

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Hanslope Parish Council held on Monday 14th September 2020 at 7.00pm - remotely.

(in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020).

Present:

Parish Councillors: -

M Palmer (Chair)

J Cass

R Simpkins

J Gregory

G Bowyer (Ward Councillor MKC)

D Courtman

S Proctor

E Price

Clerk: G Merry

2 Members of the Public

MOTION: to resolve that due to the confidential nature of the business to be conducted, the public will be excluded from the meeting under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, for item 20.089 v. PROPOSED by Cllr Courtman SECONDED by Cllr Cass and AGREED.

20.083 Apologies:

There were no apologies. Cllr Proctor had advised his late arrival.

20.084 Declarations of Interest:

No items

20.085 To Approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on 13th July and 27th July 2020:

Both sets of minutes had been previously circulated and were PROPOSED by Cllr Simpkins, SECONDED by Cllr Courtman, AGREED and SIGNED.

20.086 Public Time:

No items

20.087 Council:

- i. **Clerk's Report:** *There had only been confirmation of one S106 project, no progress on the CCTV, or the implementation of the trial security service for the Rec. Ground. However, a way had been found to connect the camera to the power source from the lighting columns in the Rec. Ground, as the necessary part had arrived. On a positive note, the new signage is underway with the changing room signage done and the new 'Jeannette Green' signs going up this week. The football changing side and showers have been deep-cleaned, and the surgery car park is scheduled for 1st/2nd October. Bloors have agreed to pay for the cost of replacing the finger post, at the Gold Street/Long Street junction. The clerk had attended 2 courses: One at MK Council on the use of new mapping software, and a BMKALC course on website accessibility. The accessibility statement has now been published in time for the deadline. The clerk asked if anyone knows a visually-impaired person, who might be prepared to test the website, and report back.*
- ii. **Baden Lodge:** Scouts and Guides had confirmed January 2021 as the earliest to re-start. Cllrs Palmer and Simpson had overseen the handover back to the PC and asked for a wish-list. This had been advised as: Repairs to the boiler or a new heating system (preferably), adjustments to the toilets, doors and fire doors, painting the bathrooms, and in the long-term, improvements to insulation and perhaps natural lighting. Cllr Palmer suggested the heating

system had been attended-to many times and continued to malfunction. It was worth considering replacing it with a modern system/radiators etc. Use of S106 was discussed but the clerk advised this was unlikely to be forthcoming as it is not usually approved for refurbishment, only new projects. No projects are currently being approved. It was agreed to start obtaining quotes for a new system and to ask the caretaker to undertake the smaller jobs in the hall, with a view to opening in January.

- iii. **Highways Updates:** Bloors had agreed to pay for the repair and installation to the sign at the 'Watts Arms' junction and had been invoiced. Cllr Palmer would liaise with both the fabricator and the MKC officer re. the location. MKC had advised a freeze on spending and for this reason, the promised school zebra crossing could not currently be scheduled. Cllr Palmer agreed to ask the Highways officer about this.
- iv. **Speeding, Residents' Concerns and White Gates:** Cllr Courtman had received several complaints re. speeding through the village and the SID had also recorded an increase during the lockdown period. Cllr Courtman proposed that installation of white 'village gates' at all entrances to the village might help and this was discussed. It was agreed the clerk would work on quotes for this project and undertake a basic consultation via Facebook/website.
- v. **MKC's 'Together We Can':** MKC would be launching this initiative as a means of working closer with the parishes and the clerk had circulated the documents. The clerk suggested collaboration with MKC departments was inconsistent, but it was agreed to respond that the PC will work with MKC as positively as it can. Cllr Bowyer felt that many rural parishes also feel overlooked and Cllr Gregory asked how Hanslope is currently represented. The existing Parishes Forum was discussed.
- vi. **Open Meeting October 2020:** The Village Hall Committee had issued a rigorous risk assessment meaning that a maximum of 30 only could be allowed, including councillors and staff. The clerk advised that only one 'Open' meeting is required i.e. the AMPC in May. Given these considerations plus the new 'rule of 6' from the Government, it was decided not to hold the Open Meeting this October but the clerk would expand use of Facebook and the website as a way of getting information out.

