

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

held on Wednesday 8th May 2024 at the Silsoe village hall.

Present:

Cllr Kelly, Cllr Offer, Cllr Mann, Cllr Appleman, Cllr Willard, Cllr Gearey. Central Bedfordshire Councillor Liz Childs, Central Bedfordshire Councillor Anna French.

166/24 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF THE PARISH COUNCIL:

Cllr Gearey Proposed Cllr Offer as Chair, seconded by Cllr Appleman, all Cllrs agreed.

Cllr Offer Proposed Cllr Kelly as Vice-Chair, seconded by Cllr Mann, all Cllr agreed.

167/24 Acceptance of Office:

All Cllrs completed and acceptance of Office and confirmed that they had attended or watched the recording for Code of Conduct training.

168/24 Apologies and Declaration of interest/ Request for dispensation

Cllr Kevan

169/24 Confirm the Minutes/ Matter Arising:

The Minutes of the meetings held on 27th March 2024 and the Annual Parish meeting on 10th April 2024 were agreed.

170/24 Co-option of a new Councillor:

A resident, Malcolm Royer has been attending meetings and expressed an interest in joining the Parish Council. Proposed by Cllr Kelly, seconded by Cllr Offer, all Cllrs agreed. Cllr Offer welcomed him to the team. He completed an Acceptance of office and Clerk has provided the link for Declaration of interests.

171/24 Public participation:

A resident from the Allotments group attended to provide an update. There are currently 88 plots, with 81 tenants and no empty plots. £700 has been credited to the PC account to hold for deposits and the Gardening club have received payment for membership from the PC. Cllr Kelly is looking at the dimensions for a possible gate. The weather has caused some damage to the surface level in the allotment and 20 tonnes of hardcore has been delivered, volunteers relaying the hardcore in the poor areas to improve matters. Additional rat bait

has been purchased at a cost of £49 as the allotments currently have an increase in rats, the PC agreed to pay the cost of the rat bait. There will be notices where the bait has been laid.

172/24 Report by Ward Councillors:

Ward Cllrs are still looking at Traffic management options for the village, both Ward Cllrs have met with the Strategic Highways Team. They will team up with and work alongside Cllr Willard and the residents. As well as traffic management they have also been looking at the possibility of relocating the bus stop. The markings on the Clophill roundabout also need to be looked at.

Ward Cllr leaflets have been delivered to residents; they include an article on crime.

Two pupils have been carrying out a school project looking into the safety aspect of traffic through the village.

173/24 Finances:

This is the first report for the financial year 2024/25. It has been updated to show the final accounts for 2023/24, with budgets rolled over as confirmed in the final March meeting and with committed expenditure / related budgets also now rolled over. The total expenditure last year was £106,149, total income was £86,893 and therefore net deduction from reserves in the year £19,256.

Approved payments and invoices due for payment in the current year so far total £11,062. This does include the annual energy cost for the street lighting (£3,466) and grass cutting costs (£6,217 excluding VAT).

We have received the first precept instalment of £38,545.50 (this is 50% of the full year precept with the second 50% due to paid to us in October). We have also received payments from the allotments via Peter of £700 – I believe some of this was the balance of rents paid in cash, with the rest deposits paid by new tenants.

The bank account balances as of May 7th are:

Current a/c	£62,699.60	was £25,730.18 on Mar 31
Deposit a/c	£203,824.15	was £203,824.15 on Mar 31
Nationwide	£85,965.94	was £85,965.94 on Mar 31 – we received £2,914 of interest on Mar 31

Adjusting for the value of unapproved invoices included and expected to be paid, this leaves a total current PC cash balance of £344,652.45 (balance Mar 31st was £317,878.18). There are no un-cleared payments.

There are currently reserved balances of:

£25,000	General reserve	was £25,000
£1,772	Allotment deposits	was £1,234

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£85,279	Sports Centre	was £85,279
£88,303	Miller Homes Play Areas	was £89,080
£187	Village Hall	was £187

Based on our budget for 2024/25, this means there is £53,960 (balance last month was £53,960) currently available for new projects between now and March 2025.

Payments for May 2024:

Website and Domain £162.00
D Granger £8,097.60
Silsoe village hall, hall hire £80
N Power £3,465.69 & £67.64
PD & Co £38.88
Clerk expenses £95.96
CPRE membership £36

Payments proposed by Cllr Kelly, seconded by Cllr Offer, all agreed.

The Fixed assets have been reviewed by Clerk and adjustments made bringing the total fixed assets value to £2,361,193.00. Items added:

Defibrillator £1080.00

Camera/speakers £250.00

Solar panels £18,285.00

Travelo speed signs £7901.00

Cricket side screen £1000.

Changes proposed by Cllr Offer, seconded by Cllr Gearey.

Cllr Kelly commented that CBC have still not provided a warranty or documents for the Travelo speed signs.

The Risk assessment has been reviewed by Clerk and updated to include the recent tender for grass cutting.

Clerk proposed the Exercise of Public rights dates to run from 17th June until 25th July.

S101 Local Government Act 1972 permits Councillors to delegate the power of decision making to two members of the council, usually Clerk/RFO and one other. Cllr Appleman proposed Clerk and Cllr Kevan be nominated, seconded by Cllr Offer, all agreed.

