

Supporting information for Bletsoe PC – 6 November meeting

Item 3 – minutes – circulated via email

Item 4 – Matters Arising

Mary to update regarding parking provision on land owned by BpHA

Item 6 – Report on NDP

The NDP is nearing completion however there is still some work to be completed by Woods Hardwick in order to satisfy the Borough's screening process. The parish council need to approve funding to enable the plan to be finalised and this would need to come from undesignated reserves (which currently are earmarked for drainage). Ann has circulated an email trail of correspondence between Woods Hardwick and herself and Trevor Roff regarding the screening process. **The parish council need to approve the cost of £2500 + VAT for Woods Hardwick to complete this part of the plan.**

Item 7 – Old Parish Field

Our current tenant has vacated the field – since her parents have now moved out of the village. The new owners of the property have approach the parish council to see if they could use the field to graze their horses. Sarah paid £210.00 per calendar year. The field is 2.2 acres has some fencing which Sarah put in but does not have a water supply. It is difficult to guage whether the rent charged was sufficient as when I have tried to compare most of the land has good fencing, is for a larger acreage and has a water supply. The prices I have found are approximately £20.00 a week for approximately 4 acres with water. If the council do wish to enter into a new agreement you will need to agree what the yearly rent will be. I would recommend the council continues to only sign a yearly lease as the field is one of the sites that the parish council have put forward in the NDP as a possible site for development. Whilst no formal decisions have been taken regarding this it is something the parish council have been considering and it development did take place this could potentially provide affordable housing for Bletsoe residents whilst also generating a large sum of money for the parish council.

Item 8 – Lady Smockers

At the last meeting Paul submitted a proposal on behalf of the Lady Smockers for the purchase of a ride on mower. The cost would be £5128 including VAT. The Lady Smockers wish to purchase the mower the cutting of the large playing field but there could be scope for them to also cut other areas such as the Orchard. Their proposal is that the mower could be funded from parish council reserves, Cil levy or a combination of both.

The Cil Levy we have recently received for Rhonda was £5939.28.

At the last meeting members raised concerns about relying on volunteers to undertake such a large task, the overall cost in comparison to our total Precept and reserves and whether this is something the parish council should budget for over a period of time.

In addition, the Lady Smockers are also seeking funding for a shed to store their equipment in.

Cllr Towler has donated £1000 of ward funds towards the cost of the storage shed and Paul has advised the shed would cost £1554 which leaves £446 to purchase materials for the concrete base. The PC had included the sum of £1000 in its budget for a shed for the Lady Smockers.

Item 9 – Allotments

The parish council has received 10 letters from residents who would like the parish council to provide land for allotments. The council now must decide if this demonstrates sufficient demand and if so whether it has land that is both suitable and available for this purpose.

There are I understand 3 pieces of land owned by the parish council:

1 - The old parish field – currently used for grazing. This land has been identified as a potential site for future housing which would financially benefit the parish and provide affordable accommodation to Bletsoe residents. However, once land has been designated for allotments it is very difficult to legally change its use so I would be advise caution about providing allotments on the old parish field - you may feel that renting the field for grazing is a better option.

2 – The Orchard on the corner of The Avenue and Memorial Lane. There is a water source nearby (we informed Anglian Water to disconnect the supply) but it could be re-instated. However, this is land in the heart of the village

and I am unsure how other residents would feel about it being dug up and used for allotments? I am also unsure if there is sufficient room for 10 plots and whether this land is fit for purpose as it does slope which is not ideal for the allotment holders especially if you had a plot at the bottom.

3 – The Playing Field

The only other land available is the playing field – this would not be seen from the highway. However, the Lady Smockers are managing this field and have put in a wildflower meadow, we have football pitches, a MUGA and a public footpath running through it. Not quite sure if there is an area that would be big enough for a minimum of 10 plots. There is no water supply.

If the parish council does not feel that any of these locations are suitable or available then the council would need to inform the residents that it cannot provide allotments at the moment.

There are many things to think about when providing allotments, who will manage the site, ensure the tenancy agreement is being adhered to, collect rent, liaise with the tenants etc.

10 – Speeding on Bourne End Lane

Mary has asked for this to be included on the agenda – she will provide a verbal report at the meeting.

11 – Calendar of meetings

Meeting dates emailed in separate document - for approval

Item 12

(i) Planning – written report circulated

Mary has circulated details regarding the recent application on the Waiting for the Sun site. This has now been resubmitted – I shall bring any paperwork supplied from Beds BC with me to the meeting. You can view this online beforehand at www.bedford.gov.uk/searchplans and then type in the planning number. There is no legal requirement for the parish council to be consulted on this or for the Borough to provide free copies of the documentation. I have requested copies and agreed the parish council will pay for these.

(ii) New developments at Twinwoods and Thurleigh Airfield – meeting with the Mayor on 6 November – I hope that Alison Foster will be able to provide a verbal update regarding this

Item 13 - Financial Matters

(i) Accounts for payment – written report emailed

(ii) Spend against budget – written report emailed

(iii) Bank mandate – the parish council's bank mandate needs to be revised to remove Edward and I would suggest we add both Clare and Paul so that everyone on the parish council is a signatory. This makes it much easier to obtain signatures for cheque payments. I would also like to seek your permission to explore the possibility of online banking for the parish council. From a statutory point of view the parish council has been permitted to do this for a few years now. It would be much easier to make payments via BACS and this is becoming the preferred method of payment for most suppliers. Accounts would still be submitted for payment in the usual manner but the payment method would be by BACS. It also makes year end and bank balances more readily available rather than waiting on bank statements.

Item 14- Clerk's Report

We have now received £5939.28 CiL levy from Bedford Borough Council.

Parish councillor vacancy – notices are currently displayed from the Borough regarding the vacancy. Hopefully there will be no requirement for an election which will then allow the parish council to co-opt to fill this vacancy. Once I receive confirmation from the Borough I will place a notice of vacancy on the notice boards and website. Assuming we have sufficient interest this can be agreed at the January meeting.

Information Commissioners Office – the law affecting data protection has changed as you will have seen from the Bedfordshire Bugle. The parish council must register with the ICO and I am booked onto an SLCC training course on the 9th November. The parish council should have a Data Protection policy – I am hoping that the SLCC will produce a model policy which we can tweak for our requirements. The cost of registering with the ICO is currently £35.00 and I have included this in my list of accounts for approval.

Solicitors letter regarding sale of 38 The Avenue. I have sought legal advice on this and hope this should be ready in time for our meeting.

I have been thinking about introducing a regular agenda item called Matters in Progress.

This is a brief report where items are included until they have been actioned – larger items not just actions from each month's meeting i.e. speeding on Bourne End Lane (if you decided to ask for a speed survey would be added to the list.) It ensures items are not forgotten even if not on the agenda and members can update at this point in the meeting and it is formally recorded. I use this item in Biddenham and Ravensden and it works very well – responsibility for each item is also allocated.

Item 15 – Date of next meeting – Monday 8th January 7:30pm

This will be our budget/precept meeting – if anyone has anything specific they wish to include in the draft budget please let me know.

As always highways issues i.e. potholes, should be reported online via the Borough website www.bedford.gov.uk rather than waiting for the next parish council meeting.

If you wish to report a problem with streetlighting please let me know via email as the parish council are responsible for the street lights (except Memorial Lane). I will need the column lamp number and the location – I will then contact EoN who look after our streetlights.

A Southern
1/11/2017