

**STEEPLE MORDEN PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held remotely on**  
**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors: J Clayton (Chairman), N Badger, K Austin,  
 C Upchurch, S Wheatley, S Traverse-Healy, M Bird, A Drew, G Belson  
 District Cllr Williams, County Cllr Kindersley (part)  
 In attendance: Mrs S Walmesley (Clerk) and 2 members of the public.

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

All Councillors were in attendance. There were no declarations made.

**2 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

**2.1 District Council**

Cllr Williams reported that the planning application for Bourn airfield had been approved at the recent SCDC planning meeting. If there were any changes to the plan she would update Councillors.

The budget for 2021/22 had been agreed with more funding allocated towards homelessness provision and the electrification of SCDC vehicles. Cllr Williams stated that she did not support the overall budget as she was concerned over the rate of acceleration of the debt forecast.

The local council tax support scheme was to continue. It was anticipated that there would be more need as time went on. She wanted to encourage residents to keep in touch.

**2.2 County Council**

Cllr Kindersley would circulate a report in the next couple of days.

He reported that Cambridgeshire County Council had agreed their budget with included a 1.99% increase in council tax generally and 1% for adult social care.

There was media coverage that there was to be an additional £4 million allocated to highway improvements. Cllr Kindersley explained how this was not the case as Central Government had reduced its contribution by £7.5million and there were various necessary road projects required. Some additional funding would also need to be borrowed.

There was a proposal to reclassify the A1123 from east Cambs to Huntingdon. If this happened, and the road was changed from an A to a B road, then the County Council would lose £250,000.

Cllr Kindersley reminded Councillors that there were County Council, Mayor and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2021.

The South West Cambs action group had been active in relation to the Thakeham proposal. The developer originally said that a submission would be made to the South Cambridgeshire District Council planners by Easter. The planners had now been told that, due to Covid, this would not happen. This would affect the planners with their timetable for assessment of sites. Cllr Kindersley added that it was becoming more apparent that decisions on larger developments were being taken away from the local authorities.

Cllr Kindersley asked if the North Brook End road works had started which Cllr Austin confirmed that they had. Cllr Austin advised that three storm water drains had been reported blocked on the County Council website in January 2021. There had been no update and the report was still showing as live on the website. Cllr Kindersley agreed to follow up with the Local Highway Officer. **-SK**

The Chairman thanked Cllr Williams and Cllr Kindersley for their reports.

**3 MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no issues raised.

#### 4 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF

- 4.1 The Parish Council Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
On a proposition by Cllr Austin, seconded by Cllr Bird, the minutes as circulated were taken as read and then approved as a true record and would be signed by the Chairman.
- 4.2 The Parish Council Planning Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021  
On a proposition by Cllr Austin, seconded by Cllr Bird, the minutes as circulated were taken as read and then approved as a true record and would be signed by the Chairman.

#### 5 MATTERS ARISING AND CARRIED FORWARD

- 5.1 Cllr Covid Volunteer Group Update  
Cllr Belson reported that limited support had been provided to residents and was currently quiet. South Cambridgeshire District Council continued with their briefings.
- 5.2 Steeple Morden Village Award Presentation  
The Clerk was asked to write to the recipient and advise her of the award and that the presentation would take place once circumstances allow. The announcement would then be made in the newsletter, website and on the village Facebook page.  
Cllr Drew to arrange the engraving of the award. **-AD & Clerk**

