

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

held on 13th January 2020 via Zoom.

Present:

Cllr Kelly in the Chair

Cllr McGrory, Cllr. L Mann, Cllr Kevan, Cllr Tierney, Cllr Willard, CBC Councillor Alison Graham.

Apologies: Cllr Offer

1/21 Public Participation:

Residents raised concerns over Wrest Park, two issues, firstly the fact that they still open and attracting visitors from outside the village at a time when the Government has imposed a Lockdown, secondly the condition of the grass, which has been churned up. The PC have met with English Heritage and were able to offer feedback:

The PC have been exchanging emails with English Heritage over the last few weeks. EH are monitoring visitors to the park through the visitor booking system and currently 92% are within the local 10-mile radius of the village. Staff on site are challenging those that are using the facility as a social meeting point and those travelling from out of the area, it is very much being advertised as an area for exercise. All unnecessary volunteers have been cancelled and those more vulnerable are being asked not to come in. There are rigorous COVID-19 measures in place and a thorough risk assessment has been carried out (I should receive a copy later today). The PC did ask EH if they would consider shutting the Park to visitors, EH stated this would not be an option, however if they felt that people were breaking the rules it would have to be considered. EH have reduced the capacity by a quarter rather than running at full capacity and have additional control measures in place. There is a staff presence on the site and teams outside are directing all vehicles to park on hard standing rather than use the grass, the park is only open at weekends so there should be sufficient parking available. They are looking at additional signage to stop people parking on the grass, this needs to be authorised by Historic England before they can be put in place. Since July 2020 when the bridge first started to be closed there has been a reduction in the number of cars gaining entry to do 'doughnuts' it appears that the current damage is due to visitors manoeuvring when they park.

One Resident was particularly upset with the lack of response to his emails from EH and WPE. It was felt by residents that permanent signs regarding the parking should be put up rather than temporary and that a method of preventing cars from being able to access the grass should be investigated. There are issues with Anti-social behaviour on the site and Cllr McGrory has been in discussions with the Community team from CBC.

EH will provide the PC with a copy of their risk- assessment and the PC will continue to monitor the situation. Any breaches of the Covid-19 guidelines can be reported on the Police website. If there are evidence of breaches Cllr Graham would be able to follow it up with CBC.

A resident has written to CBC regarding the poor condition of the path running from the Church into Wrest Park, this is something the PC have been investigating for some time. The matter has been referred to CBC Highways who will carry out a site inspection.

2/21 Confirm the Minutes/ Matter Arising:

- The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th November and 9th December 2020 were agreed.
- The deletion of the previous meeting recording was agreed.

3/21 Declaration of interest/ Request for dispensation:

- None.

4/21 Report by Central Bedfordshire Councillor:

- Following the Resident's complaint regarding the condition of the pathways in Park Ave, 2 members of Highways will be visiting the site to inspect, Cllr Graham has requested that they inform the PC of any decisions made, they did not seem to be aware of the back story, Clerk will follow this up. There is a question over ownership and the willingness of WPE to work with the SPC and CBC.
- Cllr Graham has also reported the request for double yellow lines opposite The Rowans.
- Cllr Graham has been in contact with Paul Salmon and Lisa Wright regarding speeding vehicles, and HGVs through the village. Paul Salmon confirmed on 14/9/20 that CBC were investigating a possible upgrade to the signage on the A507, and to see if an upgrade of the road markings should be considered at the Junction of Newbury Lane and Ampthill Rd These works would not take place until the next financial year.
- Majority of HGVs passing through the village have been confirmed as legitimate traffic.
- Cllr Kelly has produced an analysis of items raised by Mrs C Allen and cross referenced with the Minutes of her meeting with Cllr Dalgarno and Cllr A Graham plus other additional correspondence. The analysis indicated that apart from the A507 signage and Newbury Land junction there was a suggestion to provide more bollards in the High street.
- Cllr. Kelly proposed that the SPC consider remedial works that it could action :-
 - Service the two Radar speed signs,
 - Trim the overhanging trees.
 - Recondition the "All Routes A6" sign.
- Cllr Kelly confirmed that he is awaiting a quotation for the servicing of the speed signs, the tree work could be carried out at any time. The PC approved items 1 & 2 but deferred item 3) until a traffic survey had been completed.

