

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

held on 5th October 2022 at the Silsoe village hall.

Present:

Cllr Kelly in the Chair

Cllr Gearey, Cllr Willard, Cllr Kevan, Central Bedfordshire Councillor Alison Graham.

Cllr Offer, Cllr Mann via Zoom

A one-minute silence was held to reflect upon the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth II.

72/22 Apologies and Declaration of interest/ Request for dispensation:

Apologies:

CBC - to discuss Clophill roundabout - will attend the November meeting

Bedfordshire Police - will attend the December meeting.

Declaration of Interest:

None

73/22 Confirm the Minutes/ Matter Arising:

The Minutes of the meetings held on 6th July were agreed and signed by the Chairman

74/22 Public participation:

- Residents, members of a netball group that has recently been formed in the village made a request for assistance with funding. The team currently have 18 full members and a couple on 'pay as you go' and have played in the Summer League during last season and have now enrolled at the Bedford Netball League. Most members are Silsoe Residents, and train at the Silsoe Community Sports Centre. Cllrs considered the request and deferred the decision about funding until the meeting discussed Finances.
- Several Residents attending the meeting expressed their concerns at the volume and speed of traffic traveling through the village. Residents felt that there was a definite increase in the volume of traffic, as well as the speed of traffic. They expressed their concerns for the safety of other road users, pedestrians, and particularly children.
- Residents also reported the loss of family pets run over and killed by speeding traffic

- Speedwatch - have reported, using calibrated gun that 21% of vehicles through the village were speeding, going up to 29mph in the 20mph zone and up to 38.5mph in the 30mph zone.
- Another Resident stated that she was becoming increasingly concerned for the safety of school children, when crossing the High Street to the bus stop and the limited space available as a waiting area. The Resident had previously contacted the PC about this subject during the summer holidays and the PC had forwarded the request to CBC to action this. A survey was conducted by CBC Highways and their recommendation was made for CBC to approach the schools concerned and educate the children with regards to road safety.
- The Resident explained that 134 children from the village are bused to the Arnold middle school and of that group 70 are under 11 years of age. The Resident requested the provision of a pedestrian crossing and an improved waiting area. The PC agreed to follow this up with CBC Highways and to obtain a copy of the CBC Safety Survey.

The Chairman, having listened to the Residents, said that the Parish Council have been trying to get CBC to agree to the provision of additional traffic calming measures within the village for some time e.g., additional signage on the A507/Amphill Road, the replacement of speed indicator signs but no commitment has been forthcoming. The PC is extremely concerned at that the situation will significantly worsen when the Clophill roundabout construction works commence in early 2023. Representatives of the PC have attended three CBC Consultations regarding the Clophill Roundabout and expressed the need for traffic calming measures both internal and external to the village during the construction phase. So far there has been no response.

Cllr Graham highlighted that if the Residents and the PC decided what they would like to achieve then she would help as far as possible. She explained that the Executive Member of the Traffic Management Committee was aware of the issues in Silsoe and how it is a holistic problem, rat running, bad parking, bad driving and speeding are all contributory factors alongside the volume of traffic. She agreed that traffic should be steered back to the A6 rather than through the village and highlighted that diversions during the Clophill works would need to be directed onto roads of the same status. Cllr Graham agreed to speak to the Executive member about the situation. Cllr Graham went on to outline the HGV pilot scheme.

It was agreed that a meeting would be arranged for Residents to attend and discuss their concerns and ideas but in the meantime the following requests were made to Cllr Graham:

1. A crossing and safer waiting area for children waiting for buses - Cllr Graham will ask CBC for the report following their investigation, along with the assessment criteria and the designs for bus shelters, if CBC has a policy on this.

