

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

held on 8th December 2021 in the village hall and via Zoom.

Present:

Cllr Kelly in the Chair

Cllr Kevan, Cllr Mann, Cllr Offer, Cllr Willard and Cllr Gearey Central Bedfordshire Councillor Alison Graham.

Apologies Cllr McGrory, Central Bedfordshire Councillor Alison Graham.

104/21 Public participation:

- Two residents attended to discuss the issues with parked cars in Newbury Lane, at the High St end. The PC stated that they met with the Highways custodian to discuss a number of parking problem areas within the Village. She has made recommendations for Park Ave, Church Rd, Newbury Lane and Mander Farm Rd and will be going out to consultation with residents in January 2022. The PC had planned to hold a public meeting to gain feedback from residents, but this feedback will be gained directly from CBC via the consultation. Once the feedback has been gathered, the PC will discuss the options with CBC. Residents on Newbury Lane felt that both staff and visitors to the care home were escalating the situation parking by parking on the street rather than using their car park.
- The residents requested an update on the bottle bank, Clerk confirmed that CBC was gathering evidence, she will contact them for an update. A resident stated that she had already completed an evidence gathering exercise and submitted it to CBC in 2015.

105/21 Apologies and Declaration of interest/ Request for dispensation:

Apologies Cllr McGrory, Central Bedfordshire Councillor Alison Graham.

106/21 Confirm the Minutes/ Matter Arising:

The Minutes of the meetings held on 10th November 2021 were agreed.

107/21 Report by Central Bedfordshire Councillor:

Cllr Graham sent her apologies.

108/21 Finances:

Cllr Kevan provided a Financial Report which included.

OUTING GOING PAYMENTS FOR OCTOBER:

David Granger £240
Aurora, website, and social media £162
Eon £67.03
Wave £91.26
Kompan £5,083.96
Community heartbeat £19.20
Village hall hire £223.75
All payments agreed.

Approved payments and invoices due for payment in the current year so far total £55,366 (balance last meeting was £48,684). This does include the latest invoices, the major invoice being from Kompan for the play area repairs agreed a few months ago.

The bank account balances as of Dec 7th are:

| | | |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Current a/c | £50,014.57 | was £61,615.98 |
| Deposit a/c | £200,955.59 | was £200,950.58 |
| Nationwide | £81,475.34 | was £81,475.34 |

Adjusting for the value of unapproved invoices included and expected to be paid, this leaves a total current PC cash balance of £330,952.26 (balance last meeting was £338,585.76).

The forecast costs for the balance of the current financial year have been revised per our meeting last week.

There are currently reserved balances of:

| | |
|----------|-------------------------|
| £15,000 | General reserve |
| £520 | Allotment deposits |
| £108,459 | Sports Centre |
| £93,650 | Miller Homes Play Areas |
| £187 | Village Hall |

Budget 2022/23

The Budget for 2022/23 was agreed and the precept for next year is based upon the Parish Tax Base increasing from 1,392 units to 1,403 – an increase of 0.8% - and an increase in the individual household cost of 4.0%. This makes the total proposed precept £73,433 against £70,059 for the current year – a total increase of £3,374 or 4.8%. All Cllrs agreed.

The budgeted expenditure is detailed in the report provided: in summary it is around £52,000 for regular items plus £68,000 for identified projects (some of this is already committed, but we have not been billed yet). This leaves £20,593 in reserve for any new projects – this has dropped by £22,000 from the beginning of this financial year. If everything is spent except this reserve, then we will see a net reduction of £45,000 in the funds held by the PC. This is in addition to the £31,000 reduction forecast for this year.

Funding Application Clerk applied for Ward Councillor funding towards the cost of a new noticeboard, the total cost of the noticeboard is £1,906.91+ vat. A grant of £800 has been granted, thank you Cllr Graham.

The Councillors and Clerk all wore Christmas jumpers to the meeting in aid of Save the Children, a donation of £50 was agreed.