20.088 Planning:

- i. **Update:** Cllr Cass reported on the following applications:
 - 20/01945/REM** - Land south of Cuckoo Hill Bungalow, Castlethorpe Rd. Cllrs Cass, Price and Courtman had met to discuss proposed considerations for Reserved Matters on this application. It was agreed Cllr Cass would circulate a summary to the rest of council for approval, to submit to the planning officer. Cllr Bowyer agreed to call in Reserved Matters to the Development Control Committee (DCC) if possible and asked for details.
 - ii. **20/01693/FUL** - Eventing Centre, Castlethorpe Road. Cllrs Price and Cass had met the case officer at the site to discuss several concerns, one of which was safety, due to the blind corner. The meeting had been inconclusive. Cllr Bowyer confirmed he had called the application in to the DCC and Cllr Cass and Price would prepare comments for this.
- iii. **Enforcement:** There had been no action from enforcement re. the signage in the Conservation Area, nor the shed which appeared to be 'change of use'.
- iv. **New Government Planning White Paper and Planning Obligations Report:** Cllr Cass reported there were 2 lengthy papers to read and respond on: 1. Planning for the Future (responses by 31st/10/2020) and 2. Changes to the Planning Structure (responses by 1/10/2020). Cllr Cass stated that the planning sub-group could not speak for the PC and it must be a full PC response. Herself and Cllr Price were still ploughing through the documents. Cllr Gregory agreed to join them, and it was agreed the clerk would send him the documents ASAP. This

working group would meet to develop a proposed response which would be drafted and circulated to council for agreement.

- v. **School Expansion Plans:** Cllr Cass had spoken the contactors for the expansion, who had offered to meet with the PC. It was discussed and agreed that an in-person meeting would be preferable, in order to spread out drawings and view them properly. The clerk agreed to set this up with a view to 3-4 councillors attending, with COVID protocols observed. Concern was expressed over plans to install an All-Weather Pitch and possible conflict with the PC's plans for similar.
- vi. **Conservation Area Review:** The initial findings of the review had been circulated and since there was to be a formal consultation, it would be sufficient to engage with that.

20.089: Finance:

- i. **Reconciliations and Financial Situation Report:** Reconciliation checks had been carried out by Cllr Price and the 3 accounts balanced. The clerk circulated accounts to August 31st, and these showed receipts to-date of £76,123 (56% of budget) and payments of £50,519 (39% of budget). The clerk stated that currently the council was underspending, due to the difficulty of getting projects done and needs to avoid carrying forward too large a reserve. There were no further questions.
- ii. **Earmarking of Reserves:** The clerk had drawn up a reserves policy, based on standard sector practice, which had been circulated. This stated the PC should always carry 50-100% of its fixed costs in reserve. Any reserves over this should be earmarked towards projects. This policy was agreed and will be published on the website. The clerk had circulated an account of current general reserves, and showing the balance remaining, to be allocated to earmarked reserves. She stated the projects to be earmarked were those already agreed, and the reserves could subsidise/underwrite them, to help ensure they happened. It was unlikely that contributing to the church bells and clock would comply with the LGA 1894 (which prohibits Parish Councils from contributing funds to property relating to the affairs of the church or an ecclesiastical charity). She suggested this amount could be allocated towards the white village gates instead.

MOTION: to agree the recommended reserves policy, PROPOSED by Cllr Courtman SECONDED by Cllr Palmer and AGREED

MOTION: To agree the recommended reserves amounts, PROPOSED by Cllr Courtman SECONDED by Cllr Palmer and AGREED

- iii. **VAT Update:** The clerk reminded council of their decision not to 'Opt to Tax' with regard to building lettings, and their decision to withdraw the Option to Tax (OTT) application. HMRC had subsequently advised that organisations could not 'withdraw' OTT but could only apply to revoke an application. The clerk had submitted the form but HMRC continued to query this. She had written again stating that the PC has never made exempt supplies. The pavilion has been used for non-business purposes, and no other VAT-exempt activities have taken place. Although VAT on the 2018 refurbishment had been reclaimed, as non-business under Section 33 of the VAT Act, the clerk stated it would have been better practice to wait under the revocation had been accepted.
- iv. **Approval of Payments:** The clerk had circulated the list of payments to be agreed (below) and these were reviewed.

Date	Invoice from	For	Net	Vat	Total
22/07/2020	MK Play Association	3 x full day play scheme	£ 2,178.00	£ 435.60	£ 2,613.60
03/08/2020	BMKALC	Website accessibility training (clerk)	£ 41.55		£ 41.55

31/08/2020	John Sharpe	Caretaking – Aug	£ 360.95	£ -	£ 360.95
31/08/2020	RTM Landscapes	Landscaping – Aug	£ 979.17	£ 195.83	£ 1,175.00
01/09/2020	Marcus Young Environmental	Bins and Dog Bins Aug	£ 484.50	£ 96.90	£ 581.40
08/09/2020	Lotte Landscapes	Rec. Ground – Aug	£ 788.33	£ 157.67	£ 946.00
11/09/2020	G Merry	Expenses reimbursement			£ 122.25
	PAID				
27/08/2020	G Merry	Aug Salary	████████	████████	████████
27/08/2020	HMRC	Aug Tax and NI	████████	████████	████████
27/08/2020	Bucks CC	LGPS - Aug pension contribution	████████	████████	████████
10/08/2020	Zoom Communications	Monthly fee			£ 14.39
27/08/2020	T Davies	August weekly cleans - PC side	£ 60.00	£ -	£ 60.00
03/09/2020	T Davies	Deep clean - changing room side	£ 60.00		£ 60.00

MOTION: to agree the payments for Aug/Sept 2020 as above, PROPOSED by Cllr Price SECONDED by Cllr Courtman and AGREED.