2. The Community Safety Partnership to look at all the issues in the village as a whole and to consider the safety of drivers, pedestrians and particularly school children. Cllr Graham agreed to ask CBC if the Community Safety Partnership should be involved?
 3. How the village can be helped during the Clophill roundabout works?
- **SURVEY SOFTWARE** - A Resident as part of her campaign for road safety would like to conduct a survey of the Residents and asked if the PC had Survey Monkey? Or if they would consider covering the cost of it? Clerk stated that the PC did not have a copy of the software but will investigate the subscription costs.
 - **CHURCH ROAD** - A Resident raised questions regarding Church Rd asking if there were proposals to make Church Road One-way or a No Through Road. It was confirmed that these were options being considered , but no decision had yet been made
 - The Resident also raised concerns over the parking on grass verges at the end of Church Rd.
 - **SILSOE COMMUNITY SOCIETY** - The Chair of the Silsoe Community Society attended the meeting to discuss the village beacon. He confirmed that following the Queens Jubilee Celebrations, the PC had offered the beacon to the Silsoe Community Society, but they declined the offer.
 - The Chairman of the Silsoe Community Society put forward a proposal:-
 - The SCF fund the repair of the existing beacon
 - The PC to carry out the works
 - The Beacon to be available for use at the Coronation (May/June2023)
 - The Community Society have obtained a quotation for repair of the beacon like for like and would donate the £720 for the repair to the PC.
 - The Trust would also like two plaques fitted to the beacon, one representing the society and the donation for repairs and restoration and one representing the company who would conduct the repairs to the beacon.
 - Cllr Kelly stated that in preparation for the Queens Jubilee Celebrations the PC Inspected the Beacon and established that the basket would have to be replaced.
 - There were also concerns about safety when in operation. how the wood charge would be lifted into the Beacon, how the charge could be ignited and the control of the fire & ash drift during operation.
 - The PC sought advice and consulted with their insurers Game & Co., RoSPA and the Community Fire Safety Officer. Based up their recommendations the PC took the decision not to use the existing Beacon and to purchase a gas fired beacon.
 - If there was a wish to refurbish the existing beacon the PC would require that it fully comply with the design as laid down in page 24 "THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE BEACONS 2ND JUNE 2022 - YOUR GUIDE TO TAKING PART".

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- The PC may consider joining with the Silsoe Community Society in creating a piece of “Community Art” on the Millennium Green but would not agree to the use of the beacon with a solid fuel charge.
- **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS** The Chair of the Silsoe Community Society announced that the Charity were proposing to hang the Christmas lights along the High Street as per last year. It is also proposed that there be a small Christmas Fare with stalls in the Village Hall Car Park on the evening of the Switching-on of the lights. When asked if there was to be any extension to the lights further down the High Street, the Chairman explained that CBC Highways were unwilling to allow access to streetlights electrical supplies and therefore, they could not extend the coverage further down the High Street
- It was suggested that the Christmas tree at the Village Hall be placed in a more prominent position, where it is not hidden by the wall? The Silsoe Community Society would like the tree to remain where it is.
- There was concern that the village Christmas Lights were not covering the southern part of the village. The Village Green area is a Bloor Homes responsibility and there do not appear to be any electrical supplies local to the area. It was suggested it might be possible to mount a Christmas Tree with lights on the Mander Farm Roundabout. The Clerk to investigate.
- The donation from the PC for lights was discussed, however Cllr Kevan mentioned a sponsor will be contacting the society, so the decision was deferred.
- **ALLOTMENTS** - Representatives from the Silsoe Allotment Society/Waterslade Gardening Club attended and explained some changes being made in their organisations. One of which was that they have nominated representative to attend PC meetings from time to time to improve communications with the PC.
- **SPEEDING A6** - A Resident raised concerns over both at the speed on the A6 between Silsoe and Clophill and the general speed limit in the village, suggesting it should be 20mph throughout? After some open discussion it was proposed that the Parish Council organise a separate meeting to enable Residents to collectively discuss, review and decide on what were their traffic priorities. Clerk to agree a date and advise.

75/22 Finances:

OUTING GOING PAYMENTS FOR OCTOBER:

SILSOE PARISH COUNCIL

This includes payments made over the summer.

