

Minutes of Annual Meeting of Bletsoe Parish Council held on Monday 9th May 2016 at the Village Hall, Memorial Lane, Bletsoe

Present:

Present: Ann Gibbons (Chairman), Edward Bean, Paul Caves, John Economides, Alison Foster, Mary Laws, Claire Woodward and the Clerk. There were also 4 members of the public.

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| 1. | Election of Chairman
Cllr Foster proposed Cllr Gibbons and this was seconded by Cllr Caves. All members approved the nomination and Cllr Gibbons accepted the term of office. | |
| 2. | Declaration of acceptance of office
The acceptance of office was signed and witnessed by the Clerk. | |
| 3. | To consider any requests for new dispensations/renewal of current dispensations
All members requested a renewal of their dispensations in matters relating to the NDP, matters relating to the Old Parish Field and the Waiting for the Sun site. The clerk confirmed dispensations will be renewed to all members. | Clerk |
| 4. | Apologies for absence
None | |
| 5. | Declarations of Interest
All members declared a local interest in matters relating to the NDP and matters relating to the Old Parish Field - Cllr Foster and Cllr Laws also declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in matters relating to the NDP. 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 members who therefore have the right to speak and vote on this item. | |
| 6. | To approve the minutes of previous meeting held on Monday 7th March
A minor amendment was made to the minutes to alter the surname of one of the parish field trustees to Crocker. It was then resolved to approve the minutes. | Clerk |
| 7. | Matters arising from minutes
Light at car storage place – Cllr Economides reported that the lights should now be switched off at night and he hoped the matter had now been resolved. Cllr Bean asked for the details of the company so we could phone if the lights went back on. | J Economides |
| 8. | Public Open Session
There were no questions from the public. | |
| 9. | To allocate areas of responsibility within the Parish Council as follows:
Election of Vice Chairman – P Caves
Town and Parish Network – Cllr Foster although all members would be circulated the agenda and could attend
Play Area – Cllr Caves
Street Furniture – Cllr Bean
Highways – Cllr Caves – put number for pothole hit squad up on notice boards
Village Hall Representative – Cllr Gibbons
Finance & NDP – Cllr Economides
Transport – Cllr Bean
Planning – Cllr Laws – although a separate committee is no longer required Cllr Laws agreed to review any consultations or planning policy information
Parking – It has been suggested that we could move the existing play area to increase the amount of parking space at the village hall. This extra parking might be used for residents from Memorial Lane which would ensure the highway is clear | |

and allow better access. Some members were concerned about how this would be managed and how would this affect hirers? **It was resolved** to include as an agenda item for the next meeting and Cllr Woodward expressed an interest in joining any sub-committee looking at this issue.

Clerk

Cllr Towler joined the meeting. Members were reminded that the parish council could borrow the mobile speed cameras and to contact Cllr Towler if they wished to do so.

10. **To review the council’s policies:**

Code of Conduct – no revisions and the code was accepted.

Standing Orders – no revisions and the code was accepted.

Financial Regulations – one minor alteration to reflect the need to publish all financial information on the website as part of the Transparency Act if turnover is less than £25K per year, effective from 1/7/15.

Risk Assessment – no revisions and the policy was accepted.

To consider adoption of a complaints policy

A draft complaints policy had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. This was the model policy circulated by the SLCC and BATPC.

Members asked for an additional category to be added as follows:

Member conduct (in house)	If the complaint is “in house” i.e. between parish councillors then this should initially be raised with the Clerk and the Chairman who will endeavour to deal with on an informal basis. However, if a solution/compromise cannot be agreed then the complainant would have no further right of complaint to the PC. They would of course be able to refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer if the complaint relates to a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.
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11. **Town Close Charity**

The town close charity manages income received from rent on land owned by the parish council. The charity distributes the income to local causes or individuals in the parish. The trust is made up of 3 trustees and currently has one vacancy following the resignation from Jonathan Knights. The remaining trustees Joyce Crocker and Jean Jeavons have nominated Jamie Hassall and he has indicated he would be prepared to accept the position. The parish council need to formally approve the candidate. Members formally approved the appointment of Jamie Hassall for a term of office of 4 years. In addition, it was noted that Joyce Crocker’s appointment was also due to expire in May 2016 and this was extended for a further 3 years.

Clerk

12. **To approve costs for hedge laying works for the Parish Field**

It was resolved to approve the £150 cost for approximately 30 metres to be undertaken by Adrian Fett.

13. **To note the yearly play inspection report and approve any recommended works**

Paul Caves to measure the chains and will install the replacement parts for the swings.

P Caves

Paint for goal posts – volunteers agreed to undertake this work.

Work to the fireman’s pole would be undertaken by Solutions for Playgrounds.

Clerk

14. **Planning**

The report was noted – there were no new applications for consideration.