Precept Approval

- CBC will be making a 1.95% increase to Council tax and has ring-fenced a further 3% for Adult Social Care.
- Bedfordshire Police Service increase will be the maximum as will the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

CBC Elections

- CBC elections are 2 years away, there is no plans to delay them currently.
- The Boundary Commission have agreed the final version of the Ward recommendations. Silsoe will be partnered with Barton-le-clay as a single Councillor Ward, while Shillington, Meppershall and Gravenhurst will form another single Councillor Ward.

5/21Finances:

Following a budget meeting on 14th December 2020, Cllr Kevan emailed around a proposed budget for the following financial year. It was proposed at the meeting that the precept be raised by 2.5%, the precept collected would be increased from £65,794.00 to £70,059.00, taking the Band D property increase to £50.33 from £49.10. The anticipated expenditure exceeds the budgeted income by approximately £1500.00. All Cllrs agreed the budget and the precept increase. Clerk will submit the precept to CBC.

Cllr Kevan emailed his latest Financial Report which included.

- Current Account = £35,429.67
- Deposit Account = £200,935.55
- National wide = 81,257.39

Outgoing payments for January 2021:

David Granger £300
Website/social media £150
Came and Co £123.00
A Muskett £108.00
Eon £54.24
Mazars £360.00

Credit for £1,179.31 CBC grass cutting contribution.

Credit for £4,848.00 HMRC

BATPC have forwarded an invoice for £622, payable in April for Annual membership.

All payments agreed, Clerk will set up online payments to be authorised by Cllr Kevan.

Clerk invoiced the Millennium Green Committee for £1,301, contribution for hedge cutting, Clerk confirmed the amount paid last year was £1520 on 26th March 2019. The PC have received an email from the Millennium Green Trust, the contribution was greater than they expected and due to the pandemic, they have suffered a loss of income this year. The PC agreed to waiver the contribution for this year. All future work carried out on behalf of the MGT by SPC will be approved by MGT prior to the work being carried out.

Concerns were raised over the condition and age of the Defibrillators within the village, 2 of them (Allotments & Star & Garter) were out of service over Christmas, they had been listed as "Requiring Attention" on the National Defibrillator Database for several months, The PC not be involved with the servicing and maintenance of the defibrillator. A Resident has sole responsibility.

The PC felt that the exiting situation could not be allowed to continue and proposed to take steps to bring these units under its control. Clerk will look at the costs involved in the PC purchasing and installing their own defibrillators, which they would be entirely responsible for.

6/21 Planning:

Due to there being only one application this month there was no Planning meeting.

- CB/20/03847/MW - Cainhoe Quarry, erection of covered waste facility building. The only query is whether the increase in capacity would mean additional lorries.

Bloor Homes:

A meeting scheduled for 8/1/21 was cancelled due to Bloor moving offices. A further request to reschedule the meeting has been made and a response is awaited.

Further items to be advised:-

- Bat boxes, Clerk has found CBC can offer no help with this, she is currently awaiting a response from the Bedfordshire Bat Society.
- Further insurance Claim to fell a large Plane tree.
- Section 38, Highways adoption of the roads and possible 20 mph zone?
- Pruning of 25 fruit trees
- Mander Farm Road fencing has been confirmed as Miller Homes Ltd responsibility.
- Invoice for the Plantation View Play area Covid-19 signs has been passed for payment .