Paid already:

| | |
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| £2245.93 | David Granger (13/8/22) |
| £36.10 | N Power (13/8/22) |
| £34.96 | N Power (13/8/22) |
| £27 | Village Hall (13/8/22) |
| £294 | L Frusciante (13/8/22) |
| £88.90 | I Kelly expenses (8/8/22) |
| £2379.12 | David Granger Ltd (13/9/22) |
| £367.63 | Anglian Water (14/9/22) |
| £12.16 | Anglian water (14/9/22) |
| £360 | Mazars (14/9/22) |
| £1824.00 | Metro signs (23/9/22) |
| £120 | Sapsworth Ltd (16/9/22) |
| £36.34 | N Power (16/9/22) |
| £5367.78 | Gallagher (30/9/22) |
| £294 | TV installation |

To be paid:

| | |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| £2400.00 | Property heritage |
| £547.20 | Michal Dales |
| £2489.05 | David Granger Ltd |
| £60 | CPRE planning training course |
| £113.40 | Andy Muskett |
| £393 - | Cllr Kelly expenses |

Clerk will submit a vat claim this month for £7095.38

Project Account balance: total spend for the Cage is approximately £12,685, with a grant of £9,944 plus Ward Cllr funding.

- Current: £70,168.67
- Savings: £201,037.68
- Nationwide: £81,698.78

1. There was £825 available in grants, it was agreed that this be increased by £1000.
2. Cllr Willard proposed a grant of £600 to Busy Tots, seconded by Cllr Kevan, all agreed. The PC will purchase the items so they can claim back the vat.

3. It was proposed by Cllr Kelly and seconded by Cllr Kevan that £500 be granted to the netball team, all Cllrs agreed.
4. It was agreed that £50 be donated as prize money for the advent windows, proposed by Cllr Kevan, seconded by Cllr Kelly, all agreed.
5. It was agreed to adjust the budget for the Insurance and to increase the costs of the children's activities.
6. A quotation for £2,400 has been received for dead wooding and raising the crowns of trees on the High St, this was agreed.

The PC will need to schedule the Annual Budget Meeting , week beginning 5th December, was suggested , Clerk will check hall availability. Could all Councillors please consider what projects they would be interested in for the next year and any estimates of costs involved would be helpful.

The Christmas lights were discussed, the grant paid by the PC was for the lights to be extended each year and as they will be the same the PC were undecided whether a donation should be made?

76/22 Ward Councillor Cllr Alison Graham:

- The enforcement team are investigating and may act on an unauthorised development at New Inn Farm.
- The Taymer development has not appeared on the Agenda for the TMC yet. Cllr Graham wishes to negate views that the PC have not done enough, she made it clear that the PC have done everything they could do and now it is up to the TMC.
- The SOS held their 20th birthday, and it was a success, well done.
- Regarding the meeting to discuss the holistic traffic problems in Silsoe, Highways function is to keep traffic moving not to promote parking spaces. Only submit ideas which are appropriate, a list of items that are 'doable'
- Cllr Graham stressed that the PC must keep her in the loop, so that she can help. She has emailed CLLR Dalgarno constantly about the situation in the village. The situation is getting worse, and the problem now does seem to be aggressive driving as well as speed.
- CBC have been allocated £5million from Central Government to help through the winter, those in the voluntary sector, elderly, and children. All public meetings will be kept open to provide a place of warmth.
- Cllr Kevan asked if Cllr Graham had managed to facilitate a meeting with the Chief Executive to discuss the S106 agreement? The Chief executive replied to her e-mail and was not prepared to meet the PC, Cllr Graham will resend the email and share it with Cllrs.
- No further update on the bottle banks.

77/22 Planning:

The PC considered the following applications:

- CB/22/02821/FULL 3 The Maples, internal alterations including rear extension, garage, and roof conversion. No objections
- CB/22/02801/FULL 6 The Oaks, demolition of utility room and 2 storey side extension. No objections
- CB/22/03306 20, Colorado green, single storey rear extension. No objections
- CB/22/03610/FULL The Gateway, additional car parking spaces. No objections
- Greenwood, no further update, or application
- Taymer, waiting to be heard before the TMC

78/22 Projects:

