

Minutes of Meeting of Bletsoe Parish Council held on Monday 30th November 2015 at the Village Hall, Memorial Lane, Bletsoe

Present:

Present: Ann Gibbons (Chairman), Edward Bean, Paul Caves, Mary Laws, Alison Foster, Claire Woodward and the Clerk. There were also 3 members of the public and Borough Cllr Martin Towler.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from John Economides – **it was resolved** to accept the apologies for absence

2. **Declarations of Interest**

All members declared an interest in matters relating to the Waiting for the Sun planning application item however dispensations have been granted to members who therefore have the right to speak and vote on this item.

Cllr Foster re-iterated that all members should consider applying to the Clerk for a dispensation in all matters relating to the NDP and in particular to matters relating to the Old Parish Field.

ALL
Clerk

3. **To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 28th September**

It was resolved to accept the minutes with a minor amendment to reflect that Cllr Foster had proposed that all members should apply for dispensations in relation to all matters relating to the NDP and in particular to matters relating to the Old Parish Field.

4. **Matters Arising**

Members were asked to encourage residents to use the new mobile post office service. There were no matters not covered elsewhere within the agenda.

5. **Public Open Session**

Mike Gibbon's chair of the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) gave an update regarding renovation works for the Village Hall. A written report was circulated to all members. The committee have agreed to spend their accrued funds on the priority area of the kitchen and will look for grant support for the remaining work – toilets, storage, improvements to the main hall in the future. Three quotes had been obtained for the works to the kitchen and the total cost will be £21,500 + VAT. The current balance of village hall funds is £27,000 however a balance of at least £5,000 should be retained at all times to pay for any urgent day to day maintenance requirements. Therefore the VHMC is asking the parish council for funding of £4,000 towards this project. This item would be considered at the January meeting.

Clerk

Shane Hughes updated the council on his proposal for a wildflower project in the fallow area near the top of the village playing field. Friends of the Earth have supplied seeds free of charge for an area of approximately 300 m². The maintenance regime would require 1 deep cut in the Spring and using Yellow Rattle which is an annual plant used to keep the grass down and allow the wildflowers to grow. In addition he would like to install a small wooden plaque (copy of design will be emailed to all members). In March he proposes to hold an event to let everyone know how the meadow will be maintained.

Members were supportive of the idea and asked whether there were any cost implications and what could the parish council do to assist. Members were advised that the anticipated costs would be approximately £400-500 plus cost of one grass cut and any initial groundworks.

Members suggested involving the local community in particular the Barcing group,

local children and to keep the parish council updated.

6. **To receive an update regarding the Grant Palmer bus service**

Following the September meeting the Clerk had written to Grant Palmer and Bedford Borough Council regarding concern about the safety of buses using Coplowe Lane and in particular buses travelling too fast heading down the lane towards The Avenue and near the exit with Castle Barns. Grant Palmer had responded and this had been circulated to all members. The company were keen to work with the parish council to ensure it provides a good service whilst respecting safety to all road users. If the council had any further concerns they would welcome the opportunity to discuss further. The Borough had not yet responded. Cllr Bean reported that he had been using the service regularly since the last meeting and had not witnessed any problems in terms of speeding or altercations with other motorists on Coplowe Lane. **It was resolved** to write to local horse riders to advise on the timing of the bus services using Coplowe Lane and to also circulate a copy of the timetable to residents living in Castle Barns.

Cllr Bean/Cllr Gibbons

7. **To receive a report from the NDP group and consider any recommendations**

The steering group had met and discussed proposals for sites to be put forward for the Local Plan 2032. The group had met with BpHA and discussed the possibility of a small development of starter homes/shared ownership on the Old Parish Field off Captains Close. A Highways report had been received from Beds BC which did raise concerns regarding access to the field (vehicle access for construction and also refuse lorries). The group now seeks the support of the parish council to put forward the Old Parish Field as a site for development in the Local Plan 2032. Members wanted assurance that the parish council can specify who is offered the properties. In addition members did not want the development to include social housing since the parish already had a large proportion of social housing. It was proposed (M Laws) and seconded (C Woodward) that the Old Parish Field be put forward as a site for development in the Local Plan 2032. **It was resolved** (all in favour) to submit the application for the Old Parish Field for a minimum of 5 houses and a maximum of 9 houses.

Clerk

8. **Planning**

(i) The report was noted. A new application had been received, 15/02408/FULWM for Bedford Autodrome in Thurleigh. The application is for removal of concrete and restoration to grassland, formation of a wader habitat and a pond. Members did not object to the application but expressed concern regarding the number of lorry movements transporting the concrete from the site and over what time period. In addition the route lorries would take as several roads were subject to weight limits in particular Coplowe Lane. **It was resolved** to write to Beds BC and ask for clarification on these points.

Clerk

(ii) Diversion of public bridleway no 10 – there were no objections to this proposal.

