors, lives in Dalmore Avenue and is in contact with other residents. The CRGT is trying to increase the numbers of access points into the Ground; rather than trying to keep people out, they are trying to encourage them to access at other entry points. The sports clubs are no longer giving Dalmore Avenue postcode but are telling visiting clubs to park in the Hare Lane car park. The CRGT has funded new A boards to inform ground users about parking.

Q: Can there be any improvement to the parking problems in Church Road?

A: CPC requested and got double yellow lines opposite The Causeway, in order to assist the K3 turning into Church Road. The only solution would be long stretches of yellow lines, which are not popular. Cllr Bension advised people to call the 'parking' telephone number at SCC.

Q: Can we have information about the elections on the website?

A: Yes.

Q: Are the Parish Council involved in the Jubilee picnic??

A: The CVA are organising the event and CPC has given a grant toward it. There will be no public marquees.

It was noted that the official opening of the new Pavilion is at 10.30 on 25 May 2012 and all are welcome.

All the Councillors were thanked for their work and told they all deserve a community cup!

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and raising issues. She also thanked her fellow councillors and the Clerk. She hoped everyone had a safe journey home.

.....Chairman

..... Date