**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting**

**held on Monday 3rd February 2025 at the Silsoe village hall.**

**Present:**

**Cllr Offer in the Chair**

Cllr Kevan Cllr Gearey, Cllr Virgo, Cllr Kelly, Cllr Appleman, Cllr McGrory, Cllr Mann. CBC Ward Cllr Anna French.

**11/25 Apologies and Declaration of interest/ Request for dispensation**

Cllr Willard, Cllr Royer, CBC Ward Cllr Liz Childs

**12/25 Confirm the Minutes/ Matter Arising**:

The Minutes of the meetings held on 6th January2025 were agreed. Proposed by Cllr Offer, seconded by Cllr Kelly, all agreed.

**13/25** **Public participation:**

None.

**14/25 Report by Ward Councillors:**

* The issues surrounding the bus passes has been raised with the Executive member for Children’s services, they will carry out a review.
* CBC have gone out to consultation for the budget, a representative from the PC have been invited to a meeting on 19th February 6-7.30pm at Priory House. Clerk passed paper copies to Chair for distribution.
* Residents have not been contacted by CBC for renewal of green bin fees, Cllr French.
* Local plan is progressing and will be valid until 2050.
* Lights on Plantation view and Mander farm Rd have been reported to CBC several times since 6th December, and they are still not repaired. Cllr Childs is following this up.

**15/25 Finances:**

February payments:

D Granger £625.20

Website/Domain £162

Village hall hire £30

N Power £92.19 (paid 14/1/25)

PD & Co £38.98

Land Registry £53

Village hall donation, Marlowe Fire security £5,409.60

Community Heartbeat (Defib annual fee) £486.00

Payments proposed by Cllr Offer, seconded by Cllr Kelly, all agreed.

Silsoe School have approached the PC, the school are aware that there is an issue with traffic and parking in the area around the school and they would like to purchase some signs, they asked if the PC would be willing to contribute towards the costs? Cllrs requested that this be deferred until the PC meet with the school and Highways.

Approved payments and invoices due for payment in the current year so far total £82,968 (last meeting this was £76,454). The main costs over the last month have been the contribution to the Village Hall (by contracting for costs of £4,508 + VAT on their behalf as agreed in the last meeting) and grass cutting/hedge and tree maintenance (£591 excluding VAT).

No income has been received over the last month.

The bank account balances as of Feb 3rd are:

Current a/c           £30,593.37        was £44,389.08

Deposit a/c         £206,119.46        was £206,119.46

Nationwide           £85,965.94        was £85,965.94

Adjusting for the value of unapproved invoices included and expected to be paid, this leaves a total current PC cash balance of £321,252.59 (balance last meeting was £328,874.24). There are no old un-cleared payments.

There are currently reserved balances of:

                £25,000                 General reserve                           was £25,000

                £1,772                   Allotment deposits                      was £1,772

                £83,999                 Sports Centre                               was £83,999

                £82,137                 Miller Homes Play Areas            was £82,137

                £187                       Village Hall                                   was £187

                £6,500                   Village Orchard                            was £6,500

This forecast for the end of the current year has £50,791 of unallocated funds available for new projects (last month £50,791), but as discussed previously (with particular reference to the future budgets observations) it is already expected that a significant portion of this will be needed in future years to cover potential costs related to the adoption of portions of the Bloor Development.

**16/25 Planning:**

None

**17/25 Projects:**

1. **ORCHARD:**

Land is insured, not a requirement for the 27 Trees to be insured separately as they are not classed as assets.

No authority consent needed to prune TPO Trees (Crispin Apple)

There is a plan to map the Trees location

Edible Orchard £20 per hour to Prune Trees. Cllr Offer proposed that all trees are pruned, seconded by Cllr Mann, all agreed.

Pruning course East of England Apples and Orchard Project £350 for 12 people, not something the PC will consider at the moment.

Managing the Meadow, a twice-yearly cut, creating a 2m wide pathway, which will be cut 5 times a year The above will save an estimated £840 year on grass cutting.

Cllr Kelly suggested that a tree survey be carried out.

1. **HIGHWAYS MEETING:**

A meeting has been arranged for 11th February between the School, Highways and the PC to discuss the issues with parking and pedestrian safety in the vicinity of the school. Key points to be raised:

* Sports centre parking being used by parents.
* How to manage parking?
* Safer route to school, encourage and advertise walking to school.
* Staggered start and finish times as when the school first opened?
* Crossing Mander Farm Rd.
* Children meeting in the Café after school to wait for parents-safe guarding? Unsupervised children in the café?
1. **VE DAY 80 8TH May 2025:**

Cllrs agreed to light the beacon on the evening, Cllr Mann will approach the Millenium Green trustees to discuss if they would like to be involved?

1. **CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE:**

By the council signing up to the civility and respect pledge they are demonstrating that the council is committed to treating Councilors, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role. Cllr Gearey proposed that the Council formally signs the pledge, seconded by Cllr Appleman, all Cllrs agreed.

