

Minutes of Meeting of Bletsoe Parish Council held on Monday 20th April 2015 at the Village Hall, Memorial Lane, Bletsoe

Present:

Present: Ann Gibbons (Chairman), Paul Caves, John Economides, Alison Field-Foster, Mary Laws and the Clerk.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Edward Bean – **it was resolved** to accept the apologies.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs Gibbons, Laws, and Caves declared an interest in matters relating to the Waiting to the Sun planning application item however dispensations have been granted to these members who therefore have the right to speak and vote on this item.

New dispensation requests would be considered following the May 2015 elections.

3. **To approve the minutes of previous meeting held on 19th January 2015**

It was resolved to accept the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

4. **Matters Arising**

The clerk reported that planning enforcement had advised that there were no conditions relating to lighting attached to planning application 04/01506/FUL for the stable block.

Planning enforcement had undertaken a site visit to plot 1 Long Haydon and issued a planning contravention notice.

5. **Public Open Session**

There were no questions from the public.

6 **Planning**

The report was noted

It was resolved to make no comments on application 15/00738/FUL St Mary's Church and also 15/00508/FUL Coplowe Barn.

A new application had been received and was considered - 15/00571/S73A was a retrospective planning application for the erection of external lighting at Thurleigh Airfield. Members reviewed the plans and discussed the location of the new lighting some of which would be switched on all night. **It was resolved** to object to the application on the grounds of light pollution.

Clerk

Members were also advised that an application for a Wind Turbine at Twinwoods, Clapham (14/03051/FUL) had been submitted. Although the parish council had not been consulted members were asked to consider a response since this application was in a neighbouring parish and would be visible from some parts of Bletsoe. The turbine would be located within 90 feet of a public bridleway and the British Horse Society had objected to this due to shadow scatter. **It was resolved** to object to this application which would be prominently visible for many miles and no amount of planting or landscaping would mitigate the visual impact on the area.

Clerk

The clerk was asked to contact planning enforcement to ask for an update regarding Long Haydons.

7 **To receive an updated regarding the Neighbourhood Development Plan**

Cllr Economides gave an update on progress to date with the plan as follows:

Bletsoe's Neighbourhood Development Plan was officially launched in September 2014. Over 40 villagers attended the launch in the village hall and we obtained valuable ideas from them about what issues they would like the plan to encompass. The main issues were numbers of new houses, best locations for new houses,

speeding through the village and parking problems within the village. The NDP committee then issued a questionnaire to every household in the village, to ensure we gave every resident the opportunity to have their say. All the above issues were covered and more, including broadband speed and types of new housing that we would like to see. In addition, a housing needs survey was also conducted by The Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity. This survey confirmed our own findings that 2 to 3 bedroom type housing with up to 10 new units was favoured. This survey is available for inspection should anyone be interested (the conclusion and recommendations is attached). I also attach a summary of our findings from the Bletsoe NDP questionnaire conducted in December 2014.

We have also engaged with the Bedford Borough Council Planning Department. A meeting took place in March this year where we discussed our findings re housing and favoured locations (these are the old village parish field, the corner plot at The Avenue/A6 and the rear of The Old Rectory). We also discussed the parking issue and the possibility of extending the village hall car park, for daily parking use. The BBC confirmed that up to 10 new units for Bletsoe, would be acceptable as far as they were concerned, although this was stated "off the record".

All expenses incurred thus far for the use of a consultant to assist with the production of our NDP, have been covered by a grant from the DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government). We continue to work towards a year end target for the production of our final plan and this is well within the BBC's overall schedule for rural NDP's.

8 **Correspondence**

The old village field is currently rented out for grazing. The tenant has contacted the chairman as she is concerned about the sycamore trees in the field. The leaves and seeds are poisonous to horses and if ingested can be fatal. **It was resolved** to undertake a site visit to establish how many sycamore trees were on the field, their location and size. The clerk would also ask a local tree surgeon to visit for advice. This would be reported back at the May meeting.

All
Clerk

Ratification of decision to accept a defibrillator for the village hall from Beds Fire Service and to approve the cost of installation and future maintenance costs. **It was resolved** that the council accept the defibrillator on behalf of the parish of Bletsoe. This would be located on the outside wall of the village hall and the council would pay for its installation and future maintenance costs. The clerk would arrange for delivery and installation in next few weeks.

Clerk

9 **Financial Matters:**

(i) To approve the accounts for payment

It was resolved to approve the accounts for payment.

| Ch No | Payee | £ | Description |
|-------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| 1321 | Eon | 71.82 | Street lighting maintenance |
| 1322 | Bletsoe Village Hall Fund | 10.00 | Hall hire April 2015 meeting |
| | TOTAL | 81.82 | |

The reserves were noted and current bank balances were noted as follows:
 National Westminster Bank £30,048.69 of which reserves of £13,312 for drainage for the playing field, £2,138.47 and £1000.00 for new play equipment (payment already received from Borough Ward Funds) – installation due at end of April.

(ii) spend against budget – as this was the first meeting of the new financial year no spend of budget was submitted.

(iii) **It was resolved** to approve the salary increment for the Clerk following her completion and award of the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA). The chairman would inform the Borough payroll of the decision and the increase would be backdated to 1st April which was when the qualification was awarded.

Chairman

10 **Clerk’s report**

The report was noted. There were no items not included elsewhere on the agenda requiring action.

11 **Parish Concerns**

Road signage at Bourne End crossroads – this had still not been actioned by the Borough who had offered to mount the existing signs onto large yellow background signs which would be more visible plus some rumble strips which should encourage motorists to slow down on the approach to the crossroads.

Clerk/A Foster

Condition of Coplowe Lane – there were several large potholes and Cllr Caves had reported these to the Highways Helpdesk which appeared to be the most effective method of communication with Highways.

Members discussed the current bus route along Coplowe Lane and raised concerns once again about its suitability. The problem is that the lane is quite narrow and winding and is used by pedestrians and horses. The buses do not appear to be keeping within the speed limit and there are limited suitable passing places. It was noted that the council do recognise it is an important service to residents and do not wish to lose the service but for a compromise to be reached. Cllr Foster offered to discuss the matter with Chris Pettifer at Bedford Borough Council.

A Foster

Community Post Office – this a mobile services offered to rural parishes. Currently this operates at Thurleigh and Little Staughton. The service offers residents the opportunity to pay bills and withdraw cash from the mobile van. This is wheelchair accessible and usually visits once a week. It was resolved to contact the post office to enquire if a service could be provided to Bletsoe ideally on a Tuesday to co-incide with Tuesday tea shop.

Clerk

Sign at Castle Barns – members discussed the location of the new sign which is still causing confusion to delivery drivers. Cllr Economides reported that the residents group had approved the location of the sign and although he had proposed placing some additional arrows indicating the direction of the Barn this was not met with the approval of the majority and would not be installed.

Cllr Laws informed the meeting that she had recently submitted an outline planning application for the first field located on the corner of The Avenue and the A6. Once the application was received by the parish council this would be considered. Cllr Laws understood that she would have to declare a personal and financial interest in this application and would not be permitted to take part in any discussion regarding the application.

- 12 **Date of next meeting Thursday 21st May 2015** – which will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council .

.....
Approved by Chairman 21st May 2015

DRAFT