

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SILSOE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2016.

Present: Cllr. J M Jarrard – in the Chair.

Cllrs. Mrs H Flack, I J Kelly, L Mann, Mrs J McGrory, E Owen, R Vass and Mrs A Webb.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. J G Foolkes and P Kevan; and Central Bedfordshire Cllr. Ms. A Graham.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. S Hall of Amey (representing Central Bedfordshire Highways).

139/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Residents commented on the increased traffic in Park Avenue and expressed concerns about the parking, the lack of footpaths, and the upkeep of the verges.

The Chairman stated that, although the main carriageway was maintained by Central Bedfordshire Council (as the Highway Authority), Park Avenue and the verges were owned by Wrest Park Ltd. The Parish Council had made representations to Wrest Park Ltd., English Heritage and Central Bedfordshire Council about the whole of Park Avenue being adopted and maintained as public highway, but little progress had been made and, on occasions, it had been necessary for the Parish Council to undertake grass-cutting. It was also noted that English Heritage had failed to improve the footpath in Wrest Park and Central Bedfordshire Highways had been asked to restrict parking in Park Avenue; improve the Park Avenue/High Street junction; and, in the long term, provide a direct access from Trunk Road A6 to Wrest Park.

A resident reported that a street light, in front of The Beeches, was not working.

140/15 MINUTES

Further to Minute 125/15, the Council received the amended Minutes and confirmed them as a correct record of the meeting of the Council held on 16 December 2015. The Clerk also submitted the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20 January 2016 and, subject to consideration of any comments received from Members prior to the next meeting, the Council agreed that they be signed as a correct record.

141/15 CO-OPTION TO FILL VACANCIES

The Clerk confirmed that, following the last meeting, Mrs J McGrory and Mrs A Webb had completed Declarations of Acceptance of Office as Members of the Parish Council (pursuant to Minute 126/15).

The Chairman welcomed Cllrs. Mrs McGrory and Mrs A Webb and referred to the need to review appointments and the allocation of responsibilities at a future meeting.

142/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr. L Mann declared an interest in both applications for grant aid (Minute 149/15).

143/15 CONSULTATIONS ON TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Further to Minute 131/15, Mr S Hall submitted drawings of traffic management options for the High Street, prepared for the public consultation on Saturday 27 February. The Council considered the proposals; agreed that they should all be put forward to obtain

the views of residents; and finalised arrangements for the consultation. Although the availability of LTP Rural Match Funding for highway improvement schemes was noted, the Council took the view that it was unlikely to aid a High Street traffic management scheme.

144/15 HIGHWAYS

For the information of Members, the Clerk submitted copies of recent Customer Service and Roadworks Bulletins, together with a report from BATPC on the second stakeholder meeting in relation to the A1 (East of England) Strategic Road Study.

Further to Minute 131/15, Cllr. E Owen reported that an updated map of the village, showing 'approved' routes to the new Lower School, would be published in the Silsoe News. Whilst Members appreciated the opportunity for the Council to have an input into the School Travel Plan, there was disappointment that Central Bedfordshire Council policies limited the provision of on-site parking and appropriate drop-off facilities.

145/15 POLICE ISSUES

The Clerk drew attention to an email from Police Sergeant G Kidd which indicated that, due to financial restraints, Bedfordshire Police would no longer have resources available to provide monthly crime reports and attend Parish Council meetings. Crime figures could, however, be obtained from various websites; and new Community Engagement Teams would focus on problem solving within communities.

The Council expressed disappointment, and Members were concerned that the idea of recruiting 'local' Special Constables had not been progressed. Cllrs. Mrs J McGrory and R Vass were appointed to liaise with the Police, when necessary.

146/15 REPORT BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE CLLR. MS. A GRAHAM

In the absence of Cllr. Ms A Graham, the Clerk submitted a report which indicated that planning application CB/15/03172 (residential development at the rear of 16 – 36 Newbury Lane) was to be referred to Central Bedfordshire Council's Development Management Committee, on 2 March, with a recommendation of approval. In the circumstances, the Chairman was authorised to arrange for Mr R C Shrimplin to attend the meeting on behalf of the Parish Council and object to the grant of planning consent. The report also provided information about the new Local Plan, and indicated enforcement action being taken in respect of the George Hotel, the drainage problem in West End Road, and the mobile homes at the junction of the A6 with Gravenhurst Road.

147/15 PLANNING

The Clerk reported receipt of three recent planning applications, and they were passed to the Planning Sub-Group for comment

Further to Minute 113/15, the Clerk submitted notification from Central Bedfordshire Council that the new Local Plan had been launched on 15 February and would be followed by a 'Call for Sites' on 22 February.

