

**Minutes of meeting of Bletsoe Parish Council held on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at the Village Hall, Memorial Lane, Bletsoe**

**Present:** Ann Gibbons (Chairman), Paul Caves, Mary Laws, Claire Woodward and the Clerk. There were also 9 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Cllr Foster and Cllr Bean – the apologies were accepted.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

All members declared a local interest in matters relating to the NDP and matters relating to the Old Parish Field. Cllr Laws also declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in matters relating to the NDP. However, dispensations have been granted to all members who therefore have the right to speak and vote on this item. All members also declared a local interest in matters relating to the Waiting for the Sun similarly dispensations have been granted to all members who therefore have the right to speak and vote on this item.

3. **To approve the minutes of previous meeting held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July**

*It was resolved* to approve the minutes.

4. **Matters arising from minutes**

Play area repairs

Playground swings completed

Hedge trimming still to be completed

Flooding in Coplowe Lane

The Borough had not contacted Cllr Caves but they had undertaken a site visit.

Waiting for The Sun Site – dog barking

Dog barking is still a problem - Environmental Health are involved and investigating the complaints.

Coplowe Lane Bench

Cllr Bean has marked the spot where the bench should be located.

5. **Public Open Session**

There was a sign in the memorial garden stating No Dogs Allowed. There wasn't any consultation with residents regarding this and under whose authority was this made? *The Chair responded that the voluntary group Barcing had put the sign up and not the Parish Council. The group had undertaken some clearance and improvement works in the Memorial Garden and had put the sign up afterwards.*

Most dog owners are responsible and it is such a shame that we are not allowed to exercise our dogs off the lead in this area. Has there been an issue of fouling in the memorial garden? *Not that we have noticed.* Would the parish council consider having an area that is dog friendly especially since dogs are not permitted off the lead on the playing field? Other parishes offer this type of amenity land including Rushden and Willington. **It was resolved** that the steering group look into this as part of its management plan for the playing field.

Bench – perhaps until a location has been agreed for Coplowe Lane the playing field steering group could borrow this for use on the parish field?

Members agreed this would be acceptable but on a temporary basis. Cllr Caves offered to deliver the bench.

Memorial bench – the Borough tree warden had advised the proposed location under

Clerk

Playing  
Field  
steering  
group

the Oak tree was not ideal. It was most likely that the bench would be located on the paved area to the rear of the village hall.

*Cllr Towler joined the meeting.*

*Trevor Roff joined the meeting.*

At the last meeting we understood there were goalposts that can be used on the field for 5 a side? Are we able to use these? *There are goals stored at the side of the village hall however the netting needs to be put up and taken down so it doesn't cause a problem for the mowers.* Mike Gibbons on behalf of the VHMC *reported that the posts were very old metal ones and no longer fit for purpose. In addition, there is also no storage for either the nets or any new posts and this would need to be considered before making any purchase of equipment.* If costings could be provided the PC would consider this though a suitable storage facility would need to be identified.

It was noted that this summer there had been a large number of local children playing outside and using the field and the play equipment especially in the summer holidays.

6. *Members agreed to alter the order of the agenda and to consider the NDP item at this point in the meeting.*

**NDP – to approve the final questionnaire**

Cllr Laws was concerned about the cost of NDP? *The chair replied that there has been no cost to the PC as grant funding has covered the cost of the NDP process to date. The group now needs to pay for a consultant to undertake the work as the steering group doesn't have the expertise to complete the NDP. Members were asked if they had any questions for Mr Roff who is the consultant from Regeneration Positive. There were no questions.*

Mr Roff re-iterated that the revised questionnaire is a much better document which can now be distributed to the community for their consideration. The NDP group will need to revisit its project plan and continue to monitor progress against this. Some good points have been raised and if exception sites are used the PC need to ensure an S106 agreement will enable local people to benefit i.e. local housing need.

7. **To confirm the terms of reference for the playing field steering group regarding the Wildflower Meadow and to receive a report from the steering group.**

The group had met in August and been through the terms of reference. The revised terms had been circulated to all members and **it was resolved** to accept the new terms of reference. Further research was required to establish if charitable status was necessary. The first draft of a 10-year plan would be submitted to the PC no later than March 2017. There would be a standing item on future parish council agendas and a representative from the steering group would attend.

