

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

held on Wednesday 8th November 2023 at the Silsoe village hall.

Present:

Cllr Kelly in the Chair

Cllr Offer, Cllr Gearey, Cllr Kevan, Cllr Willard, Cllr Mann Central Bedfordshire Councillor Anna French, Central Bedfordshire Councillor Liz Childs.

Clerk via Zoom.

111/23 Apologies and Declaration of interest/ Request for dispensation

Cllr Willard declared an interest with regards to planning application CB/TCA/23/00527 15-17 High St. The trees can be viewed from his garden.

112/23 Confirm the Minutes/ Matter Arising:

The Minutes of the meetings held on 11th October 2023 were agreed.

113/23 Public participation:

A representative from the Allotment society attended, Cllr Offer has invoiced all tenants for annual payment, 60 of the 85 tenants have paid so far, they have until 15/11/23.

An industrial quantity of Nitrogen oxide was dumped by the allotments on 20/10/23, it has been reported to the Police and the canisters have been handed over to the Police for safe disposal.

Allotment holders will be asked to vote on whether they would like locked gates at the entrance to the allotments, if this is necessary the defibrillator will need to be relocated to an alternative site with electricity at a cost.

A representative from the hobbies club attended to discuss bunting for the D Day Beacon lighting, the bunting can be used around the beacon pole or around the safety barrier, the PC are happy for the hobbies group to choose, proposed by Cllr Offer, seconded by Cllr Mann, all in favour.

A resident attended to discuss the condition and upkeep of the sports centre, classes are not being fully covered with staff, staff are not on reception early in the morning. The building maintenance needs addressing in terms of paint and cleanliness. The resident also requested an update on what will happen at the end of the contract with Stevenage Leisure. Cllr Kelly confirmed that the Trustees are discussing the contract with Stevenage Leisure.

The Trustees are also discussing an extension to the café using the kitchen area or a side extension allowing for extra studio and café space. Trustees will discuss the issues raised by the resident.

114/23 Police representative:

PC Samuel Hewson will attend the December meeting.

115/23 Report by Ward Councillors:

- Ward Councillors have regular updates with highways and will raise concerns over the Wrest Park illuminations.
- SIDS, the old units have still not been removed and there is still no feedback available from CBC, Truvelo would supply the data, but CBC does not permit them to do so.
- Anti-social behaviour in the village was raised and will be raised with the Police.
- The Ward Cllrs asked if they should be doing anything regarding the Greenwoods development? The Ward Cllrs confirmed CBC Planning are “working alongside the Developer,” Cllrs requested more information regarding this process of them “working alongside,” how does it work without there being a conflict? Cllr French will seek further information.
- Cllr French confirmed that she has been appointed to the Bedfordshire Group of Drainage Boards; Cllr Kelly highlighted that planning applications were being sent to BGDB for comment, but they have no authority in Silsoe, and it is the Central Bedfordshire Council Drainage Board’s responsibility. There are several issues regarding drainage within the village and pointed out that ditches are not being cleared. Cllr French will investigate this; Cllr Kelly will provide additional information.

116/23 Finances:

Approved payments and invoices due for payment in the current year so far total £82,238 (Oct meeting this was £71,100). The biggest expenditures in the last month were Grangers £7,914.20 (this includes hedge cutting and tree works around the MG and Forest Walk Play area total cost £5,157.60), Joseph Stathers £1,950.00 (bus stop roof repairs), and A Muskett £1,782 (replace broken streetlight). These significant costs were all for work agreed by the PC in advance.

Since the last meeting £1,235.80 has been received for allotment rents. We do need confirmation of how much of this relates to club membership fees which needs to be paid on to the allotment club.

The bank account balances as of Nov 6th are:

Current a/c	£61,087.35	was £72,842.22
Deposit a/c	£202,360.08	was £202,360.08

SILSOE PARISH COUNCIL

Nationwide £83,051.51 was £83,051.51

Adjusting for the value of unapproved invoices included and expected to be paid, this leaves a total current PC cash balance of £328,086.63 (balance last month was £340,305.34). Apart from the payments proposed in this meeting, the speed signs payment for £7,901.40 which was received back in April has still not cleared.