1. **SUMMER ACTIVITIES:** Clerk attended the activities over the summer period, the activities were well organised, and over 200 children enjoyed a range of the activities. Attendance was good, with most sessions being full. It is very unlikely that the Parish Council will be able to afford funding for this project next year.
2. **VANDALISM AND POLICE:** Cllr Gearey attended PCC Annual meeting on 4/10/22 and was able to provide the following report:
Festus Akinboboye, The Police and Crime Commissioner is committed to invest in Community policing despite significant critical challenges around funding. Staffing levels include 60 PCs and 52 PCSOs. Retention is an issue with the Met and Hertfordshire paying significantly more. 50% PC's have 5 years or less Service and 35% PC's have less than 2 years Service. Their performance priorities have increased tenfold. A Community based policing hub is based in Flitwick to help close the gap between Police and the Community. The challenges include £ 20 million of drugs going through Bedfordshire in a month .The Police receive 12,000 calls a month, 60% of calls to the police are dealing with mental health issue, not a PC responsibility. Bedfordshire Police is ranked 1st in the UK for dealing with persistent offenders
The quarterly Police Annual Setting Meetings have now been cancelled due to lack of attendance. The Community Policing team would still like an update from each Parish on what their priorities would be for the next discussion on 10/10/22. The PC agreed that speed of vehicles through the village was the main issue.
3. **THE CAGE:** The works to the Cage have now been completed and the Interpretation board fitted. Cllr Willard has offered to have the key, but the PC do need to get a second key cut, as the key is the ancient one, which needs to be taken care of. Cllr Offer met with the funding partners on site, and they were extremely happy with the overall outcome.
4. **BLOOR HOMES:**

Community Woodland - We have received the preliminary documentation from CBC inviting the PC to adopt of the area known as the Community Woodland. The diagrams provided show the Community Woodland an area of some 5.3 Hectares to the south of the Silsoe Community Sports Centre and which also includes the Plantation View Play Area. The PC replied to the invitation confirming their intention to adopt the area together with some points requiring clarification. CBC have replied saying that the Plantation View Play Area although shown on drawing was not part of the Community Woodland, and that the Play Area is not to be offered for adoption by the Parish Council.

The reasons given by CBC for this change in procedure is that “in having considered the terms of the S.106 agreement, the play area is included within the definition of “Outdoor Leisure Facilities” and not the “Community Woodland.” The management provisions for the play area are required to be provided by Bloor only as far as they relate to the Outdoor Leisure Facilities and not the Community Woodland. Therefore, there is no obligation within the S.106 Agreement for Bloor to provide future maintenance/management details for the play area to the Council for approval prior to the transfer of the Community Woodland”

On completion of a development, it is normal practice for CBC Leisure Services to offer play areas for adoption by the local Parish Council. On adoption a sum of money is paid to the PC for the future maintenance of the play area for a period of 15 years. CBC's have a specification which identifies the maintenance activity and cost for each piece of play equipment, and this collated together to make the final sum.

CBC's letter states that Bloor Homes have no obligation to supply details of their future maintenance of the play area or any management details of the play area. Cllr Kelly stated he finds this unacceptable. Silsoe Parish Council spends a great deal of time, effort and money ensuring that play areas it is responsible for are kept as safe as is possible and in accordance with the appropriate British Standards and Approved Codes of Practice. All our play areas are inspected weekly by qualified staff. CBC appear to propose to absolve Bloor Homes of any management responsibilities, allowing them to operate unregulated with no financial control.

It should be noted that under the proposed system of management any costs associated with Bloor's Management of the Plantation View Play Area will be recovered directly from the Residents of the Bloor Estate as part of their service charge

Cllr Kelly discussed this with the PC's legal adviser and is seeking SPC approval to take legal advice to dispute CBC's actions. Proposed by Cllr Kelly, seconded by Cllr Kevan, all agreed.

5. **BOTTLE BANK:** CBC have put on hold their plans for moving the bottle bank, we are awaiting further updates.