174/24 Review of Policies:

The Policies below have been emailed to all Cllrs prior to the meeting and any changes highlighted:

- Councillor co-option
- Standing orders
- Complaints procedure
- Equality and diversity
- Financial regulations
- Death of a National figure
- Privacy notice
- Habitual/vexatious complaint
- Social media
- Freedom of information
- Emergency plan
- Code of conduct training.

Cllr Willard proposed the agreement of the policies, seconded by Cllr Offer, all agreed.

175/24 Planning:

- TCA/24/00174 20A High St, works to trees within a Conservation area. T1 Sycamore-Crown Reduction. No objection,
- CB/TCA/24/00159 2 High St, works to trees within a Conservation area. Canopy cleanse of dead. Diseased and dying limbs to Prunus T1 to T4. No objection.
- CB/24/00766/FULL 1 Vicarage Rd. Demolition of garage and conservatory, erection of 2 storey side extension, single storey rear extension and detached garage. Not a substantial difference to the property, no objection.
- CB/24/01023/FULL Fielden House, Gravenhurst Rd, Silsoe. Conversion of stables into 4 dwellings. No objection.
- CB/24/00947/DOC 24 High St. Discharge of condition 2, 4 and 5 against Planning permission CB/24/00135/FULL, Conversion of retail premises into Residential. This has now been granted.

176/24 Projects:

1. TRAFFIC IN THE VILLAGE:

Cllr Willard has had an open meeting with residents to discuss the traffic issues within the village. One resident has been looking at traffic management options and will provide a presentation at the next meeting, another has been looking at the data analysis of traffic. CBC will be carrying out traffic monitoring in September 2024, but the group need some reliable data to analysis it against, previous traffic surveys were carried out in December 2021, during Covid and in 2023 during the Clophill roundabout works. This will be discussed at the next meeting. The PC also need to

consider whether this is where the residents would like the PC time and money to be focused on, is this is the village priority? The PC will look to consult with residents.

2. ACCESSIBLE PLAY EQUIPMENT:

Cllr Mann would like the PC to consider some more accessible play equipment when replacing equipment at the High St North play area. Cllr Kelly went out to tender to 6 companies and is currently discussing equipment with two of them. Cllr Appleman mentioned a play equipment company based in Wrest Park that may be able to assist?

3. D DAY:

Cllr Kelly has prepared posters advertising the event. The Lord Lieutenant's Deputy will read the tribute, the Vicar will carryout a blessing, the fish and chip van and Millenium Green group will provide refreshments and food. The beacon has now been made and is ready to be fitted, Cllr Kelly will make arrangements for the fitting. The JCB may cause some damage to the grass, but the PC will make good. Stakes and tape will be provided by Wrest Park. The trees will be lit up by battery lights and Cllr Royer will arrange for a War jeep to be on display.

4. ORCHARD:

Cllr Gearey, Cllr Mann and Clerk met with Edible High Town Orchard and Bedfordshire Orchards to discuss the Orchard behind the Co-op, which the PC will be taking responsibility for. The groups will assist the PC in creating a management plan. The Orchard trees have TPOs fitted, dated 2017, Cllr Kelly will order new signs. The variety of apple is Crispin which originated from Japan in the 1930s.

5. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR:

Cllr Gearey, Ward Cllr Childs and Clerk met with Gary Newitt at CBC to discuss Anti-social behaviour in the village, it was a very productive meeting. A meeting will now be arranged with all parties but will include the PCSOs and Paradigm housing. Gray has written to residents in the village to seek information on ASB and the PC will seek information via FB and the Silsoe news. Cllr Childs is chasing up the Drone incident.

6. THE CAGE:

Cllr Offer is discussing repairs to The Cage with the contractor.

177/24 Consultations and correspondence:

The following correspondence was received:

- CPRE Membership renewal £36.00
- Hospital charity Barn dance invitation for 11/5/24
- CBC Topic session, Tree planting 8/5/24
- CBC Topic session, Library services 13/5/24
- CBC Topic session Trees planting, and improvements 8th May 24
- CBC Topic session Library services 13th May 24
- Topic session follow up Local Transport plan.
- Topic session follow up Local Nature recovery strategy.
 - Topic session follow up Traffic plan.
 - Topic session follow up Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
 - Photo of His Majesty, The King, to be placed in the Community sports centre.

178/24 AOB:

- The tree in the Churchyard is covered in Ivy and parts of it look to have died at the bottom, Cllr Offer will notify the Church warden.
- A request has been made for additional tables in the café at the Community sports centre, it is very busy during peak times and additional seating is required. Cllr Kelly will look into this. The Muga also needs some work carried out.
- Busy Tots have placed some old toys by the bin at the Village Hall which needs removing. Clerk will contact the hall.
- TPO labels have now all been fitted.
- Some of the potholes on the High St have been repaired.
- Cllr Gearey is working with First port to have the outstanding work completed.
- A meeting with the Cricket club will be arranged for next week.
- Clerk asked Wrest Park to look at CCTV footage for cars racing on the premises, none have been seen.
- West Park is aiming to improve engagement with the Community and improve access to the park, if anyone has any ideas how to achieve this, please notify them.
- A resident has raised concern over the parking is disabled bays at the Co-op, Cllr French will discuss the additional parking being used for shoppers?

179/24 Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 12th June 2024

Signed

Date