The Council also noted that Central Bedfordshire Council had investigated work being carried at the George Hotel/Public House and had advised Cllr. Ms. A Graham that demolition of the existing rear extensions and erection of a new rear extension, was being undertaken in accordance with planning consent CB/15/00785. However, in her report, Cllr. Ms. Graham had expressed concern about further damage and failure to protect the fabric of the building, which was listed as an Asset of Community Value.

148/15 SILSOE COMMUNITY SPORTS CENTRE

Further to Minute 131/15, the Council noted that:

- The lease of the Community Sports Centre to Silsoe Community Recreational Trust was being progressed.
- The Trust was negotiating a contract with Stevenage Leisure for the management of the Centre.
- It was hoped to resolve the building defects and complete the fitting out by mid March, to enable the Centre to open Tuesday 29 March. Cllr. I Kelly and Mr J Robinson were liaising regarding the placing of orders by the Council/Trust.
- The design of the Café had been progressed, and the floodlighting of the MUGA was in hand.
- Further discussions were expected to take place with Bloor Homes and Central Bedfordshire Council about the layout and drainage of the football pitches; the future use / maintenance of the Community Woodland and other open spaces; and the planned commercial development.
- A payment of 8,096.40 pounds had been made to Powell Quality Flooring Ltd in respect of flooring in the Sports Hall, and the balance of the payments received from Bloor Homes had been made available to the Trust (with the agreement of Cllr. P Kevan).

149/15 FINANCE

Further to Minute 133/15, the Clerk drew attention to additional information from Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd about external audit arrangements which would take effect from 1 April 2017 (unless a Council decided to opt out of the SAAA scheme by 31 March 2016).

The Clerk indicated that there was a need to enter into further discussions with Bedford Borough Council about provision of a payroll service from 1 April 2016 and terms of employment (to include workplace pensions).

The Clerk reported payment of a deposit of 7781.58 pounds to Playdale Playgrounds Ltd in respect of replacement equipment at the play area near the allotments, details of Bank balances and invoices for payment, and submitted applications for grant aid from Silsoe Millennium Green Trust (as a contribution towards annual running costs) and Silsoe Village Hall Management Committee (towards the cost of improved lighting in the Main Hall and refurbishment of the Bar area for use as an Outreach Post Office).

Further to Minute 130/15, the Council noted that Silsoe Community Benefit Society (the 'Save the George' campaign) had incurred reduced costs of 550 pounds in registering as a Community Benefit Society and joining the Plunkett Foundation. It was agreed to reimburse the costs to Mr E Bakker. A Member reported that a survey of residents had indicated a high level of support for the campaign.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the following payments be approved:

Adept Paving & Building Services – repairs to bus shelter	85.00
Data & Mailing Solutions Ltd – website fees	48.00
Mrs T Medley – claim for attending meetings	352.22
Silsoe Village Hall – hall hire	83.00
Anglian Water – allotment water charges	13.62
Silsoe Millennium Green Trust – grant aid	1500.00

- (2) That, subject to confirmation of the available budget provision, a grant to Silsoe Village Hall Management Committee, for improvements to the Village Hall, be approved in principle.

150/15 CONSULTATIONS

The Clerk drew attention to information from Groundwork Luton & Bedfordshire about available funding for community green space projects, and Members suggested that the Community Woodland might be suitable.

The Council also noted a NALC Parliamentary briefing on the Housing and Planning Bill.

151/15 CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk submitted correspondence received since the last meeting, and drew attention a new BATPC Training Programme, a statement from Wicksteed Playgrounds about the use of Lead and Cadmium Paint, details of 'Pollution Watch' (an Anglian Water campaign), and further information about the Queen's 90th Birthday Celebrations.

In relation to the Queens birthday, the Chairman outlined proposals for a 'clean up', street parties and lighting the Beacon.

152/15 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Further to Minute 136/15, the Council agreed, in principle, to progress a Housing Needs Survey in April/May, in partnership with BRCC.

153/15 PLAY AREAS

Cllr. L Mann commented on the condition of the play areas, and the Clerk indicated that installation of the replacement equipment in the play area next to the allotments was due in the week commencing 21 March.

154/15 MAINTENANCE ISSUES

Cllr. L Mann reported that, after consulting the Chairman, he had arranged for Harrold Signs to renovate the 'Festival of Britain' sign at a cost of 355 pounds.

The Clerk reported that the fixing bolts holding the seat in Newbury Lane were in need of attention and he would contact Amey/Central Bedfordshire Highways.

155/15 ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Clerk confirmed that the Annual Parish Meeting would be held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 30 March at 7.30pm.

156/15 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS

The Council was pleased to note that the Pancake Race had been a success (raising 1400 pounds) and it was understood that Bloor Homes would be prepared to sponsor a similar event in 2017.

The Clerk confirmed that the next meeting of the Council would be held on Wednesday 16 March 2016.

Chairman.