There are currently reserved balances of:

£15,000	General reserve	was £15,000
£1,234	Allotment deposits	was £1,234
£85,279	Sports Centre	was £85,279
£89,821	Miller Homes Play Areas	was £90,553
£187	Village Hall	was £187

As agreed in the last meeting, £1,000 of additional budget has been allocated for the Millennium Green grass cutting. Cllrs looked at the budgets for bus shelter and street lighting repairs, additional budget allocations of £500 for the bus shelter repairs and £1,500 for the street lighting repair to cover the expenditure were agreed.

Payments for November 2023:

Website: £162
D Granger £7,751.00
Clerk expenses £593.31
N Power £63.06
A Muskett (Repair to streetlamp) £1,782.00
Village Hall hire £27.00.
J&E Roofing (bus shelter repairs) £1,950.00

Payments and budget adjustments proposed by Cllr Offer, seconded by Cllr Kevan, all agreed, Clerk will set up payments.

Clerk has submitted a VAT claim for £7,439.13.

Clerk will prepare for the internal interim audit.

A budget meeting was arranged for 7.30pm 22nd November 2023 via Zoom to discuss the budget for the next financial year, this will be presented at the full Council meeting in December 2023.

117/23 Planning:

The PC considered the following applications:

CB/23/03115/FULL Wrest House, wrest Park. Installation of heat pump and replacement of boiler and flue. No objections.

CB/23/03146/FULL Land adjacent to Housekeeper cottage, 1 Silsoe Rd, Flitton. Erection of 3 stables and field shelter. Change of use to equestrian. No objections.

CB/23/03422/FULL Land adjacent to 7 Clophill Rd. Demolition of existing agricultural barn and change of use to residential and erection of new dwelling and associated garage. No objections.

CB/23/1006/FULL Unit 7 New Inn Farm, change of use from Class B2 showroom to Class E(d) indoor gym. PC will resubmit original comments.

CB/TCA/23/00499 3 The Orchards, Crown reduction to Robinia tree located in next doors garden over shadowing number 3. No objections.

CB/TCA/23/00527 15-17 High St. Shorten by 3-4m 9 mature silver birch trees. Cllr Offer will look at this application.

The Pc are still not aware of who has purchased the land to the south of the village or the land off Amphill Rd which has been recently auctioned.

The TPO is now in place for the trees behind The Beeches. Cllr Offer proposed identifying the trees and labelling them to ensure everyone is aware they have a TPO on them at a cost of approximately £200, seconded by Cllr Kelly, all agreed.

118/23 Projects:

1. MILLER HOMES/FIRST POINT:

Cllr Gearey met with the Property manager on 30/10/23 and agreed the following points:

- Tree survey has identified works are required the company is going out to tender.
- Courtyard is full of weeds and agreed needs to be cleared.
- The path from Mander Farm Rd to West End play area needs weeding and hedges need cutting.
- Trees and bushes opposite the bungalows in west end Rd need trimming.
- The height of the trees in Mander Farm Rd needs assessing.
- The garden area near the power unit fencing needs attention.
- New tree in Mander Farm Rd requires a feeding bag.

All these works are included in the budget, some residents have invoices outstanding from 2019.

The roundabout by the Co-op is being assessed for meterage of grass, Permission is granted for a Christmas tree on the roundabout, Cllr Gearey will look for sponsorship as its not within the PC budget.

2. CLOPHILL ROUNDABOUT UPDATE:

There have been lots of comments on Fb as to what the works have achieved. There is currently no Teams meeting scheduled for an update with CBC, however the PC would like to know what has been achieved? The whole premise to the works was to reduce waiting time at the roundabout, has this been achieved? The Pc would also like to ask why the trees were removed from the roundabout?

Traffic survey during the works showed 75% of cars speed going North to west through the village, this was 67% during the works. 25% speed going South to east.

Cllrs have asked English heritage to speak to the event organisers for the Christmas illuminations regarding parking in the village.

3. REMEMBRANCE DAY:

The road closure is in place, the Lord Lieutenant's deputy will attend, Cllr Kelly and will do a reading. The wreath has been received and the Scouting groups will parade from 10.30am to the church. The Rotary club will control the traffic and will also lay a wreath. Cllr Willard will lay the wreath on behalf of the PC. The signage is in The Cage and will be placed next to the roads on Saturday in preparation for Sunday.

4. D DAY 80/BEACON:

Cllr Kelly has met with a blacksmith to discuss the refurbishing of the basket; Clerk has organised for the pole to be inspected and Cllr Kelly is investigating the gas. The Silsoe community group are available to run a bar if required? The Millenium green can offer soft drinks and cake if required? The fish and chip shop will supply orders, Cllr Willard and Gearey will speak to the pub to discuss a bar and BBQ.

5. COMMUNITY SPIRIT:

The advent windows have received a good response and 23 windows have now been take, 3 people will judge the windows and a map will be supplied, hopefully in the Silsoe news showing where the windows are. Cllr Offer proposed prizes of £100, £75, and £50, Cllr Kelly seconded this, all agreed.

Cllr Gearey suggested the PC look at an activity for Halloween next year. Halloween has proved very successful in the village once again and there is a general consensus to only knock on doors with pumpkins.

6. ROAD SAFETY WITHIN THE VILLAGE:

Will be followed up with Ward Cllrs and CBC.

7. ON-LINE MEETINGS:

The PC do need to hold face to face meetings, they can however offer a Zoom option to residents. If Cllrs would like to attend via Zoom, they can do so but will not be permitted a vote on any item, clerk may attend via Zoom. Cllrs also need to be aware that attending via Zoom does not qualify as full attendance.

8. COMMUNICATION, IMPROVING OUR PRESENCE:

Cllr Gearey attended a training course on communication and will happily feedback to Cllrs and set objectives. It was agreed Clerk will also attend the training.

119/23 Consultations and correspondence:

The following correspondence was received:

- Topic session sustainability 6/11/23
- Mental Elf run 10th December Shuttleworth
- CPRE hedgerow plan, Clerk will respond and express the PC's interest in hedges along the A6.
- Recreational open spaces strategy survey, to be completed by 22/12/23, Cllr Kelly preparing information.
- Garden and waste recycling update
- Planning obligations supplementary planning document consultation 30/10/23-11/12/23. Cllr Offer is looking into this.
- Culture, media, and sport funding opportunity 24/11/23.
- Bedford hospital have asked the PC to display posters for their fundraising.
- PCC Commissioning OPCC funding 23/24 Cameras, tickets and collisions, road safety fund.
- PCC Commissioning Community safety fund 23/24.

120/23 AOB:

1. A Cllrs asked the Ward Cllrs if there is any update regarding glass collections, none as yet.
2. The Land registry information has been received, Cllr Kevan is the administrator, Cllr Offer and Cllr Gery will register as user, they will record any information for future reference. Some searches do incur a fee.
3. The Cage has been inspected and it was concluded that the damage is frost related, they have suggested that the mortar needs replacing but it was agreed they would wait till spring which will allow time for it to fully dry prior to the autumnal weather.
4. A thank you has been received from the Allotment society, thanking the PC for working alongside them to keep the space for residents.
5. A mobile fish and chip have been advertising that they will visit the village form 9/11/23. Clerk will find out if they have a permit.

6. The sign on the West end play area is still broken and has not been removed, clerk will follow this up.
7. Cllr Kelly has been seeking quotes for the works to the high St play area, one company has offered a quote, one has declined and two are yet to respond. The Pc may have to look at the purchase of equipment with separate installation.
8. CBC will repair the damaged bus stop.

121/23 Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 13TH December 2023

Signed

Date