Grass Cutting Costs

It was agreed that the PC will look to go out to tender on grass cutting in September 2022.

Energy Costs

Clerk will contact Eon regarding increase in energy prices.

109/21 Planning:

The PC considered the following applications:

CB/21/04914/FULL Red House, 16 Amptill Rd, erection of a carport. The design seems in keeping with the house. No objections.

CB/21/05118/FULL and CB/21/05056/LB. Self-build garden shed, no objections.

Outstanding Applications : Cllr Offer contacted Planning at CBC for an update on Greenwood and Taymer applications, the Taymer plans are under review, no further information and there has been no further discussion regarding Greenwood.

Traffic Management : Beaumont Farm have lots of HGVs leaving the farm and a resident has questioned whether they require a licence to operate, Enforcement will investigate this, they do not require a licence to operate as a farm, but they will require one for subsequent businesses.

110/21 Projects:

Wildflowers:

This has been deferred to January 2022, the resident who has raised this will attend the meeting.

Summer Activities:

Clerk shared feedback from a survey aimed at parents prior to the meeting. Cllr Kelly and Clerk have also met with Gemma and Heather from Stevenage Leisure to discuss the possibility of running the scheme next summer? Rather than run the two age groups 5-12years and 12-16 years it was agreed the ages should be 5-8 years and 9-12/14 years. We are awaiting feedback from SSG regarding costs and number of sessions, but 64% of parents said they would be willing to pay £10-£15 per session. We would need to discuss whether to offer fully funded sessions to some children if required and whether to offer some full days? All Cllrs agreed to going ahead with the scheme next summer and Clerk will now book the company, further plans will be discussed in the new year.

Traffic survey:

The Traffic survey equipment has been installed and is currently gathering data.

Police/Vandalism:

A meeting took place between Cllrs and PC Mark Payne and PCSO Hannah Beddell on 25th November 2021. The Police discussed the increase in patrols that they have been carrying out and individuals they have stopped and spoken to. There does seem to have been an improvement in the village. Cllr Kelly had written a letter of complaint; he will follow this up and thank the force for their action on this matter.

Parking in the village and Mander Farm Road:

Discussed earlier in the meeting, under Public Participation.

111/21 Consultations and correspondence:

- Magpas email regarding Christmas jumper fundraiser.
- Bulletin war memorials
- CPRE magazine

112/21 AOB:

- Items for the newsletter/Website/FB. Highway's update, PCC update will next time be mentioned in the newsletter with a link to the full report on the website. An update will be provided regarding the works on the Miller area.
- Clerk had as requested investigated the Skate Park, key points to consider are:
 1. Parking will be needed as most skaters come from out of the area.
 2. Litter picking and safety checks will need to be carried out daily.
 3. CCTV should be considered.
 4. There will be graffiti, so a graffiti wall is recommended to earmark an acceptable area.
 5. Joints do fail and are expensive so reserves will need to be put aside.
 6. It's recommended to have the area fenced off as a demarcation of the area, although people to try to gain access from over the fence.
- PCC funding application deadline is 10/12/21, Clerk has prepared the application for new road signs, Cllr Kelly will agree it prior to clerk submitting it.
- A number of parcels have been reported missing or delivered to the wrong address on FB, CO-OP offer a delivery and collection service for DPD and Amazon parcels, clerk will put a post out, so residents are aware of this service.
- New signage for the sports centre was agreed.
- Allotments, 4/5 payments are still outstanding, residents have had 60 days' notice and under the agreement they can now be given their final 30 days' notice to pay. If they do not pay, their deposit can be used to cover the cost. Cllr had a discussion with the allotment committee and explained the outgoing costs that the PC cover for the allotments and they have agreed the £1 increase in costs. The Committee are looking at what work they can cover themselves and understand that any large projects will involve raising money. They mentioned the toilets again and they have been advised to look at what toilets are available on other allotments.

113/21 Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 12th January 2022 after the Government advice to work from home from next week, the meeting will be held via Zoom.