

## **STEEPLE MORDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at St Peter and St Paul Church on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors: J Clayton (Chairman), K Austin, M Carroll, G Belson, C Upchurch, M Bird, N Badger, S Traverse-Healy

In attendance: Mrs S Walmesley (Clerk) with four members of the public.

#### **1 Apologies for absence, declarations under the code of conduct and requests for dispensations**

Apologies were received from Cllr Wheatley, District Cllr Williams and County Cllr Kindersley. There were no declarations made.

#### **2 County and District Councillors' reports**

Neither the County or District Councillors were in attendance.

#### **3 Comments and observations from parishioners and members of the public**

##### **3.1 Churchyard Trees**

Following the request from neighbouring residents of the Church at the last meeting, to have some tree work carried out, representatives of the Church had written to the Chairman to see if there was any financial contribution possible from the Parish Council. The correspondence had been circulated to Councillors.

Members of the Church committee were in attendance and reiterated the request. Councillors were advised that the last tree work was carried out in 2006 and on inspection the trees need attention again. Four quotation had been sought for the work with the best quotation being £2304 including VAT. At the present time the Church would find it very difficult to meet this cost themselves. The issue had been raised with the Diocese of Ely Head of Church Buildings. The Church Treasurer added that there was an appeal made around the village during 2021, for help with funding due to the Covid pandemic, and this received reasonable support. He did not think that it was appropriate to appeal again at this time.

#### **4 To approve the minutes of**

##### **4.1 The Parish Council Meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

On a proposition by Cllr Bird, seconded by Cllr Traverse-Healy, the minutes as circulated were taken as read and then approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

##### **4.2 The Parish Council Planning Meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

On a proposition by Cllr Bird, seconded by Cllr Traverse-Healy, the minutes as circulated were taken as read and then approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman

#### **5 Matters arising and carried forward from last meetings**

##### **5.1 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Policy Update**

The Clerk advised that completion of the SCDC Tool Kit had been delayed. Following the November meeting the Clerk had found that the link to the guidelines had been removed. She had since received a further link from the officer but this also could not be reached. Cllr Upchurch had also received notification that the Tool Kit had been delayed.

#### **6 Finances**

##### **6.1 To receive the financial statement and to approve the payment of bills**

E-ON	
Reading Room electricity January 2022 DD	£ 39.00
DRAX POWER	
Street light electricity Nov 2021 DD (inc £1.75VAT)	£ 36.62
PRO CLEANING	
Disabled toilet clean December 2021	£ 15.65
NETWISE	

Website hosting/support/mtce 22-23 (inc £60.00 VAT	£360.00	
Domain renewal 22-23 (inc £3.00VAT)	£ 18.00	£378.00
G & R MAINTENANCE LTD		
Final payment for tree removal		£3000.00
MRS S WALMESLEY		
Salary and expenses October-December 2021		£1409.70
HMRC		
TOTAL		£4878.97
The Following Payments Were Agreed At Planning Meeting 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2021		
ROFELO FORRESTRY LTD		
Grinding out stumps following tree removal (inc £300.00 VAT)		£1800.00
MD LANDSCAPES		
Grass verge cut 2021 x2	£ 540.00	
Recreation Ground cut x20	£1400.00	
Recreation Ground hedge cut	£ 400.00	
Conservation area cut	£ 250.00	
VAT	£ 518.00	£3108.00

Agreed. PROPOSED Cllr Bird SECONDED Cllr Austin.

## 6.2 Agreement of Budget/Precept 2022/23

Councillors revisited the request from the Church representatives asking for help with the tree work costs advised under Item 3.1.

The Chairman advised that the Parish Council had tried on several occasions to help the Church with maintenance projects but was prohibited by Government legislation relating to open burial grounds. A discussion took place between Councillors who agreed that they would like to help. The Church representatives were asked to investigate further options with the Diocese.

The finance working group had met and circulated a draft budget to Councillors.

There were no questions and the budget 2022/23 was agreed. On a proposal by Cllr Traverse-Healy, seconded by Cllr Badger, it was agreed to set the parish precept at £32500. Agreed by all Councillors. Clerk to Make the demand to the Parish Council.

**-Clerk**

## 6.3 Update on Invoices for Water/Electricity contributions

The payments for the Football Club and Magpies was outstanding.

### 6.3.1 Tennis Club Query on Invoice

Concern had been raised over the latest invoice which equated to £25 per visit to the toilet as there was no water in the club house.

The Clerk and Cllr Bird explained how the charges had been worked out for the clubs this time as due to estimated readings they had not been invoiced since 2019. Cllr Bird agreed that the way that the percentages were calculated was an unfair way of charging. It was suggested that the clubs should work out between themselves how much they would pay.

It was noted that the Bowls Club and Village Hall were metered and could be charged on usage. The remainder of the charges could then be divided between the clubs and Parish Council. The Clerk advised that the latest water and sewage invoices had been paid so another invoice was due to be sent out. It was agreed that Cllr Bird and the Clerk calculate the payments for the Bowls Club and Village Hall with the remainder of the costs split between the clubs as they deemed appropriate. **-MB & Clerk**

## 7 **Recreation Ground/Conservation Area**

### 7.1 Recreation Ground Checks

Cllr Badger confirmed all was well with the recreation ground.