- v. **SLCC/NALC Salary Scales:** The new scales for 2020-21 had been received & circulated and the clerk was eligible for an increase. This was discussed and agreed in closed session at the end of the meeting.

MOTION: To agree to implement the new NALC/SLCC salary scales and increase for the clerk PROPOSED by Cllr Courtman and AGREED

20.0090 Recreation Ground and Village Projects:

- i **Security:** There had been an increase in anti-social behaviour in the Rec. Ground car park over the summer. Councillors had been offered a 4-week free trial from a local security company and this was being implemented. Longer-term options with budget costs were circulated by the clerk and discussed. It was agreed the best option would be automatic bollards, programmed to lower in the morning and lift at night, with user groups being issued with a fob to override the timings. The limitations of the current CCTV system were discussed, and it was agreed to install an upgraded system. The clerk agreed to research options and costs.
- ii **Update and Progress on Signs:** The clerk and Cllr Courtman had worked on designs and locations of new signage, on-site with the signage company. The first phase had been installed and the new entrance signs were due.
- iii **Groundwork Needed to Football Pitch:** Cllr Simpkins advised that the necessary work was included in the current maintenance contract and the contractor had been instructed. Cllr Gregory stated that Hanslope FC had obtained a grant which could be put towards the cost of pitch improvements. Cllr Simpkins agreed to discuss this with the FC.
- iv **Harkness Court Pond:** Cllr Simpkins outlined that the original pond was moved by the developer and the water source destroyed, leaving only a surface water-filling ditch. This is entirely dependent upon natural rainfall and evaporation. The wildflower planting undertaken last year, will take time to mature. More can be spent on removal of reed growth but will not solve the primary water-supply problem. An alternative option had been circulated, to infill and level, to create a grassland area with wildflower planting. It was discussed and agreed

that although it was a tragedy the pond had not worked, the infilling idea would be developed, starting with inviting the ecology officer to advise re. species etc.

MOTION: to develop the Harkness Pond as a wildflower area PROPOSED by Cllr Courtman, SECONDED by Cllr Palmer and AGREED

AFTER NOTE: A comprehensive response was received from the MKC Ecologist, which may negate the PC decision taken on 14/9/2020. The PC will debate further.

(Cllr Proctor arrived at 20.33)

- v **Williams Close Hedge:** Cllr Cass had discussed the problems with MKC's Housing Officer and Environmental Health had re-visited and dealt with the rat problem and advised the tenants. Attempts to determine ownership of the strip of land containing the hedge, or to encourage Davidsons to take on the responsibility as originally indicated, had proved fruitless. Cllr Palmer had visited the site with the landscape contractor to discuss the requirements, with a view to the PC taking on responsibility. A quote had been presented for an initial tidy, followed by annual maintenance and this was discussed. Cllr Price felt that contracts such as this should be tendered/quoted and the clerk advised that it was within Financial Regs not to do this, as the contractor had already been subject to a rigorous tendering process to gain the original maintenance contract. However, it was discussed and agreed that at least one further quote would be obtained.

MOTION: To agree to adopt the maintenance of the hedge but to obtain at least one further quote, PROPOSED by Cllr Palmer SECONDED by Cllr Price and AGREED.

- vi **Christmas Lights:** Cllr Palmer had discussed with a local contractor what would be required, to simplify the installation process for the lights this year. No quotes had been obtained yet and Cllr Price proposed obtaining more quotes to ensure value for money. It was agreed to settle on a specification for what is required and obtain quotes for the work.

MOTION: Not required.

20.091 S106 Projects

- i. **Update from MKC on Funding:** The clerk had been in constant contact with the S106 officers. However, only the Dr's Surgery car park money had been approved. MKC had advised there was currently a moratorium on spending, as a result of the COVID crisis, and no new projects could be approved at this stage.
- ii. **Project Updates:** The surgery car park resurfacing will take place on 1st and 2nd October. Cllr Palmer will oversee the project and stated that this may be considered a test case for obtaining S106 funding for health care facilities in the parish.

20.092 Allotments

- i. **Update:** Cllr Simpkins reported that lettings have increased over lockdown and that almost all plots were now let.
- ii. **Maintenance Requirements:** The sub-group was working hard to keep unlet plots tidy. However, there were approx. 5 plots that required more work than could be achieved at present and would need professional clearance before letting. It was discussed and agreed to obtain quotes for this work but to wait until renewals had been completed, so a clear picture of who may not be renewing would be known. Quotes would be obtained in advance of this so the work could commence early in the new year.

20.093 Date of Next Meeting: Monday 12th October 2020 at 7pm, via Zoom

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Signed Date