1. **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING:**

Cllrs discussed the APM at the last meeting and agreed that Clerk would contact the Hobbies group to see if there was sufficient interest for the PC to organise the hobbies evening as last year. There has been insufficient interest in the evening, so Cllrs agreed to hold an information evening for residents, inviting The Orchard group, woodland group, Police, Ward Cllrs, Maintenance company. Cllrs agreed for it to be held In the Sports centre café 5-7pm on Tuesday 8th April, it will be followed by a PC meeting.

1. **WOODLAND CONSULTATION:**

There was an information event for residents on 13th January in the sports centre café, over 60 residents attended to ask questions.

1. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Cllr Kelly and Cllr Kevan both plan to step down from their roles as Cllrs at the end of April 2025. Cllrs discussed roles and responsibilities, they will all email Clerk to confirm their preferences by 21st February and they will be agreed at the next meeting.

1. **RIPARIAN RIGHTS FOR RESIDENTS:**

A neighbouring Parish recently posted a statement regarding resident’s riparian rights on social media, SPC shared the information with residents both on the website and social media. A piece will be included in the Silsoe Newsletter to update residents that further information is on the website.

1. **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR:**

Cllr Gearey and Clerk recently met with CBC ASB Officer, PCSO Sarah Carne, Ward Cllr Liz Childs and a representative from Paradigm housing to discuss ASB in the village. Silsoe will be an area of priority for the next 3 months, this will include an increased Police presence. Agreed next steps:

* Coop to report all incidents
* Use Coop foyer for police events in the village
* Make contact with Coop Area manager
* Set up Shopwatch for Barton Le Clay and Silsoe
* Public protection order for Village Park to be investigated
* Police to use Beds Connect to communicate to residents
* Police and Paradigm housing to link re The Conifers

Next meeting 14th April via Teams to discuss.

1. Individual Action plans
2. Utilisation of CBC Safer Neighbourhood Officers
3. Discuss structure of Police ASB Team, dynamics and connection with PCSO
4. **GROUNDS CONTROL:**

Discussions had with David Granger, reducing frequency of cuts, & review process. Potential savings of over £ 10 k per year. Late Feb meeting planned to discuss Bloor in detail.

Silsoe Cricket Club can no longer field a team. Cllr Offer is in discussions with other interested Clubs. The average cost per game for cricket is £60-£100. Cllr Kevan proposed the PC charge £75 a game, seconded by Cllr Appleman, all agreed. The cricket club can have use of the changing and café facilities at the Community Sports centre. Cricket for juniors remains popular 5-8 yrs & 8-11yrs, 8 x One hour sessions Sat am. Cllrs are aware that some of the children meet to run during the winter months, as the PC take on responsibility of this are they will need to ensure that there is insurance in place to cover these sessions, Cllr Gearey will follow this up.

Cllr Gearey has contacted the resident that used to maintain the Cricket Square, he has agreed to start maintaining it once again at a cost of £20 per hour, it will take approximately 8 hours a week to maintain, proposed by Cllr Offer, seconded by Cllr Kevan, all agreed.

RJW value the Hayter Mower £2500 plus vat, similar valuation by David Granger. RJW have a cricket club interested in purchasing it, Cllr Kevan proposed the sale, seconded by Cllr Appleman, all agreed. Cllr Gearey will make the arrangements.

1. **MILLER:**

There is a new Property Manager, Cllr Gearey recently met with her to discuss the Miller area and 6 Courtyards on Bloor. First port in discussion with their mobilisation team re Bloor handover. Bloor residents will incur a service charge similar to Archers Field residents

1. **CRICKET CLUB:** Discussed under Grounds control.

**18/25 Consultations and correspondence:**

The following correspondence was received:

* Crime statistics
* BATPC planning training
* BLMK ICB Winter Communication and engagement
* CBC Budget consultation
* War memorials Trust bulletin
* S106 Parish reports- Topic session
* Buckingham Palace Garden party nomination
* BATPC Nuts and Bolts planning training.

**19/25 AOB:**

* Cllr Mann reported the hedge overgrown on Ampthill Rd; Clerk will report to CBC.
* Restrictions are now in place at the tidy tip, no charges as yet but there is a limit to the number of items that can be deposited annually.
* Cllr Gearey suggested that the PC may benefit from a long-term budget planning meeting looking at a forecast for 5-10 years, Cllr Kevan agreed that would be appropriate once the Bloor handover is complete.
* Muga payment is yet to be received, now looks like it could be end of February, Clerk will follow this up.
* The play area quote from Setter has been agreed, Cllr Kelly is looking at additional items to add, he suggested this be added after the initial works.
* Cllr Kelly updated Cllrs that the Bloor handover is still progressing. He has been in contact with Bloor regarding the Plantation view play area. Clerk advised the PC that as there was a serious accident on the play area and the parents of the child involved were pursuing a claim against Bloor that the equipment was not correctly positioned and therefore dangerous, it was essential that the PC ensure that the equipment is safe. The PC should have evidence that the play area has been checked after the accident and that the position of the equipment was not a contributory factor, without this evidence the PC could be liable if there was a subsequent accident.

**20/25 Date of next meeting:**

The next meeting will be on Monday 3rd March 2025

Signed Date