### 7.2 Quotations for Fence and hedging

Three contractors had been approached for advice and quotations on the fence and hedging around the play area. Cllr Badger explained the options which varied from metal fencing all around the area to repairs to the current fence, additional fencing and planting.

A discussion took place on the most appropriate and best value option. It was suggested that wooden fencing would be easier on the eye rather than the sterile metal fencing.

On a proposal by Cllr Austin, seconded by Cllr Upchurch, it was agreed that the contract be awarded to Buchans Landscapes, to repair two sides of the existing wooden fence and install two new sides. Hedge whips would also be planted, at a cost of £5600.40 Plus VAT

7.3 Steeple Morden Magpies request for Floodlights

Cllr Badger confirmed that he had asked for a lighting report from the Magpies twice. The Clerk was asked to formally request the report before the proposal was discussed by the Parish Council.

**-Clerk**

## 8 Maintenance

8.1 Footpaths /Footways

8.1.1 Craft Way Footway

Following the November meeting the Clerk had followed up the actions of the County Council with the Local Highway Officer who advised that this had been passed to the County Enforcement Officer who was currently on sick leave.

The Chairman asked that the response be forwarded to Cllr Kindersley for information.

**-Clerk**

8.1.2 Church Farm Lane Overgrown Hedge

It was noted that there had been some branches cut back from the hedge following the report at the last meeting.

8.2 Update On Litter Picking

Cllr Belson reported that she would be compiling a schedule for the coming year. **-GB**

8.3 Missing Repeater Signs

The Clerk asked for the position of the missing signs so that she could report to the County Council. Cllr Austin agreed to advise her.

**-KA & Clerk**

8.4 Replacement Batteries for MVAS

Cllr Austin advised that two batteries needed to be replaced as they could no longer be charged. The cost of the replacements would be £134.00 plus VAT. It was agreed that the Clerk place the order.

**-Clerk**

## 9 Parish Council Projects 2021/22

9.1 Update on Quotations for Car Park Resurfacing

Cllr Carroll had spoken to three interested contractors but by the day the tender was due one contractor pulled out and the other two wanted further discussion/information. These two contractors had confirmed that they were still interested. Cllr Carroll stated that he did not think they had considered all the requirements he had put in the specification.

Cllr Carroll agreed to discuss a firm specification again with the contractors with a view to having quotations, within budget, available for the March meeting.

**-MC**

9.2 Update on Redecoration of Reading Room Quotations –on hold until March 2022

Cllr Carroll would obtain quotations from contractors, within budget, for the March Parish Council meeting.

**-MC**

9.2.1 Date for further meeting with Village Clubs

The meeting would be arranged for March 2022. The Chairman to advise the Clerk of his availability.

**-JC**

## 10 Planning/Tree work Applications

10.1 To consider Planning Applications

10.1.1 Planning Ref 21/05512/PRIOR

Flittons Farm, 78-80 Station Road –Change of use of Agricultural Buildings to 2 Dwelling houses (Class C3) and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion

Cllr Traverse-Healy advised that the ecology report had identified a rare bat habitat on the land. The applicant, who was in attendance, was invited to speak. He confirmed that there were rare bats and that the interim ecology report had to go to Natural England. The bats would almost certainly be accommodated. Access to the site would also be though agricultural land.

The following recommendation was made by Councillors.

**Recommendation –Support with requests**

**The proposal must meet all ecological requirements from a proper ecological survey. County Highways must be content with the access being though agricultural land.**

**10.2 Feedback from Planners on the way representations are recorded on the Planning Portal**

There was no further update.

**11 To consider correspondence received including;**

**11.1 Steeple Morden Allotment Society –Invitation to visit Allotment and request to replace boundary fence mesh**

A letter had been circulated from the Chairman of the Allotment Society inviting Councillors to visit the site for a guided visit. Councillors were also made aware that the fence on two sides of the site was in need of repair in places after 11 years. The posts seemed to be fine but the mesh needed to be replaced. A request for the cost of replacing the mesh in the budget for 22/23 was made.

A discussion took place on the rotting fence and also the Allotment Society finances. Councillors agreed that the allotment holders should be raising funds themselves for this purpose. The Clerk was asked to reply to the Allotment Society Chairman.

**-Clerk**

**11.2 Tree Planting update and request for information on further land for planting**

It was noted that more trees had been planted in the village and photographs had been circulated.

The Chairman advised that he had been approached by a resident requesting the planting of some Cherry trees on the path through to Russell Close which was South Cambridgeshire District Council land. Some concern was raised over this area as trees had been removed from there in the past following requests from residents.

The Chairman would ask the resident to formally make the request in writing. **-JC**

**12 Councillors' items for information and requiring the urgent attention of the Clerk**

**12.1 Proposal for EV Chargers**

Cllr Bird reported that he and Cllr Austin had compiled a discussion paper on a proposal for EV chargers in the village hall car park. This proposal might be eligible for a zero carbon grant. Copies of the paper were distributed to Councillors. The proposal would be discussed at a future meeting.

**12.2 Meeting with Police and Crime Commissioner**

Cllr Carroll advised that he had attended the meeting in December. He felt that the Commissioner, Darryl Preston was very supportive of rural issues. During the meeting it was advised that there were grants available for youth projects. Cllr Carroll agreed to prepare a summary of the meeting to distribute to Councillors.

**-MC**

**13 Date of next meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022. Planning Meeting to be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022.**

There was no further business. The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25pm

Chairman

Date