

**DRAFT**  
**Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Claygate Village Meeting**  
**7.30pm, on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 at Claygate Village Hall**

**Present:**

Parish Councillors: Gil Bray (Chair), Mark Sugden, Brian Rawson, Jo Collon, Janet Swift, Sue Grose, Anthony Marques, Xingang Wang, Geoff Herbert.

Co-opted Members: John Bamford, Michael Collon

Parish Clerk & RFO: Sally Harman

Surrey County Councillor: Mark Sugden

Elmbridge County Councillor: Mike Rollings

Speakers: Anne Bott (CEO of Surrey Association of Local Councils) and Alan Brown (Chair Claygate Recreation Ground Trust (CRGT))

Members of the Public: 23

Apologies: Michelle Woodward, Mark Tymieniecki

**Item 1 Minutes of the last Meeting**

Copies of the draft minutes of the last Annual Village Meeting held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022 had been distributed to attendees prior to the meeting starting and had been on the Parish Council website for the last 12 months. It was agreed that the Chair could sign the minutes, witnessed by the Clerk, as a correct record of the meeting.

**Item 2. Welcome from the Chair and update from Claygate Parish Council (CPC)**

The Chair welcomed attendees to the Village meeting. He detailed the important role of the Clerk in implementing the Councils decisions, managing the accounts and organising meetings of the Council. He gave an update on the financial situation of the Council noting that the General Reserves were at a level considered appropriate in terms of good governance. The Council had encountered very high inflation and had been implementing cost savings successfully where it could. He detailed the grants which had been awarded in the year to date namely £14.5k to Holy Trinity Church's Youth Facility on Elm Road, £4.7k to the Playground Refurbishment, £1k to Claygate Youth and Community Hub and £500 to Claygate Village Association towards the Christmas lights.

The Chair noted the main areas that the Parish Council Committees had been focusing on. The Planning Committee had been concentrating on responding to the EBC Draft Local Plan and the Royal Borough of Kingston's Local Plan consultations as well as trying to influence the siting of 5G Masts in the village. The Committee was keeping a close eye on the protection of the Green belt around Rythe Road, the Torrington Lodge Car park proposed development and more recently the future of the Claygate Community Centre. The Highways, Transportation and Environment Committee had seen budgetary constraints which meant CPC was now only focusing on 6 core Highway Garden sites. It had also supported the refurbishment of the Playground and responded to TfL's ULEZ consultation.

The Chair detailed CPC modes of communication. The Courier had improved with Peter Whitehead now running the newsletter for the Council. The Clerk was working to raise the profile of the Council on Facebook and follower numbers continued to improve. The Website and Noticeboards were the other modes of communication of the Council. The Chair then noted the Events the CPC participated in, namely that it had taken part in the Claygate Community Day and Claygate Flower Show. It organises both Claygate Clean Up Day and Claygate Remembrance Day as well as holding over 25 meetings a year. He noted the Clerk's leading role in all these events.

Finally, and on the subject of governance, the CPC had set up a Staffing Committee and had signed up to the Civility and Respect pledge - a national initiative.

**Item 3. Speakers**

**Anne Bott CEO Surrey Association of Local Councils (SALC)**

Anne spoke on her role at SALC, the role of the Parish Council and the role of a Parish Councillor. She noted that it is a statutory requirement for the Parish Council to hold a Village meeting between March and June each year. She noted her

role in the SALC as a County Officer and that her prime function is to provide support for Parish Councils. In Surrey, Parish Councils are part of 3 tier government:-. County, Borough and Town/Parish Councils. Surrey County is only one third parished. Parish Councils have the same obligations and duties as a principal authority but usually have only one member of staff, who is required to carry out the same obligations and duties. The Clerk's role is often misunderstood. They have a high level of responsibility under statute and it is very hard to find people for the role. Anne noted that Parish Councils can raise Precept which is separate to County and Borough taxation channels. This Precept allows the Parish Council to make grants to local community organisations. It allows residents to influence where the funds go.

Anne detailed how once a Cllr signs a Declaration of Office when elected to the Council, their duty is to serve the community. Parish Councils should not be political and it can become very divisive if politics get in the way. The majority always prevails on a Council. Once a Cllr steps outside of the Council then the he/she stands on their own. They cannot commit to delivering something to a resident outside a meeting. A Cllr should go into meetings with an open mind. Everyone should have a fair hearing.