7/21 Projects:

Tree Inspection Survey:

- Cllr Tierney has notified WPE of the issues with the trees in Park Avenue and requested that they take the appropriate action. Cllr Tierney to monitor
- A quotation has been received for the removing the tree in Bedford Avenue, Clerk will arrange for the works to be carried out mid- February. The PC would like to update Residents on the tree works via FB, website and newsletter prior to works commencing.
- Clerk has been in contact with CBC concerning the trees on their land that require attention, Cllr Tierney and clerk will continue to communicate.

- Cllr Tierney advised that the costs involved for trees over the next 4 years could amount to £7,500.

The PC would like to replace trees that have had to be removed, Clerk to investigate the CBC Grant for the purchase of trees , more information required on the size of the trees and the maintenance costs involved. The CBC scheme is for Minimum of 5 trees , together with a significant administrative reporting required, closing date is 21st March 2021.

Website:

Clerk requested that all Cllrs look at the information sent through by Aurora along with the existing website prior to the meeting next week. Cllr Willard has been looking at document storage requirement and will advise the PC.

Bridge over A6:

A Resident raised concerns over these planned works, Highways-Structures have confirmed that they are still at the planning stage and have yet to schedule the work.

Play Areas – Lockdown 3

The Government has not issued any further instructions requiring the closure of play areas. The Clerk has made enquires and CBC play areas remain open. The PC considered a proposal to close play areas, after discussion the PC agreed that play areas provided much needed area for children to exercise and play safely and therefore agreed that play areas would remain open. In addition to this the Clerk is to arrange a post on FB, and web site declaring the PC's decision and reminding Parents of their responsibility when using the play areas , their compliance with the Covid-19 signage, social distancing, not to gather around equipment, and to be careful to sanitise and take precautions.

The Equipment Gate on the High St North play area was found left open, Cllr Kevan has closed it and will change the code on the lock.

Village Sign:

Several Residents did come forward and helped with the condition survey of the Village Sign, unfortunately the sign needs repair. Cllr Kelly obtained a quotation for the refurbishment of the sign from Sign of the Times Ltd for approximately £700 per side (subject to condition). The expenditure was approved.

Note : Investigations established that the sign was erected in Year 2000 and a time capsule was placed beneath the base. The capsule, a stainless-steel container, contains a historic cache of goods and information as a deliberate method of communication with people into the future. items contributed include:-

The War Memorial

The War memorial will need repair later in the year.

Highways:

Cllr Kelly will look at quotes to have the speed signs serviced. After the traffic survey the PC will consider work to the turn left sign. Cllr Kelly will notify CBC that the PC are having the survey carried out.

8/21 Consultations and correspondence:

- Airspace Consultation, a reminder has been posted on FB.
- Thank you letter from "Light up a life", funding for Luton & Dunstable and Bedford Hospital for support their fundraising.
- A letter requesting support of funding by a Scouts leader for an International Scouting event, it was deemed that as the event is a training event and will therefore benefit the young people of the village then a donation of £50 could be made, Clerk will arrange.
- CPRE magazine.
- Email from CBC offering salt deliveries - declined.
- A Resident has contacted Clerk asking if the PC could enquire if BT will provide Broadband to Residents in the north of the village soon? Cllrs felt it was something for the Resident to pursue with her provider.

9/21 AOB:

- Cllr Kelly will contact WPE concerning the possibility of bollards on Park Ave.
- Parking on pavements generally has become an issue through the village, PC will put a post out on FB and an article in the newsletter requesting residents do not park on paths as they are causing damage to the water meter and trees.
- There have been reports of postal delays in parts of the Village since Christmas in parts of the Village. Understandably this is due to Covid-19 situation with RM staff shortages. Some Residents not receiving any post at all. Clerk will contact Ampthill sorting office.
- Following the success of the Christmas Scarecrows Competition and the Advent Windows, Cllr McGrory suggested the PC offer support for this next year? All agreed, Cllr McGrory will investigate this and present some proposals.

10/21 Date of next meeting:

The website meeting will be held via Zoom at 7.30pm on 20th January 2021.

The next planning meeting will be Monday 8th February 2021

21 via Zoom.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 10th February 2021 via Zoom.