

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

held on 10th September 2021 via Zoom.

Present:

CLlr Kelly in the Chair

CLlr. L Mann, CLlr McGrory, CLlr Tierney, CLlr Willard, CLlr Willard Central Bedfordshire Councillor Alison Graham.

Apologies CLlr Offer, CLlr Kevan and CLlr Gearey

Due to illness the meeting was cancelled the previous evening and rearranged for this evening; no residents wished to attend so the meeting was held via Zoom.

74/21 Public participation:

- A Resident attended to discuss the hedges around the village that require cutting back and the poor state of repair of the garages in Holly walk, another resident is known to have lost a sale due to the look of them. Clerk will chase the garage owners once again and will write to some of the residents who need to cut back their hedges, if not the clerk will contact CBC. Some of the hedges are on land owned by Cranfield estates, CLlr Kelly will report this.
- The resident also commented on how poor the tree signs were in Wrest Park, they are too small and too dark, drivers are ignoring them and there is no one to police them.

75/21 Confirm the Minutes/ Matter Arising:

- The Minutes of the meetings held on 15th July 2021 were agreed.

76/21 Declaration of interest/ Request for dispensation:

None

77/21 Report by Central Bedfordshire Councillor:

There have been requests to have the proposed double yellow lines on Park Ave extended, there is due to be a site visit next week to assess. Highways will also look at the junction of Newbury Lane with the High Street for possible yellow lines, vehicles are currently parking on the junction blocking visibility. Some residents are in favour of the lines some against. Clerk raised concerns raised by 1 resident.

The Garden waste scheme is still on hold whilst new drivers are recruited, it is hoped the service will be functioning by end of September 2021. Drivers are currently focusing on food and clinical waste.

There has been no further update regarding the proposed Greenwood development, the retirement village developer is currently looking at access, Cllr Graham will happily support both going to the DMC if necessary.

Sustainable Communities have carried out an extensive piece of work into village halls and community buildings, CBC will in future consider these buildings when looking at the use of S106 money, where appropriate it will be used for repairs.

Central Government are insisting Local Plans incorporate areas for self-build plots, CBC are currently below the required number of plots. Councils should now hold a register of people wishing to build their own house. Cllr Graham will happily offer Cllr Offer further information.

Central Government requires Local Transport Authorities to publish their bus improvement plans by 30th October 2021 and to make an enhanced partnership by March 2022. They will be considering reduced fares for young people.

A resident has raised the idea of Wildflowers in the village, including the area by The Beeches and The Rowans, Clerk will include it on the next Agenda.

Clerk reported to Cllr Graham that despite being reported on several occasions the broken lid to the bottle bank at the sports centre has not been replaced, Cllr Graham will investigate this.

Cllr Gearey has reported the parking on Mander Farm Rd as being a cause for concerns, he is doubtful that an emergency vehicle would be able to gain access, he has reported it on Fix my Street, if there is no outcome Cllr Graham will investigate this.

78/21 Finances:

Cllr Kevan provided a Financial Report which included.

OUTING GOING PAYMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER:

David Granger, Ground's maintenance £4,412.87 and £378.14

Aurora, website, and social media £162 for August £174 September and £549 second instalment of website.

CPM Playgrounds £192 (£96 to be recovered from Bloor)

Play dale £126

Eon £48.53

Insurance £4,482.06

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Eon £97.51 (paid 15/8/21)

All payments agreed.

Approved payments and invoices due for payment in the current year so far, total £33,635 (balance last meeting was £28,742). This does include the latest Grangers invoices.

The bank account balances as of Sept 2nd are:

Current a/c £39,326.18 was £40,007.31

Deposit a/c £200,945.57 was £200,945.57

Nationwide £81,475.34 was £81,475.34

Adjusting for the value of unapproved Grangers invoices included and expected to be paid, this leaves a total current PC cash balance of £316,790.62 (balance last meeting was £317,932.49). There is still one old uncleared approved payment of £60 relating to BATPC course fees which Clerk is following up on. The small drop in the total cash balance is due to the receipt of £4,733.96 for a VAT reclaim submitted by Clerk after the last meeting.

There are two points to highlight with the accounts for the financial year:

The total cost of grass cutting excluding the MG is now £8,563, leaving £4,105 in the budget for the balance of the financial year. We are only 5 months into the financial year so whilst we hope the frequency of cuts will drop significantly soon as we enter Autumn, we will need to keep under review whether more budget needs to be allocated.

There are currently reserved balances of:

£15,000 General reserve

£520 Allotment deposits (I need to

close with Peter the reconciliation of this with the Allotments Club)

£108,759 Sports Centre

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£93,887	Miller Homes Play Areas
£187	Village Hall

This leaves available to the Parish Council funding of £33,445 (unchanged from last month) for future projects (e.g., Park Avenue footpath, Play Area improvements, traffic calming measures) to the end of the next financial year, and any additional budget allocation per my notes above. This does not include yet the contribution we are expecting from the Police towards the Summer Activities already paid for in full (but does include the contribution from Silsoe Recreational Trust of £1,500).

The audit has now been concluded and the statement of accounts has been published, Clerk will display notices.