Clerk

9. **Bedford Borough Council local consultations to consider:**

- (i) **Local Plan 2032**
- (ii) **Council Tax support grant scheme**
- (iii) **Rural Grants scheme**

Local Plan - members comments:

- Land owned by the Borough has not been forward for G&T sites in the call for sites
- What provision is there for public transport for local school children as part of the proposals for new housing?
- General infrastructure – can local employment sustain the number of houses being proposed?
- In order to support the local economy there should be free car parking after

10am in the Town Centre

It was resolved to respond to the Local Plan (a draft would be circulated to all members for comments prior to submitting to the Borough for the 14th December deadline.)

Clerk

Council Tax Support Scheme – **it was resolved** to make no comments on this consultation

Clerk

10. Rural Grants Scheme – it was resolved to object to any reduction in rural funding
To approve the calendar of meetings for 2016

The calendar of meetings had been circulated prior to the meeting. However, Cllr Foster would have been unable to make the majority of the meetings due to a clash with Harrold Parish Council. **It was resolved** to alter the date of meetings to the 1st Monday of the month with the exception of May (bank holiday) and January (Christmas and New Year period). In addition **it was resolved** not to hold a separate date for the Annual Parish Meeting which would now take place prior to the May parish council meeting. The dates would need to be checked to ensure hall availability.

Clerk

Cllr Gibbons

11. **Financial matters**

(i) **It was resolved** to approve the accounts for payment

Ch No	£	Payee	Description
1353	41.85	A Southern	Working from home allowance Oct-Dec and print costs for flyers regarding new mobile post office service
TOTAL	41.85		

In addition a quote for the repairs to the bus shelter had been received for £270. **It was resolved** to accept the quote.

Clerk

Cllr Gibbons

(ii) **To note the annual spend against budget**

The report was noted.

(iii) To consider any proposals for Ward Funding

It was noted that the Church had applied for £1000 towards the restoration project but the parish council could also apply.

It was resolved to request funding for a bench on Coplowe Lane (recycled materials). Cllr Towler asked for 3 quotes to submit to the Borough.

Clerk

12. **Clerk's report**

The report was noted.

Members were asked to consider any items for next year's budget. Cllr Bean suggested the church might approach the parish council for financial support and the Clerk asked for this to be submitted in writing prior to the January meeting for consideration in next year's budget/precept.

Cllr Bean

Clerk

13. **Parish Concerns**

Bourne End Lane – ditch was still full of foul water could this be chased again. Members were advised that the Borough had inspected the ditch and cleared it and were unsure as to the source of the water. Members suggested the water may be coming from nearby houses that had recently extended their properties

Clerk

and perhaps the grey water drainage had been incorrectly routed.

Fly tipping Bourne End Lane opposite “The Roses”

Top of Coplowe Lane nature reserve associated with species of orchids – this area is being repeatedly driven over and the verges damaged can this be reported to the Borough or Beds Wildlife Trust?

Rumble Strips had been put in at the Bourne End crossroads which was good news. However, the red warning triangle sign at the crossroads was damaged and needed reporting to Highways.

Riseley crossroads – concern regarding safety as traffic is travelling at speed coming from Thurleigh Airfield to the A6. Could we write to the Borough and ask them to consider reducing the speed limit on this stretch of highway?

North End – from Thurleigh Road to the end of The Avenue again motorists appear to be travelling too fast for this stretch of the highway which is narrow and winding and could this be reduced to 40mph?

Cllr Foster reported on an initiative to have dedicated Special Constables in rural areas. Unlike PcSOs, Special Constables have the same powers as Police Officers. The scheme would see special constables allocated to rural parishes (ideally they would live nearby) which should give a real policing presence. This proposal is being considered by the PCC and Beds BC.

Defibrillator training – will take place on 20 January at Thurleigh Village Hall and anyone is welcome to attend. Details of this and the code for the defibrillator would be included in the next parish leaflet due for circulation this month.

Jonathan Knights has stepped down from the Town Close Charity and a new trustee is required.

In addition Mr Knights will not be producing the Bletsoe Gazette and a new editor is required (details will be included in next parish leaflet). Funds of £523.05 have been passed to the parish council and these would be held in the parish council account (as earmarked reserves) until a new editor or a decision taken regarding the future of the publication has been agreed.

Bletsoe Village Hall – request for use for emergency scenario by Beds BC. This had been passed to the VHMC.

Results of speed survey – Cllr Foster had received this information and would circulate to the Clerk.

Had a date been set for a joint police meeting? Cllr Towler reported that a date had not yet been set but he would let the parish council know once it had.

14. **Date of next meeting Monday 11th January 2016**

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

Cllr Gibbons

ALL

Clerk

Cllr Gibbons

VHMC

Cllr Foster

Cllr Towler

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Approved by Chairman 11th January 2016