

Silsoe Parish Council – Vice Chairman’s Report 2023/24

Among my responsibilities within the Council are the management of the allotments and the upkeep of the defibrillators within the village.

The allotments continue to be a popular village asset and the Gardening Club look after the membership and the day-to-day management of the site and the tenants. Sadly, there continue to be trespassers on the site, particularly at night, and the Council is currently considering the installation of gates to help with security. Tenant’s rents have been kept unchanged this year, but the income generated does not cover the costs of running the site so the Council has to keep this under review.

The three defibrillators in the village are inspected on a monthly basis. One cabinet suffered with serious condensation, and this resulted in the failure of one device. The problem has since been rectified and a new defib purchased and installed – partly funded by a donation from our Ward Councillors.

As Chairman of the Planning Committee, the year has been dominated by two main issues.

The main concern has been the constant spectre of the Greenwoods application. However, as is widely known, I’m delighted to report that the application was refused by Central Bedfordshire Council. The decision notice which lists the reasons why was damning which means it will be very difficult for the developer to reapply or appeal. That said, given the money that will have been spent on the application, our feeling is that our fight may not yet be over. There is a possibility that an appeal will be lodged, and we will continue to keep a close eye on this.

The redevelopment of the Clophill Roundabout, as predicted, has left it’s mark on the village both with the road closures and the long term effects on traffic volumes and speed. Councillor Willard continues to lead with these issues and has worked hard to involve the community. He will be chairing meetings with residents very soon.

In addition, the Council was dismayed and angry to learn during the year that, despite reassurances, the application to build a residential retirement facility surrounding the current Taymer Nursing Home had been approved without any further consultation with us. The approval was subject to two conditions. One to lengthen the 40mph speed limit north and south of the location. And secondly to provide a pedestrian crossing. The Council feels that this second condition is not tenable as the safety concerns are too severe. However, it appears that CBC Highways Dept have accepted the developers proposals to move the crossing and the bus stop. Residents should be aware that this will mean the loss of some of the grass verge and vegetation. We have recently been informed that this condition has been partially discharged and we are seeking clarification as to what that means.

Lastly, following the sale of the plot of land to the south of the village, between Barton Rd and the A6, we are seeking to discover the identity of the new owner and their intentions for the site.

