

Minutes of Meeting of Bletsoe Parish Council held on Monday 1 July 2013 at the Village Hall, Memorial Lane, Bletsoe

Present:

Cllrs Ann Gibbons (chairman), Edward Bean, Paul Caves, Debbie Hall, Alison Field-Foster, Borough Councillor Ian Clifton and the Clerk were in attendance. There were 2 representatives from Cedars Coaches and 2 representatives from Bedford Borough Council transport department plus 4 members of the public.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mary Laws and Matt Cox – the apologies were accepted

Declarations of interest

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

To approve the minutes of previous meeting held on 20 May 2013

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

Clerk

Matters arising from minutes

Cllr Clifton offered to pursue the matter regarding Bourne End crossroads | Clifton

Public Open Session

There were no questions from the public.

To note the play area inspection report and approve any recommendations

The report had been circulated to all members and highlighted some repairs to the slide in the children's play area, overhanging vegetation and wear on the chains on the swings. Cllr Caves reported that all works had been undertaken and some additional welding to the slide was scheduled for the following week. The chairman thanked Cllr Caves for attending to this so promptly.

7. To consider a response to Cedar Coaches regarding the de-registration of bus routes 151 & 152

The process for de-registration of bus routes 151 and 152 commenced on 19 June and the services will cease on 30 August. Joanne Moore from Bedford Borough Council then reported to the council what the current situation was. The Borough had now emailed other operators to see if there is any interest in taking on this route. 2 operators had come forward and discussions were ongoing. Passenger data is incomplete at the moment including information regarding concessionary pass holders. There is no additional funding from Beds BC which means that the route cannot be subsidised so the Borough need to look at the existing rural services to see if any routes can be adjusted to incorporate stopping at Bletsoe. Members asked about the Door to Door services provided by BRCC but were advised this is only available to concessionary pass holders who can book journeys in advance (24hrs notice required) but the problem is that they would have to give up their Bedford Borough concessionary bus pass – this is being reviewed at the moment.

Members asked how long would it take to register a new provider should one come forward as the 30 August is not that far away? The Borough is aware of the tight deadline and would endeavour to register a new provider as quickly as possible. Members also asked how long would it take the Borough to replan its existing rural services? This was a lengthy process and the Borough are looking at all possible options to ensure Bletsoe is not left without a bus service. Cllr Bean had already circulated a proposed route which he asked Beds BC to consider – this might make the route more financially viable and appealing to would be operators. Cllr Bean offered to pursue this further with Beds BC in the coming weeks.

A representative from Cedar Coaches then explained that the company were disappointed to have to withdraw from the routes but that they were not financially viable and had been running at a loss for the past 2 years. There would be a further meeting with Bedford Borough Council and Cedar Coaches during the forthcoming week.

The members of the public present praised Cedar Coaches for providing such an efficient service and were extremely concerned that they would be isolated is a solution was not found.

8 To consider creating an additional gap in the hedge bordering The Orchard to create a walkway through to Memorial Lane

By removing a small section of the hedge this would create a natural walkway diagonally across the Orchard from The Avenue into Memorial Lane. There was a small elder tree that would need to be removed to create the gap. **It was resolved** that Cllr Bean would remove the Elder and create the gap in the hedgerow and that Chris Horne would be instructed to cut both sides of the hedgerow which was currently extremely overgrown.

Cllr Bean

Clerk

9 To consider supporting an application for a Gypsy and Traveller site at Fairhill and to approve a financial contribution of £300

An application was being prepared by several local councillors. This application would make use of reports that had already been prepared for Bedford Borough Council. There was concern regarding copyright but the company concerned had given their assurance that use of the reports would not trigger any claims for copyright. A fully application would be submitted in the next week and the costs for this were: £1,000 DLP Planning Guidance on the application and £3, 400 fees to Bedford Borough Council. Members had already met informally to discuss whether they would support an application and it was resolved to support the planning application. Members had been asked to consider making a financial contribution initially of £300 but now that actual costs had been confirmed perhaps a larger contribution might be more appropriate. Cllrs Bean & Field-Foster abstained from taking part in the voting process. Cllr Gibbons proposed a sum of £1K and this was agreed by the remaining members of the council. In addition it was noted that other local parishes in north Bedfordshire would also be approached to provide funding for the application.

