

Minutes of meeting of Bletsoe Parish Council held on Monday 9th January 2017 at the Village Hall, Memorial Lane, Bletsoe

Present:

Present: Ann Gibbons (Chairman), Paul Caves, Mary Laws, Edward Bean, Paul Vine and the Clerk. There were also 5 members of the public and Borough Cllr Martin Towler.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Cllr Foster – 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. 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 (except Cllr Vine) who therefore have the right to speak and vote on this item.

Cllrs Laws declared a local and disclosable pecuniary interest regarding item 11 & 12 – all matters relating to the NDP

Cllr Vine declared a local interest regarding items 8 & 9 – matters relating to the Lady Smockers

3. **To approve the minutes of previous meeting held on Monday 14th November**

It was resolved to approve the minutes

4. **Matters arising from minutes**

There were no matters not included elsewhere within the agenda.

5. **Public Open Session**

At the last parish council meeting I asked a question about question H5 and I have not yet received a reply to this.

Cllr Gibbons responded that an email was circulated to all parish councillors and this addressed the question raised during the November public open session. Cllr Gibbons apologised to Mr Laws for not forwarding the email onto him. It was noted that the questionnaire had been ratified by the PC prior to circulating to all residents.

Why was the question changed and question H5 so different?

Cllr Gibbons agreed to ask Trevor Roff from Regeneration Positive to respond directly to Mr Laws.

There were no further questions.

6. **Planning**

The Parish Council have been consulted regarding application number 16/03625/FUL for Pippin Cottage which is outside the parish. There were no comments regarding this application and no other applications to consider. The planning report was noted.

7. **To consider a proposal regarding use of permissive paths on land owned by Mrs Knights including a yearly donation for tree planting**

A written proposal from Mrs Knights had been circulated to all members. The proposal would allow members of the public continued use of permissive paths on Mrs Knight's land. The parish council had been asked to support the proposal and publicise the new arrangements. In addition, the parish council were asked for a small yearly donation towards the cost of tree planting (approximate cost £50 per annum) and to pay for any new signage (approximate cost £50). Members voted in favour of this proposal and **it was resolved** to include £50 in the yearly budget for tree planting and to pay for the purchase of new signs.

Clerk

8. **Parish grass cutting**

The parish council's current grass cutting contractor Chris Horne has informed the council he is altering his business and will no longer be providing grass cutting services for the parish. The parish council have two choices:

- Seek an alternative contractor
- Ask the Borough council to undertake the grass cutting within the 30mph area of the village, provide a yearly grant to the PCC for grass cutting and PCC to organise their own contractor and to either find volunteers or a local gardener who is willing to cut the play area. This area is cut 10 times yearly.

It was resolved to instruct Beds BC to carry out the grass cutting of the village verges within the 30mph area. It was noted that Beds BC only guarantee to cut the verges 6 times per year which is less than our current contractor.

It was resolved to award an annual grant to St Mary's PCC to cover the cost of grass cutting up to a maximum of £500 per calendar year (based on 10 cuts).

It was resolved to ask residents if they knew anyone who could cut the play area 10 times yearly and ask them to contact the parish clerk for more information.

Clerk

Cllr Gibbons

9. **To receive a report and consider any proposals from the Lady Smockers**

A written report had been circulated to all members. The Lady Smockers would like permission for 2 compost bays on the field. The cost would be approximately £240 and this could be funded out of this year's budget. **It was resolved** to grant permission for the compost bays. Has the parish council allocated any money to The Lady Smockers for the financial year 2017-18? It was confirmed that £500 had been allocated to The Lady Smockers in the proposed budget for 2017-18.

Lady Smockers

The group now has a range of equipment including a sit on lawn mower, hand tools, protective equipment etc and a permanent storage facility is required. The group would ideally like a 10 x 15 wooden shed and the approximate cost would be £3K. The shed would be located near the pond and tucked away out of sight from the main part of the field. The Lady Smockers are seeking funding from the parish council for the cost of the shed. It was suggested that the Lady Smockers and the Village Hall might wish to share storage facilities and therefore costs. There was also some concern that the proposed location was hidden away and perhaps it would be better to locate the shed closer to the village hall which also might provide an opportunity for electricity to be available. **It was resolved** that the Lady Smockers and the village hall management committee would discuss further the most suitable location and type of storage facility as a steel container (suitably insulated) might be better value and last longer. Cllr Towler said he believed ward funds would be available for 2017-18 which the Lady Smockers could apply for.

Lady Smockers

The Lady Smockers would report back at the March parish council meeting.

