

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

Present:

Present: Ann Gibbons (Chairman), Edward Bean, John Economides, Mary Laws, Claire Woodward and the Clerk. There were also 2 members of the public present and Borough Cllr Martin Towler.

1. **Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies.

2. **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 these members who therefore have the right to speak and vote on this item.

3. **Co-option of new parish councillor**

A personal statement had been submitted by Claire Woodward of no 12 The Avenue and circulated to all members prior to the meeting. **It was resolved** to co-opt Ms Woodward with immediate effect.

4. **To approve the minutes of previous meeting held on 21st May 2015**

There were a few minor amendments as follows:

Item 7 – Cllr Laws declared a local and pecuniary interest in Item 11 not item 15

Item 13 – this should be revised to “the Old Parish Field”

Item 16 – to include “and David Baker” offered to join the group

The amendments were approved and **it was resolved** to accept the revised minutes as a true record of the meeting.

5. **Matters Arising**

The Clerk would write again regarding provision of a mobile post office.

Members asked the Clerk to write to David Baker and Jonathan Knights to thank them for their work in the past on the planning sub committee and to inform them that the planning sub committee is no longer required - all planning applications are now considered at full council meetings. The parish council would still value their input on any major planning applications.

Borough Cllr Martin Towler joined the meeting.

There were no other matters which are not included elsewhere on the agenda.

6. **Public Open Session**

Had the parish council any long term projects in mind at the moment?

With the exception of the Neighbourhood Development Plan there were no other long term projects planned by the parish council.

Claire Woodward joined the meeting and was welcomed by the Chairman.

7. **Update regarding the Grant Palmer bus service**

Cllr Bean reported that he was a frequent user of the bus service and in the past two months felt that the drivers were being more cautious when travelling through the parish at speeds of 20mph or below. Having spoken to the bus drivers they were aware that residents in Bletsoe were concerned about buses travelling too fast along Coploue Lane particularly on the approach to Castle Barns. Cllr Economides reported that he had recently witnessed a bus travelling at speed up the lane near the approach to Castle Barns. **It was resolved** that Cllr Economides would log the day and time if this occurred again and pass this information onto Cllr Bean. Additional signs had been installed at both ends of Coploue Lane to advise motorists to slow down for horses.

JE

8. **Planning**

14/00815/FULWM – Growing Beds land off Milton Road (Thurleigh). Members had viewed the revised plans prior to the meeting. Members were still concerned about traffic, noise, odour, dust, the impact on the nature reserve and proximity to neighbouring properties. **It was resolved** to object to the application as members were not convinced the revised planning application offered any real solutions to the objections raised in response to the original application. Cllr Economides, Towler and Woodward would circulate their personal letters of objection to the Clerk who would incorporate any additional points raised into the parish council's letter of objection.

Clerk

9. **Financial matters**

(i) **It was resolved** to approve the accounts for payment including an additional payment to Chris Horne Gardens Ltd for £201.60 for grass cutting in June.

Ch No	£	Payee	Description
1331	36.00	CPRE	Membership fee
1332	71.82	EoN	Street lighting maintenance fee
1333	37.00	A Southern	Working from home allowance
1334	403.20	Chris Horne Gardens	Grass cutting
1335	10.00	Bletsoe Village Hall Fund	Hall hire July meeting
1336	201.60	Chris Horne Gardens	Grass cutting
TOTAL	1889.60		

Clerk

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

The report was noted

(iii) **Request for funding towards the village hall refurbishments**

Unfortunately the application to Biffa had not been successful so the committee are proposing to remodel the kitchen and install new units and white goods. The cost of the project would be approximately £25,000 and the committee are looking for a contribution of £5,000 from the parish council. There followed a brief discussion and members discussed the amount of reserves currently held by the village hall management committee (understood to be approximately £22K). Cllr Gibbons advised that the village hall management committee could not commit the full amount of reserves as it need to hold back some reserves for day to day operating costs and any unexpected repairs that may arise. It was noted that the committee intend to make an application to the Rural Grants Scheme (Beds BC). **It was resolved** to ask the village hall committee to provide copies of the quotations for the work and also to confirm how much they will be contributing towards the project. This information should be given to the Clerk who would circulate to all members by email. The clerk confirmed there were sufficient undesignated reserves to make this contribution as this had been considered when setting this year's Precept.

V Hall committee

The village hall management committee also enquired if the parish council could (as owners of the building) place the orders for the works through the council in order to reclaim the VAT. The clerk suggested this was legally possible since the village hall is devolved to a separate charitable trust, and all operational costs are currently met by the trust including annual insurance. **It was resolved** to ask BATPC, the SLCC and the VAT office for clarification regarding reclaiming VAT for works to the village hall.

Clerk

10. **Clerk's report**

The report was noted. Cllr Gibbons volunteered to undertake the weekly checks on the defibrillator once it was installed. There were no other items not included elsewhere on the agenda requiring action.

11. **Parish Concerns**

Cllr Gibbons and Laws had recently attended a Bedford Borough training session on "Ethical Governance". The training was very informative and if anyone wanted a copy of the power point presentation notes these could be obtained from Cllr Gibbons.

Flashing street light on Coplowe Lane – please provide street lamp number to the Clerk

Clerk

When is the decision for the Waiting for the Sun site?

The hearing had taken place and a decision should be made by the 31st July by the Planning Inspector to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State would then inform the Borough.

The cabinet at the Sharnbrook crossroads near to the pumping station had been repainted in anti graffiti coating.

Bonfires – it was reported that a few residents were having bonfires and this was causing a nuisance to neighbouring properties. The clerk would check the regulations regarding times and frequency when bonfires are permitted.

Clerk

A letter of complaint had been received from a resident who had been exercising his dog off the lead in the children's play area. The complaint is that Cllr Caves had been rude to him and asked him to leave the play area. **It was resolved** to write to the resident to explain that dogs are not permitted under any circumstances in the play area (there are several signs which state this on the play area fencing). Cllr Caves kindly volunteers to oversee the play area on behalf of the parish council and it is a reasonable request to ask members of the public to leave the play area if they have a dog with them. The parish council have received numerous complaints from members of the public who are concerned about dog mess in the play area and the real danger this poses i.e. "Toxocariasis".

It was reported that the BARCing group had recently refurbished the notice board near the memorial garden.

A working party of parents had recently carried out minor repairs and sanded down and re-painted the play area equipment as highlighted in the recent play area inspection – the parish council would like to thank everyone for their help with this.

Cllr Towler would be organising a joint meeting with the local police, highways, and a representative from Bedford Borough council to discuss broadband. This would be held in the Autumn and members offered to host the meeting in Bletsoe.

12. **Date of next meeting Monday 28th September 2015**

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Approved by Chairman 28th September 2015