15. **NDP – to receive a report**

Cllr Economides had provided a report at the earlier Annual Parish Meeting. Work is well underway and the council has been successful in its application for a further £8,900 in funding. The next meeting of the group will be on Thursday 12th May. The group had received more information from BpHA and will now go and visit sites that they have developed.

16. **Financial Matters**

1) **To note the insurance renewal premium with Came & Company**

Members queried whether the village hall was insured by the parish council or the village hall management committee. The clerk responded that it is the responsibility of the village hall management committee – Cllr Gibbons agreed to confirm the village hall insures the property.

A Gibbons

2) **To approve the accounts for payment**

Ch No	Payee	£	Description of services
1370	BATPC	90.00	Affiliation Fees
1371	Regeneration Positive	400.00	NDP Fees
1372	Came & Company	688.21	Annual Insurance fee
1373	A Southern	37.00	Working from home allowance
1374	G Wiggs	135.00	Internal Auditor Fee
1375	Solutions 4 Playgrounds	150.00	Play Area Inspection fee
1376	Shane Hughes	108.50	Wildflower Meadow expenses
1377	Chris Horne Gardens	412.80	Grass Cutting
	TOTAL	2021.51	

Clerk

Clerk

3) To approve the statement of Governance for 2015-16 – **it was resolved** to approve the statement of Governance, there were no matters for concern.

Clerk

4) To approve the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2015-16 – **it was resolved** to approve the annual statement of accounts.

Clerk

5) To note the Internal Audit report – The report was accepted. The internal auditor had recommended adopting the latest model financial regulations and the Clerk advised she would review these and if necessary bring any amendments to the next meeting.

Clerk

6) To consider the effectiveness of the internal audit and the parish council's system of internal controls.

Members were satisfied that the current risk assessment provides sufficient protection. The Internal Auditor is completely independent of the parish council and provides a robust and in depth internal audit of the parish council's procedures and accounts for the financial year. In addition, a member of the parish council carries out a yearly inspection of the accounts (mid way through the financial year) and this is reported back to members of the PC at the next meeting. A draft budget is circulated to all members for consideration prior to the January precept meeting. Levels of reserves and spend against budget are considered at each council meeting. The parish council employs a part time Clerk who is CiICA qualified.

Members reviewed the Asset Register and asked whether there should be a revised valuation of the village hall and the car park. The clerk advised that the Asset Register was based on original purchase prices – this does not increase/decrease in line with inflation and was not the value used for insurance purposes. Members asked if the Village Hall Management Committee could advise how much the hall and car park are insured for? In addition, could they

ensure the insurance policy reflects that the VHMC pay for the insurance but the owners of the property are the parish council. If a claim was ever made by the VHMC for rebuilding the village hall, then this be paid to the parish council. Cllr Gibbons offered to raise with the VHMC and report back at the July meeting.

A Gibbons

17. **Clerk's report**

Location of new bench? An alternative location was considered next to the village pond. Members agreed to visit Coplowe Lane to confirm a location – the exact location with grid reference would be passed on to Cllr Caves who would install the bench. If there was insufficient space for the bench to be placed far enough away from the Highway, then it would be placed near the village pond although consideration would be needed to ensure it was placed facing away from the houses to protect their privacy.

ALL

Members approved permission to apply for funding for a laptop from the transparency fund and an application would be made via BATPC.

Clerk

Response to Borough consultation on Dog Fouling – members asked that the Village Playing Field and Play Area were included in the new dog control orders.

Clerk

18. **Parish Concerns**

Flooding on Coplowe Lane – this had been reported to the Borough. Cllr Laws asked for support from the parish council. Members agreed to write to the Borough to investigate the problem.

Clerk

Bourne End Lane – rat running – does anyone have any solutions? There is insufficient funding for speed humps and these need to be a specific distance from nearby properties due to noise –members were asked to monitor the situation.

The footpath which runs alongside the A6 is this an official footpath/cycle path? No. However, the existing path requires maintenance (from the roundabout near Sharnbrook, past Bourne End Lane to The Avenue). It was resolved to ask Highways to undertake a site visit and undertake repairs.

Clerk

Training course at BATPC – Cllr Refresher training course 1 place for Cllr Laws.

Clerk

It was reported that the government is cancelling the high speed broadband project. However, Cllr Van has reported that Bletsoe is still part of the phase 4 rollout scheduled for 2018.

Street party which will be held on the village playing field on Sunday 12th June – can this be added to the parish council's insurance? The clerk advised that the committee would need to produce a risk assessment then this could be added to the parish council insurance.

VHMC

Village Fete this year will be held on Saturday 18th June.

War Memorial event –Thursday 30th June at 9pm
Potholes on Memorial Lane – report to the Highways helpline.

19. **Date of next meeting – Monday 4th July 2016**

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Approved by Chairman 4th July 2016