#### 6 FINANCES

- 6.1 To receive the financial statement and to approve the payment of bills  
Agreed Proposed Cllr Bird Seconded Cllr Traverse-Healy  
E-ON  
Reading Room electricity March 2021 DD £ 39.00  
HAVEN POWER  
Street light electricity February 2021 DD (inc £46.08VAT) £219.92  
THE PRINTWORKS (ROYSTON) LTD  
Newsletters March 2021 £ 50.00  
MRS A TRAVERSE-HEALY  
Reimb for tree materials £14.72  
HERT S NATIVE TREES  
Final invoice for current tree project £ 80.00  
MR N BADGER  
Re-imb for picnic bench order (inc £189.90VAT) £1138.80  
MRS S WALMESLEY  
Salary January –March 2021 £1365.83  
HMRC  
PAYE Jan-March NIL (in credit)  
MRS S WALMESLEY  
Re-imb for easyspace steplemorden.com domain (inc £3.00 VAT) £ 17.99  
AGREED FOLLOWING FEBRUARY 2021 MEETING  
NETWISE  
Website upgrade premium £199.00  
Domain reg steplemordepc.org.uk £ 15.00 £214.00
- 6.2 On line banking  
A discussion took place on online banking where the Clerk advised that the Unity Trust bank account enabled the Clerk to setup bacs payments which were then authorised by two Councillors. Cllrs Austin and Wheatley believed that Barclays, the current provider, now offered this service. Cllr Bird agreed to investigate. **-CB**

#### 7 RECREATION GROUND/CONSERVATION AREA

- 7.1 Village Tree Planting Update  
An update on the tree planting had been circulated to Councillors who were all in agreement that the remaining budget be carried forward to the next financial year for further planting. On behalf of the Parish Council Cllr Wheatley expressed her thanks to Annette Traverse-Healy for overseeing such a brilliant job.

## 7.2 Play Area Upgrade

### 7.2.1 Purchase of Picnic Tables

Three quotations had been sought and an order placed with Marmax Recycled Products for three brown recycled plastic picnic benches at a cost of £949.00 plus VAT.

### 7.3 Quotation for Leylandii work

Quotations were still awaited although it was recognised that the work would need to wait now until the Autumn. There had been concerns raised on social media, and by email, over the removal of the Leylandii trees which currently provide shade and a wind break. Cllr Badger stated that the Tree Surgeons had advised that the trees were diseased and dying. He had observed this himself over the past weeks. It was agreed that a tree inspection report be obtained by a Tree Surgeon ahead of the tree removal.

A discussion took place on replanting and an action plan would be compiled.

The Chairman asked Cllr Badger to prepare a report to update residents at the Annual Parish Meeting. He would also arrange the tree inspection report. **-NB**

### 7.4 Reopening of Reading Room/Pavilion

Due to the current Covid restrictions the Reading Room and Pavilion were closed. A discussion took place on the reopening of the toilet at the end of March when the next stage of the restrictions should lift. Due to the abuse of the toilet Cllr Drew stated that it should only be made available to organised clubs adding that it was a disabled not a public toilet. Cllr Traverse-Healy supported this adding that there were quite a few older children congregating on the recreation ground currently.

After further discussion it was agreed that the toilet should remain locked until at least the 17<sup>th</sup> May. The toilet would also be an agenda topic for the Annual Parish Meeting where residents would be advised of the toilet abuse which might result in the facility being withdrawn completely.

### 7.5 Recreation Ground Checks

Cllr Drew reported that she had experienced an incident when emptying the dog waste bin by the car park. There had been some sheet glass deposited in the bin which had narrowly missed her arm. She expressed her concern over the other volunteers.

Cllr Badger would put a note on the village Facebook page warning of this. **-NB**

### 7.6 Grasscutting

The grass on the conservation area had not been cut. It was too late now as the wild flowers and orchids would be growing. Cllr Drew advised that the contractor had been to carry out the cut but he had a problem with his equipment. Cllr Badger stated that the contractor had ample opportunities. Cllr Upchurch added that the number of grass verge cuts through 2020 were also reduced. Councillors were reminded that 2020/21 was the first season of a three year contract.

After further discussion it was agreed that the Clerk send a letter to the contractor stating that the Parish Council was extremely disappointed with the grasscutting frequency and timing during 2020/21, especially the failure to carry out the cut to the conservation area. The contractor should make sure that this performance improved for 2021/22 pointing out that the Parish Council reserved the right to terminate the contract. **-Clerk**

## 8 MAINTENANCE

### 8.1 Footpaths/Footways

#### 8.1.1 Craft Way Footway

No action had been taken on cutting back the trees.