10 To receive an update on the Gypsy & Traveller site

The planning appeal had been postponed to allow time for the Fairhill planning application to be heard. A new date had been set for 24th September and would be held in the Council Chambers at Borough Hall.

11 To receive an update regarding the Bletsoe Neighbourhood Development Plan

Members of the group are Jamie Hassalls, Paul Caves, Paul Laws, Edward Bean and Ann Gibbons. Cllr Caves gave a brief report on progress to date. The application needs to be submitted for the whole area within the Bletsoe Parish boundary. Cllr Caves agreed to speak with P Caves Damon Goodyear as there was concern regarding "double funding" for the area in Bletsoe already submitted within the RAE NDP which has just been approved. There would be a further meeting regarding the plan on 10th July and a public consultation meeting on Tuesday 17th September.

12 Planning – to note the report and comment on any new planning applications received

The report was noted and there were no new applications to consider.

13 **Financial Matters****(i) to approve the accounts for payment**

It was resolved: to approve the accounts for payment. In addition payments of £36.50 to J Eames (war memorial plants) and £376.90 Kimbolton Fireworks were approved.

Ch No	Payee	£	Description
1228	A Southern	52.60	Working from home allowance & mileage
1229	Bletsoe Village Hall	10.00	Hall hire July meeting
1230	Playsafety Limited	156.00	Annual play inspections
1231	Bedford Borough Council	180.00	Annual payroll fee
1232	J Eames	36.50	Plants for war memorial (S137)
1233	Kimbolton Fireworks	376.90	Fireworks for village display
TOTAL		812.00	

Clerk

(ii) To note the annual spend against budget

The annual spend against budget was noted.

14 **To consider the draft Risk Assessment policy**

The Clerk had circulated a draft risk assessment policy for consideration by members of the council. This was a recommendation arising out of the Internal Auditors report and is a requirement by the External Auditors. Members asked for more time to consider the report and would email and suggestions to the Clerk prior to the next meeting. **It was resolved** to carry forward this item to the September meeting.

ALL
Clerk15 **To consider the calendar of meetings for the remainder of 2013**

The September and November dates would remain as the first Monday of the month however it would be beneficial if the parish council meetings could move to the 3rd Monday of the month. The Clerk would contact the village hall bookings officer to enquire if this was possible and report back at the next meeting.

Clerk

16 **To note the Clerk’s report**

The report was noted.

Cllr Gibbons agreed to find out the types of trees planted in the village field and inform the Clerk so that replacements could be planted by Beds BC in the Autumn. A Gibbons

Cllr Bean offered to pursue the action regarding high-speed broadband With Paul Vanns at Bedford Borough Council – the fibre actually runs along the A6 so it would seem logical that we could branch off this into Bletsoe. E Beans

The Clerk would contact Western Power to arrange a site visit to discuss the overhead power lines and concerns regarding safety and whether we could get the cabling put underground. Clerk

17 **Parish Concerns**

The Red Cross had been collecting door to door in the parish recently. Unfortunately one of the collectors had asked for bank details in order to set up a regular debit payment to the charity. Whilst it transpired that the collection was legitimate there was concern for the elderly and more vulnerable residents living in the parish. Could the trading standards department supply the council with some No Cold Calling Zone stickers that residents could display by their front door? The Clerk offered to obtain the stickers and make them available for the NDP consultation on 17 September. Clerk

18 **Date of Next Meeting** – Monday 2 September 2013 at 7.30pm

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Approved by Chairman 2 September 2013