**Public Liability Insurance – still to be investigated**

Currently there are 3 main groups that operate within the parish plus several individuals. The main groups were the Playing field steering group, the fete committee and the Barcing group. The clerk advised that any volunteers would normally be covered by the parish council's PL insurance however before any work was undertaken evidence of a risk assessment, use of safety equipment would be necessary. It would be beneficial to nominate responsibility to one person from each group who would be aware when work was being undertaken and that volunteers had the necessary safety equipment and training to undertake the task.

Clerk

Clerk

8. **Planning**

The report was noted – there were no new applications for consideration.

The meeting was informed that the application for Growing Beds would be considered by the Borough Planning Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> October. A site visit had taken place today. Residents would be encouraged to attend the meeting to demonstrate their opposition to the application.

Members also discussed the St Modwen Development – this is on land at Thurleigh Airfield in front of the control centre and would include additional workshops and office space. The PC had considered this application but did not object or have any comments on the proposal.

- 9. **To consider a request for hard standing at the bus stop on Coplowe Lane**  
Mr Vine had received a request from several residents to ask if hard standing could be installed at the bus stop on Coplowe Lane. Mr Strong owns the land and he has given permission on two occasions for this work to be carried out (18 June and 26 August). All the materials have been donated and the parish council had no objection to this work being undertaken.

P Vine

- 10. **Financial Matters**
  - 1. **To approve the accounts for payment**

Ch No	Payee	£	Description of services
1393	Regeneration Positive	350.00	Retainer Fee (June and August) and liaison with Woods Hardwick
1394	BDO Stoy LLP	120.00	External Audit Fee
1395	Bletsoe Village Hall Fund	10.00	Hall hire September PC meeting
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>480.00</b>	

**It was resolved** to approve the accounts for payment

- 2. To note spend against budget for 2016-17

The report was noted

- 3. To note completion of the Annual Audit for the financial year 2015-16

**It was resolved** to accept the completed annual audit – there were no matters arising from the external audit. *The annual return was available for inspection at the meeting.*

- 11. **To consider options to reduce parking congestion**

**It was resolved** to wait for the results of the NDP questionnaire and also the outcome of the recent funding application for play equipment.

- 12. **Parish Councillor training – to consider a joint refresher training session for parish councillors to be hosted by Bletsoe PC and delivered by BATPC**

Cllrs Laws had recently attended a councillor refresher course delivered by Louise Ashmore from BATPC. The course was very useful and interesting. There were many councillors with a range of experience some of whom had been parish councillors for many years. Perhaps it might be good practise for all councillors to attend a refresher course. Louise Ashmore had offered to run the course at Bletsoe. The cost would be £250 for up to 8 delegates and an additional £25 for each person wishing to attend. Bletsoe PC could host the training and perhaps invite parish councillors from neighbouring parishes this would help spread the cost. **It was resolved** to contact local parish councils and invite their members to attend. Once we have an idea of numbers a date can be set. This would be an agenda item for the November meeting.

Clerk

- 13. **Parish Concerns**

It was reported that there had been an increase in the number of cars racing up and

down Bourne End Lane.

It was reported that there was an increase in noise from car alarms on the cars being transported. Could the parish council contact SMH fleet solutions?

Clerk

Residents on Bourne End Lane have asked if a mirror could be installed at the top of Bourne End Lane to aid motorists using this junction. It was noted that this is a Borough Highways matter and not something the parish could undertake. However, Highways do not support the use of mirrors as these can cause glare which in itself can be dangerous to motorists.

Is the parish council complaints policy on the website? The chairman confirmed this is on the website under the parish council section entitled useful information.

Installation of gate at Old Way – Cllr Gibbons to contact Chris Horne.

Chair

It was reported that the Mayor had recently visited Bletsoe.

It was reported that Mr Allen is applying for legal aid to take his appeal to the European Court.

Cllr Gibbons reported that she had undertaken a site visit with Cllr Foster to view some BpHA developments. They were impressed with the schemes that have been delivered. The PC need to consider whether they wish to work with BpHA or alternatively they could try working with other companies. Does the PC want to put this on the agenda for November? Some members felt it would be worth waiting until after the results of the NDP or even the NDP plan are completed. Until the NDP results have been considered then there might be a perception that the PC are moving down a route that members of the public have not yet agreed to?

Cllr Gibbons had received correspondence from Gill Cowie (Senior Planner at Bedford Borough Council working with parishes on neighbourhood development plans) and this confirmed that exception sites can only be delivered by housing associations. Cllr Gibbons would circulate the email to all parish councillors.

Chair

Only half of the grass was recently cut on Coplowe Lane. Can we chase the Borough to ask them to complete the works?

Clerk

**14. Date of next meeting – Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

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Approved by Chairman 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016