#### 8.1.2 Cobbs Lane Footpath

There was no update on the reason for the surfacing.

### 8.2 Traffic

There was nothing to report.

### 8.3 Village Hall CCTV Cameras

Cllr Austin advised that at least one of the cameras was not working. He was aware that the system was old. When installed there was a lot of vandalism on the recreation ground and this problem seemed to have returned.

The Clerk advised that a company she had spoken to had said they would look at the system and replace parts if that was possible. It was agreed that the Clerk arrange for advice. **-Clerk**

#### 8.4 Ashwell Road Dog Waste Bin Damage

The damaged bin had been reported to South Cambridgeshire District Council and, as this bin was installed by them, they would arrange the repair.

#### 8.5 Litter

Cllr Belson reported that there had been a number of people complaining about the litter in the village. As all food outlets at the present time were take-away this added to the amount of waste. There was also a restriction at the local tip. Cllr Belson was aware that a resident of Odsey had carried out a litter pick and she had arranged for the rubbish to be taken away.

### 9 **AGM/ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2021**

It was still unknown when face to face meetings would resume. The current legislation to allow remote meetings expired on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 but due to the restrictions still in place it was expected that the legislation would be extended.

Councillors agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting should be a face to face meeting and agreed to wait until further guidance was received. The AGM would go ahead remotely on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021 when it was hoped an extension to the regulations would have been agreed.

### 10 **PLANNING/TREE WORK APPLICATIONS**

#### 10.1 Guilden Morden Parish Council –Joint Neighbourhood Plan suggestion

Details of the link to the South Cambridgeshire District Council website had been forwarded to Councillors who acknowledged that there was a lot of work and time involved. It was stated that if there was a good Local Development Plan in place a Neighbourhood Plan would not be needed. Cllr Traverse-Healy referred to grants and if two villages joined together to work on a Plan whether there would be two or one grant. Cllr Williams stated that her understanding was that there was one grant per plan.

Cllr Williams agreed that it was a long process adding that originally she believed that Guilden Morden was interested in a shared village design statement although as far as she was aware there was currently no support in place for these. She agreed to check the position with South Cambridgeshire District Council. **-HW**

It was agreed that Cllr Traverse-Healy would speak to Guilden Morden Parish Council about the Neighbourhood Plan suggestion. **-STH**

### 11 **TO CONSIDER CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED INCLUDING:**

#### 11.1 CAPALC Membership 2021/22

Details of membership benefits had been circulated to Councillors who agreed to continue with their membership for another year. Cllr Bird was to attend a Councillor training session at the end of the month.

#### 11.2 Kerbing Request, Northbrook End

Cllr Badger advised that the roadside earth curb had been eroded up to the property fence and as a result vehicles were using the eroded roadside edge as part of the highway. The owner wanted to replace and pay for kerbing and to back fill with soil but the County Council wanted permission from the Parish Council before approval.

Councillors discussed the request. It was noted that there was originally a grass verge which was there for safety reasons. Hard kerbing would not serve this purpose.

It was agreed that the area should be reinstated as a soft verge. The Clerk to reply to the resident. **-Clerk**

#### 11.3 Request for path from Ashwell Station

The Clerk had received the request which she would circulate to Councillors. **-Clerk**

### 12 **COUNCILLORS' ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND REQUIRING THE URGENT ATTENTION OF THE CLERK**

#### 12.1 Kestral Box

The replacement box was now ready to go up. Cllr Upchurch would liaise with Cllr Drew over access to the field. **-AD & CU**

#### 12.2 Mowing of Orchids

Concerns had been raised over the mowing of the grass by the tennis courts destroying the orchids. It was believed that a local resident had carried out the cutting

as it was not the Parish Council contractor. Cllr Badger agreed to look at the area and report back. **-NB**

12.3 SCDC Gypsy and Traveller Workshop

Cllr Williams advised of the workshop which was to be held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 and urged a member of the Parish Council to attend.

**13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 7pm

There was no further business and declared the meeting closed at 8.30 pm

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Chairman

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Date