10. **Clerk's report**

The clerk reported that Bedford Borough Council have confirmed more than 10 electors have requested an election. Notices detailing how to lodge nomination papers will be displayed on the boards and on the website from the 19th January. This cost of the election will be approximately £1500 and needs to be paid for in this financial year. This will bring the total amount spent on elections to £3000 and these had not been included in this year's budget. Members were disappointed that another election had been called when the parish council could have co-opted a new councillor at no cost to the parish. If there had been more than 1 candidate members would have voted (by a secret ballot if requested) for their preferred candidate. For such a small parish, it was a lot of money

Cllr Gibbons

to spend out of undesignated reserves although members recognised that it was the electorate's right to call an election.

The clerk had been contacted by St Modwen regarding their proposals for the development of Thurleigh Airport. St Modwen have offered to meet Bletsoe PC to discuss the proposed development which has been submitted in the latest call for sites. There are several large-scale developments currently being considered by Bedford Borough Council as part of the call for sites for the Local Plan 2022. This would be a private meeting between members of the PC and St Modwen in the same way as the parish council met with Bedfordia and Marcol regarding the Twinwoods proposal. **It was resolved** to meet with St Modwen and the Clerk would arrange the meeting preferably on a Monday evening.

Clerk

There were no other matters.

11. Financial Matters

1) To approve the accounts for payment

Ch No	Payee	£	Description of services
1414	Regeneration Positive	100.00	NDP
1415	P A Vine	25.00	Seed purchase (Lady Smockers)
1416	M Gibbons	72.00	Bletsoe Gazette print costs
1417	The Villager	35.00	Mini bus grant (S137)
1418	Bletsoe Village Hall Fund	10.00	Hall Hire January meeting
1419	Bedford Borough Council	1433.54	Election costs
1420	Bedford Borough Council	497.46	Playing Field grass cutting
1421	EoN	71.82	Street lighting maintenance
	TOTAL	2244.72	

Clerk

It was resolved to approve the accounts for payment

2) To consider and agree the draft budget for 2017-18

Members requested the following revisions to the draft budget:

Increase contribution for village fireworks display to £150

Grass cutting grant to St Mary's PCC maximum of £500

Play Area grass cutting £300

Tree planting for permissive plants scheme £50

It was resolved to approve the budget for 2017-18 at £12,343

Clerk

3) To consider and agree the Precept for 2017-18

It was resolved to approve the Precept at £10,754 this would keep the precept at the same level as 2016-17 equating to £89 for a Band D property. The difference between the precept and the budget would be funded from undesignated reserves.

Clerk

12 To receive a report regarding the NDP

Cllr Gibbons reported that the group had not met since the November meeting. Locality had confirmed the grant had been extended until the end of March which is very good news. There would probably be a shortfall of approximately £650 to complete the plan which would need to come out of undesignated reserves. This was due to extra print costs and use of consultants prior to circulation of the last questionnaire.

13 Parish Concerns

The parish council had been offered three well established London Plane trees. The

trees were approximately 10 feet tall (although could grow up to 30m) and whilst not a native tree they usually have a good longevity and are resistant to pollution. Members agreed that there was nowhere suitable to plant the trees apart from parish field and agreed to decline the offer.

Cllr Vine

Coplowe Lane required a litter pick - Cllr laws offered to do this

Cllr Laws

Cllr Laws reported that she has spare copies of recording sheets which must be completed if there are any bonfires on the Waiting for the Sun site. All residents should report any problems such as barking dogs, bonfires etc. Environmental health will come out for a site visit but we need to maintain a record of when the fires took place for evidence. Enforcement will be acting to put the site back to its original use but cannot do this until any appeals have been concluded.

Dog fouling – in play area is a real problem. The Borough are consulting regarding possible sites for public spaces protection orders within the Borough. It was resolved to write to the Borough and ask them to include the play area in Bletsoe as an area where Dogs are Excluded.

Clerk

Bletsoe Gazette – the left-over funds were given to the parish council however now there is a new editor should a new bank account be set up. Members agreed that the gazette funds should be put into their own account and the Clerk would liaise with Mr Gibbons regarding transferring the funds into a new account.

Clerk

Barcing group would like to place a large map of the area in the old bus shelter. Members had no objection to this but any agreement regarding costs would need to be agreed at the March meeting. Members also suggested that a sign could be put up in the old bus shelter advertising that there was a defibrillator at the village hall.

Members were asked if they could alter the date of the May meeting as Cllr Gibbons was not available. It was resolved to change the date of the meeting to the 22nd May.

14. **Date of next meeting – Monday 6th March 2017**

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Approved by Chairman 6th March 2017