79/21 Planning:

The PC considered the following applications:

- CB/21/03827/FULL 74 Newbury Lane, single storey rear extension. No objections.
- CB/21/03704/FULL 6 The Grove, single storey side and rear extension. No objections.
- CB/21/03719/FULL 57 High St, Double storey side extension, swimming pool and cover. Difficult to get a view of this as the property is gated, the planning officer would need to give consideration to the view from the property behind.
- CB/21/03518/FULL, 54 Newbury Lane, Front roof dormer extension and single storey replacement extension. No objection
- CB/21/03518/LDCP 6 Apple tree close, loft conversion. Already granted
- CB/21/03742/LDCP 3 Spruce Edge, Garage office conversion and dog grooming parlour. Parking and noise were raised but no objections.

Bloor Homes

Negotiations with CBC have been concluded. The Principal Planning officer has of the view that Bloor have not completed the development in accordance with the S106 agreement and therefore will discuss this further with Bloor.

80/21 Projects:

Bottle banks:

Clerk notified CBC that we would like to start the process of removing the bottle banks, CBC require evidence from the resident who is reporting the disturbance. Once this stage is completed the PC can move to the next step.

Roadworks:

The on-going roadworks have meant a delay to the PC having the traffic survey carried out, it has been put on hold until all roadworks are completed. The PC were not informed of all the current works, and they were not included on the itinerary of works for August, Clerk has contacted CBC for indication as to when works will be completed and she has a link for further information.

Footpath - Newbury Lane to A6

- Cllr Kelly declined the meeting as neither the landowner nor CBC are willing to commit funds. The Rights of way officer is now looking at a temporary path, Cllrs not in favour of this going through a field.

Park Avenue Footpath:

- Clerk contacted the Rights of way officer who has requested a telephone call from the Chairman, Cllr Kelly has also written to David Taylor at WPE.

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations:

- The PC discussed the lighting of the Beacon as part of the celebrations and whether it would need to be inspected for safety first? Cllr McGrory will speak to Phil Hammond regarding any events they may be organising.

Remembrance Day:

- The PCC will be discussing this at their next meeting so that it can then be coordinated with the PC. Cllr Kelly will organise a Wreath, scouts have arranged their own. Clerk will approach CBC for a road closure and make the relevant arrangements.

Summer activities 2021:

- Clerk and Jo Kevan visited the Play scheme on two occasions over the summer, one visit to each age group. The lead instructor has been at the site and coordinating all the sessions for the summer. The activities were well planned, and all set up in advance, there was a contingency plan in place should the weather restrict the activities and an activity not go as well as planned, additional resources were in a van on site at all times. All children were engaged in the activities set, the instructor was available to offer help and instruction if and when required. The company are now in the process of gaining feedback from parents in order to evaluate the scheme.
- Clerk will complete the claim forms and evaluate the scheme, this will then be submitted to the Police for release of the funding.
- Cllrs wondered if it had been a success and something to consider for the future? Cllr McGrory and Clerk will look to set up a FB poll for feedback from parents and to find out if parents would be interested in the same activities next year but at a cost? The Pc would need to decide whether they could contribute to costs or whether some free places could be offered if needed?

Website:

- A meeting has been arranged with Aurora for next week to discuss the feedback from Cllrs over the new website and to finalise the logo.

Vandalism:

The vandalism within the village continues and the PC have been urging residents to report incidents so that further evidence can be gained. Wrest Park have also had damage to property and racist graffiti on signs, young people are also being very confrontational with security staff. Cllr Kelly and Clerk met with 2 PCSO's this week to discuss how we resolve this situation? There are two groups of young people, we do not need seem to have names for the older group or know if they live in the village? Until we have further information, or the Police see them it will be difficult to find a solution. We have names for the younger group, the Police have visited and spoken to both the children and parents, and it has not had any effect. The Police will visit them once again and will also look to see if the parents are in breach of any tenancy agreements? The Sports centre along with vandalism is also experiencing a lot of drugs equipment being left. A follow up meeting is planned for 11th October 2021, Cllr McGrory and Cllr Gearey will take a lead on this.

Village sign:

The Village sign needs removing, Cllr McGrory will arrange this.

81/21 Consultations and correspondence:

- Festival for Older people
- Eon, changes to energy prices
- Elan city flyer
- CPRE magazine
- CBC emailed a request for Councils to become involved in a project by the Community Emergency Response Team, Clerk will include it as an Agenda item for next meeting.

82/21 AOB:

- The Councillors have agreed to cover the cost of the grass cutting at the village hall on behalf of the scouts.
- Clerk will check with Cllr Offer if the Defibrillators are all in order.
- A resident has asked if the PC would consider the speed 'lollipops' for the village? Once the PC has the traffic data, options can be discussed.
- Cllr Kelly suggested advertising the café at the sports centre, he will forward details to Cllr Mann for the newsletter and Clerk for FB.
- There have been no further complaints of dog fouling at the Millennium Green, there have been new signs. There have been two complaints from residents regarding the long grass on the community woodland and how difficult it is to pick up after your dog in this area.
- The Witches hat on the High Street North play area is fixed, the roundabout and the other Witches hat is scheduled for repair in October 2021.
- Cllr McGrory and Cllr Gearey will be setting up a FB page for Miller residents.
- Cllr Gearey has set up a Watts app group and a first meeting with The Gateway traders. He has also set up a meeting with Peter Moore, regional manager for First port in early October.
- First point has declined responsibility for clearing the storage area at The Conifers so Cllr Gearey is communicating with Paradigm housing.

83/21 Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 13th October 2021 in the Village Hall, the meeting will be face-to-face, but residents and Cllrs can attend via Zoom if necessary.