Finally, Anne finished by saying that Claygate is your community. Only residents can look after it and make things happen. If a resident chooses not to become a Cllr, then you have left the role to others and that you should respect their decisions as a Council. She noted that more responsibility is expected to be handed down to community level, so Parish Councils will become more important with time. It is essential to have a good Parish Council structure in place and good decision making.

#### **Alan Brown - Chair of Claygate Recreation Ground Trust (CRGT)**

Alan thanked Helen Maguire, his predecessor, for her considerable contribution to the Recreation Ground Trust and the new Pavilion. He noted that Claygate Recreation Ground was unique in Elmbridge as being the only one leased from the Borough Council. CRGT received a grant from EBC for FY 22/23 of £33k p.a. a sum which had not increased since 2004. The new pavilion helps bring funds into the CRGT to help fund the operation of the Recreation Ground. The CRGT's role is to ensure groups that want to use the recreation ground, can. The 2 main users are Claygate Royals Football Club and Claygate Cricket Club.

Alan went on to update the audience on the CRGT's plans for the Kings Coronation on the afternoon of the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023. The focus was to be for a traditional children-centric fete with activities by the football and cricket clubs, ponies, face painting, a bouncing castle, live music, BBQ, and a gin and fizz tent, amongst other things. He asked for help from residents to help run the event.

Alan then went on to request £2k from CPC to support the event. The Chair of CPC noted that there are rules which govern CPC's ability to make grants and which need to be adhere to. However, the CPC would review as to whether it can discuss the request at the next CPC meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and would revert back. Anne Bott noted that a Council can't spend money unless it has a power to. Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows an amount of money to be used for discretionary expenditure but any expenditure must meet audit requirements.

#### **Item 4. Open Forum- Residents of Claygate can express their views and concerns about any aspect of life in Claygate.**

Residents asked the following questions: -

- *Does CPC know what is going to be built on Torrington Lodge Car Park?* Chair responded noting that CPC didn't have the full details at present from Elmbridge Borough Council. When the application comes to the CPC Planning Committee it is a public meeting so residents can attend to raise their views to Cllrs.
- *As CPC should not be political, can CPC stipulate that party political logos are not included on nomination paperwork?* The Chair noted that the CPC has a Remit document which clearly states that its affairs should be conducted without political party involvement. Anne Bott responded noting that we are unable to stop people putting political logos on their paperwork.
- *The Courier was vastly improved but can it revert to a 3 issues per annum circulation?* The Chair noted the Council would discuss.
- *Claygate Pedestrian Railway Bridge rusted and not in good condition?* The Chair noted the Council would discuss.

- *The Parade gets congested but the sign into the station car park notes 7 day a week charging. However a further sign correctly states free at weekends? Can CPC request first sign be removed.* Chair noted the Council would discuss.
- *Can extended double yellow lines be put on the righthand side corner of Albany Crescent and Foley Road corner to help sightline?* Chair noted the Council would discuss.
- *Can hedge on right hand side of Cornwall Avenue/Causeway be cut back to aid sightline?* Chair noted the Council would discuss.
- *Could a forum suggested in an old CPC leaflet be created?* The Chair noted that all meetings of the Parish council are public meetings and residents should use them as the forum to come and have their say. Any further forum creation request would need to go to the new Council when formed in May.
- *The Elderly community are struggling and they need someone to advocate on their behalf. It also sounded like Claygate Daycare centre was closing?* The Chair noted the daycentre was on the agenda for the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023 full council meeting to discuss and it was a public meeting and residents could attend and have their say. John Bamford spoke. He noted he had received an email from Ray Lee at Elmbridge Borough Council who had confirmed that no decision of future use of Daycare center had been made. EBC would seek the views of the community before any future decisions are made.
- *Is there an update on the Hook development proposal?* Cllr Sugden spoke. He noted that the RBK's Draft Local Plan had not allocated the Hook site for housing or Green belt release. At this stage RBK had confirmed that it can hit its housing figures without having to release any Green Belt land.

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked those residents who had attended.

The meeting closed at 20h40

Signed:

Dated: