

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

held on Wednesday 10th January 2024 at the Silsoe village hall.

Present:

Cllr Kelly in the Chair

Cllr Willard, Cllr Appleman, Central Bedfordshire Councillor Anna French, Central Bedfordshire Councillor Liz Childs.

Cllr Mann, Cllr Offer and Clerk via Zoom

133/23 Apologies and Declaration of interest/ Request for dispensation

Cllr Gearey, Cllr Kevan.

134/23 Confirm the Minutes/ Matter Arising:

The Minutes of the meetings held on 6th December 2023 were agreed.

135/23 Public participation:

- Silsoe News representatives attended the meeting, thanking the PC for the financial support, a full report of the group, including the finances will be delivered soon. The group introduces Flip book last year and would like a link for this to appear on the website, the group will send the details through to Clerk who will arrange for it to be added. Cllrs agreed the newsletter was a reliable source of information and relevant to the village.
- The Speed Watch Team requested a discussion regarding inaccuracies in the Silsoe news which they felt damaged the reputation of the Speed Watch Team. The article included that there had been 3,600 reports of speeding and there had been no prosecutions. This number implied it was recent but actually the number was data running over several years. The Speed Watch collaborates with the Police and focuses on education rather than prosecution, the article inferred that Speed watch was a waste of time. The teamwork alongside Juliet Wright of Beds Police to try and educate drivers and avoid further speeding. There will be a report in the next edition of the Silsoe News explaining the concept of Speed Watch and how drivers do receive a letter regarding their speeding and if they receive 3 letters, they do get a visit from the Police. If conducted consistently, Speed Watch does work. Cllr Kelly and Cllr Mann apologised if the article was misleading and agreed that the PC is fully supportive of the Speed Watch Team, the PC will share the RDS traffic data with the team.

- Representatives attended from the Allotment Society. The allotments are quiet at the moment due to the poor weather. The Society would still like to explore a new gate for the entrance, it would be one wide gate with a pedestrian entrance to the side, this would allow access to the defibrillator.
- There are 3 allotment rents still outstanding, a total outstanding cost of £60.50, the society asked if the missing rent could be taken from the deposits, Clerk will investigate whether this would fit with the auditor? The allotment society will write to the plot holders to inform them they no longer have use of the plot. It was suggested that any new tenants should pay upfront rather than in arrears.

136/23 Police representative:

None

137/23 Report by Ward Councillors:

- Ward Cllrs have a meeting with Highways on 21st January, they asked what the priorities of the PC were? The main problem in Silsoe is there are few alternative routes to the main road and traffic from Wrest Park is a major issue. The PC would still like to explore extending the 20mph zone to Ampthill Rd and Barton Rd, would still like speed cameras and explore the possibility of one way on Church Rd. Ideally a crossing would be good in the centre of the village but it is very tricky as the verges are sloped.
- Clerk asked if there had been any update from the licensing team regarding the mobile fish and chip shop. Ward Cllrs awaiting response , to pursue further.
- Clerk had been contacted by a resident having difficulty reporting a block soakaway drain on the High St, CBC said it was not their responsibility, Ward Cllrs will investigate this.

138/23 Finances:

Approved payments and invoices due for payment in the current year so far total £86,954 (Dec meeting this was £84,215). This does include the latest invoices.

Since the last meeting, a further £55.50 has been received for allotment rents, making the total so far £1,488.30.

The bank account balances as of Jan 8th are:

Current a/c	£54,978.64	was £56,866.70.
Deposit a/c	£203,064.74	was £202,360.08.
Nationwide	£83,051.51	was £83,051.51.

SILSOE PARISH COUNCIL

Adjusting for the value of unapproved invoices included and expected to be paid, this leaves a total current PC cash balance of £331,472.05 (balance last month was £334,400.15). 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 been resolved.

There are currently reserved balances of:

£25,000	General reserve	was £15,000.
£1,234	Allotment deposits	was £1,234.
£85,279	Sports Centre	was £85,279.
£89,691	Miller Homes Play Areas	was £89,821.
£187	Village Hall	was £187.

The General reserve was increased as approved at the last meeting.

The 2024/25 precept of £77,091 was approved at the last meeting and this has now been submitted to CBC. This represents a 3.0% per household increase, but only a 2.6% increase in total precept value for the reasons discussed last month (CBC lowering the tax base number). Based on our budget for 2024/25, this means there is £46,358 currently available for new projects between now and March 2025.

Payments for January 2024:

Website:	£162
D Granger	£1,322.40
N Power	£62.59 (Dec) £64.24
Anglian Water	£75.79 & £17.32
A Muskett	£113.40
PD&Co	£32.40
Village Hall Hire	£27.00.
Road Data Services	£1,140.00

Payments proposed by Cllr Appleman, seconded by Cllr Willard, all agreed, Clerk will set up payments.

Barclays have asked the PC to confirm mandate details again, Clerk has submitted details twice now but will contact Barclays to discuss further.

139/23 Planning:

The PC considered the following applications:

- CB/TCA/23/00607 16 The Oaks. Works to trees with a conservation area, the tree officer will view, no objections.
- CB/23/03434/FULL 36 Ampthill Rd, Erection of a brick external boiler housing and tiled roof. Will not affect the appearance of the front of the property and is small, no objection.

- CB/TCA/23/00622 The Old Farmhouse, West End Rd. Works to trees in a conservation area. Works to trees with a conservation area, the tree officer will view, no objections.

140/23 Projects:

1. MILLER HOMES/FIRST POINT:

Octavia has the details for the pipe instillation on Cranfield roundabout.

The roundabout signage lights are now fixed.

Fly tipping in the watercourse on West End Road has been reported.

Hedgerow to be cut back by First port asap.

Barton Road and A6 roundabout potholes are to be repaired by the end of January.

To confirm that Silsoe Community Centre has now been added to the directory of warm spaces with CBC.

2. WREST PARK CHRISTMAS EVENT:

There is a meeting planned with English Heritage for 22nd January at wrest Park. Cllr Willard and Cllr Gearey will attend along with Cllr Anna French.

3. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE TENDER:

Clerk went out to tender to six companies, four of which declined to submit a tender due to the size of the contract. David Granger (our existing contractor) and Alan Reynolds have each submitted a tender. The costs covered 13 sections of grass cutting and 14 sections of hedge cutting and ditches and was based on 16 cuts across the season. Basic costs have gone up by 23%. Reynolds came out overall £4015.00 more expensive than David Granger. Cllr Willard proposed the PC continue with David Granger, seconded by Cllr Appleman. Clerk will notify the contractors.

4. ADVENT WINDOWS/JUDGING:

Winners have been announced, 2 of the payments of prizes have been made, the remaining one is for Beavers, which clerk will arrange with the leader. Cllr Mann will include and update and thank you for the organisers in the Silsoe News. Next year the PC will notify the School and Horticultural Centre of dates in advance this year.

5. DEFIBRILLATOR:

Cllr Offer has ordered a new defibrillator and is awaiting delivery. The replacement sealant has been delivered and fits.

6. COMMUNITY SPIRIT:

Cllrs will arrange a meeting in February to discuss this further.

7. D DAY 80 Celebrations

Cllr Kelly is making arrangements for the beacon and the gas conversion. Fish and chip shop will provide food, Silsoe Community Group will run a bar, the Millenium Green Trustees will offer soft drinks and cake and the Hobbies Group will provide bunting.

8. MEETING DATES 2024:

Clerk will book the hall for meetings in 2024, all Cllrs are happy to keep with 2nd Wednesday of the month. The Annual Meeting on April 10th will be at the Sports centre. The Police priority setting meetings planned for this year clash with the PC meetings so clerk proposed that just for July and October the Cllrs meet on the 1st Wednesday of the month, which would be 3rd July and 2nd October, this would enable clerk to attend the Police meeting, all Cllrs agreed.

141/23 Consultations and correspondence:

The following correspondence was received:

- Survey launched by CBC to understand views on how to get involved in CBC decisions.
- Bus Users' Group will meet at Luton Town Hall on 11th January, Cllrs are invited to represent their residents who use buses.
- Hedgehogs in the community, reminder to take care of hedgehogs.
- Barclays updating personal details again! I have submitted them twice already, will call them later this week.
- Change in charges from N Power.

142/23 AOB:

- Cllr Willard attended the latest Clophill Roundabout update meeting. CBC are pleased with the success of the works but due to the scope of the works being reduced, was it worth it? CBC will be conducting an appraisal of the works and whether there has been an improvement to traffic and noise? The Eastern arm will be closed 19th-21st January, West arm 26-29th January and the east arm again 28th Jan-1st February.
- Cllr Kelly proposed a service and repairs for the lawnmower, seconded by Cllr Willard, all Cllrs agreed,

143/23 Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 14th February 2024

Signed

Date