6. MILLER HOMES:

- **BIN STORAGE AREA** - at the Conifers remains a hazard. Temporary measures have been taken to secure the building and Residents cars are now allowed in the Courtyard.
 - A Surveyor attended on Monday to review the extent of damage and remedial works required and concluded that at least a third of the structure would need to be rebuilt. Paradigm Housing are awaiting their Insurance Loss Adjusters to attend site.
 - Cllr Gearey has asked the Resident at 5 Mander Farm Road to check the structure of his property, as it is connected to the building.
 - **THE CONIFERS**- After clearing rubbish and abandoned cars there is evidence of fly tipping adjacent to No 4 again .
 - Mander Far Road - A fence is due for repair on Mander Farm Road by the Roundabout, has been sent to Airways.
 - **MAINSTAY** - Advised Residents that they have an overspend of 7.2K on their service charge for yearend 31st March due to unexpected expenditure cutting the hedgerow along Mander Farm. A request for a detailed breakdown of the costs has been requested.
 - **MAINSTAY** - Advised Residents that they have commenced handover of their contract responsibilities to First Port Ltd
 - Cherry Blossom Close - Mainstay have requested permission to plant flower beds of and position a bench.
 - **ACCIDENT** - Cllr Gearey is still awaiting a reply from Bloor Homes with reference to an accident where a partially sighted Resident tripped over a low-level fence between the school field and The Spinney / Osier Walk. (Dec 2021)
7. **STREET WATCH UPDATE:** A meeting is taking place this evening and an update will be provided to the PC in due course. Cllr Gearey will liase between the two groups.
 8. **CLOPHILL ROUNDABOUT:** Cllrs Kelly, Gearey and the Clerk attended a meeting with CBC Highways last week to discuss the planned works and the impact on Silsoe. CBC agreed to attend the October PC meeting but have now rescheduled to attend the November 2022 meeting.
 9. **ADVENT WINDOWS:** Abby McGrory has offered to organise the Advent Windows this year, she has arranged advertising and has a schedule which she will follow in terms of timescales. The PC agreed £50 for prizes. The Clerk will liase with Abby.
 10. **REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY:** Clerk has applied for a road closures, Cllr Kelly has contacted Rotary for volunteers, Clerk has a Cornet player, just need to confirm timings. Volunteers are needed.

11. **UTILITIES REVIEW:** Increased prices for utilities (electricity and water) are of concern particularly as the PC owns 142 streetlights (All LED). Cllrs agreed to continue with the street current lighting schedule. Review at submission of next invoices
12. **OLD NOTICEBOARD:** Cllr Kelly proposed spending £250 refurbishing the old noticeboard to then sell on, seconded by Cllr Willard, all agreed.
13. **SPECIAL CONSTABLES:** Cllr Gearey update the PC, a co-ordinator is currently setting up a recruitment process for Specials, further information will be available shortly.
14. **FUTURE STREET NAMES:** Cllr Kelly e-mailed around a list from Road Names from 2019, it was agreed that the list should be reviewed but in keeping with the traditional emphasis on tree names

79/22 Consultations and correspondence:

- Clophill roundabout
- CPRE Planning course, Cllr Gearey and Clerk have reserved places for 30/11/22
- PCC conference, attended by Cllr Gearey
- Street parking consultation
- HGV monitoring project
- Magpus air ambulance - thank you for donation
- Two cricket clubs have contacted the PC requesting the use of the cricket square. Advised no capacity

80/22 AOB:

- **Graffiti:** A Resident has asked if the PC plan to do anything about the graffiti in the bus shelter. It was agreed whilst the vandalism was still an issue in the Village it would be a waste of money removing it at this time.
- **Hedgehogs-R-Us** requesting the PC buy hedgehog boxes, the PC agreed not to pursue this.
- **Christmas Jumpers** - Cllrs all wore Christmas jumpers to the December meeting last year in aid of Save The Children. It was agreed they would be worn this year but for a charity closer to the village.
- **Streetlight** – by the Allotment lights has been on after 7.30am. Clerk will contact Andy Muskett.
- **Vote Of Thanks** - The PC wish to send a Vote of Thanks to Thomas Kevan for taking charge to ensure the Union Flag was correctly displayed during the period of public mourning for Queen Elizabeth II

81/22 Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 9th November 2022.

Signed

Date

DRAFT