

## **STEEPLE MORDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in the Cricket Pavilion on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors: J Clayton (Chairman), N Badger, C Upchurch, O Parsons, K Austin, S Traverse-Healy, M Carroll, M Bird  
County Cllr Kindersley (part) District Cllr Williams  
In attendance: Mrs S Walmesley (Clerk) with two members of the public.

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

The Chairman reported that Nicola Sharkey had resigned from the Parish Council. The process for co-option would commence.

Cllr Austin declared a non-pecuniary interest under Item 11.1.3 when the application was brought to the attention of the Parish Council.

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

##### **2.1 County Council**

Cllr Kindersley advised that a Bus User Group meeting was to take place on the 6<sup>th</sup> October in Bassingbourn. Lifts would be available to those residents who needed them. He would put the details on the Facebook page.

The Making Connections initiative relating to the congestion charge was not likely to happen. There would be consequences as no improvements to the local bus service would be made and there would be an impact on the development in and around Cambridge where planning permission conditions were dependent on improved public transport. A knock-on effect could also affect the five year housing and supply resulting in more speculative planning applications as before the adoption of the current Local Development Plan.

Cllr Kindersley gave an update on the previously reported proposals for a new silicone valley and East West Rail where he had attended a meeting with Anthony Browne MP and the rail minister.

Local updates were then made. The gully cleaning schedule showed that Steeple Morden were programmed for work w/c 16<sup>th</sup> October. He asked Councillors to let him know if the work didn't take place. The County Council was also seeking funding from the Government for the roads affected by the weather in 2022.

As a representative of the Fire Authority Cllr Kindersley had asked for a report on lithium batteries for a discussion. Fires in Cambridgeshire were increasingly common so a worry for those charging equipment such as mobility scooters.

Cllr Kindersley advised that the Weedkilling Policy had caused some difficulties, so the County Council was now undertaking a review.

Cllr Bird asked if there was an update on the 20mph applications which he was told would be considered by the County Council in July. Cllr Kindersley had no further update. The Clerk advised that she had been told that the County Council would consider the applications later in the Autumn,

The Chairman thanked Cllr Kindersley for his report.

##### **2.2 District Council**

Cllr Williams stated that the refuse collection in the village was moving to a Thursday from w/c 18<sup>th</sup> September due to the SCDC four day week working. She updated the meeting on the hours the staff would work adding that there were not enough drivers. She expressed her disappointment that she was not allowed to take part in the decision, and represent the views of the parishes she represented, on the four day week as the decision was made by just eight Cabinet members. There had been another letter from the Government asking the District Council to stop the trial with financial consequences being considered if they did not.

Cllr Williams then added to the update on the congestion charge proposal stating that a final decision was due to be made by the end of the month.

A discussion by Councillors took place on the four-day week and the lack of a debate by all District Councillors on the decision. Cllr Kindersley had earlier supported the initiative adding that there had been a £300k saving with the service level maintained. This had been reported via an independent report.

It was noted that the three-month trial period had ended and the trial extended without full consultation. Councillors agreed that a letter be sent to the Chief Executive, copied to the Leader of the District Council and MP Anthony Browne, questioning the validity of the four-day working week which had been agreed without due diligence taking place and by only eight cabinet members. A request to see a copy of the independent report on how the shorter working week was justified would be made. The Chief Executive would be advised that more openness and transparency was needed. A reference was made to a previous letter sent where there had been no reply. The Clerk would also follow up a response on the points raised then. **-Clerk**

The Chairman thanked Cllr Williams for her report.

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

There were no comments made.

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

##### **4.1 The Parish Council Meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

On a proposition by Cllr Parsons, seconded by Cllr Upchurch, the minutes as circulated were taken as read and then approved a true record and signed by the Chairman.

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

##### **5.1 Broadband Link to Church**

There had been no feedback to date from the Church. The Chairman advised that a meeting of the PCC was to be held on the 11<sup>th</sup> October so he would make sure that there was an answer.

##### **5.2 Agreement of position of Whitebeam trees on Cheyney Street**

The County Council Local Highway Officer was chasing this as he wanted to get his planting contract in place. Cllr Badger would follow up with the village tree planting co-ordinator as soon as possible. **-NB**

##### **5.3 Gigclear Proposed Rollout**

Cllr Bird reported that a final decision was to be made by the end of December. This item would therefore be removed from the agenda.

#### **6 Finances**

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

E-ON

Reading Room electricity September 23 DD £ 5.00

DRAX POWER

Street light electricity August 23 (inc £1.81 VAT) £ 37.92

PRO CLEANING

Disabled toilet clean July/August 2023 £23.93

THE PRINTWORKS(ROYSTON)LTD

Newsletters £60.00

MD LANDSCAPES

Rec grasscutting July 23 £340.00

Replace 2 concrete posts on rec £240.00

Rec grasscutting August 23 £340.00

Verges August 2023 £320.00 £1240.00

CHRISTOPHER MARKHAM HOME AND GARDEN SERVICES

Supply and install new rabbit fencing at allotments £1800.00

VIKING

Replacement Drum for printer & diary 2024 (inc £28.39VAT) £ 152.39

CURV360 LTD

EV Project fees £ 10.41

STEEPLE MORDEN BOWLS CLUB

Energy consumed February - £121.94

Space rental for EV equipment 2023 £100.00 £221.94

TOTAL £3551.59

Agreed. Proposed Cllr Bird, Seconded Cllr Traverse-Healy

## 6.2 Internal Audit Report 2022/23

The report had still not been received. The Clerk advised that the External Audit was due to be completed by the end of September. The Auditor had asked some questions relating to the return which had been answered.

## 6.3 EV Charger -Financial Arrangement with Bowls Club

The draft agreement was circulated to Councillors. This had now been signed. It was noted that the Bowls Club did not want the suggested float.

## 6.4 EV Charger Payment Authorisations and New Signage

Cllr Bird suggested new signage be installed asking that it be brought to the attention of the Parish Council if the chargers were not working. There was an issue a few weeks ago and Cllr Bird had noticed that the chargers had not been used since. He felt that people who had been using them had been put off.

It was agreed that signage be purchased up to a maximum of £90.00. A note would also be put in the newsletter and on Facebook urging residents to use the facility. Cllr Parsons added that on a EV charger point map these were shown. **-MB**

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

### 7.1 Recreation Ground Checks

Cllr Badger reported that all was well apart from a bench by the bottom of the car park which was rotten and could not be repaired.

It was agreed that the bench would be removed and an invitation welcoming residents to donate or sponsor a replacement be made through Facebook and the newsletter. **-NB**

#### 7.1.1 Damage to barrier

Damage to another part of the barrier had occurred. This had been repaired.

### 7.2 Update on Play area repairs

Cllr Badger reported that the repairs were in hand.

A discussion took place suggestions made for equipment which included a basketball area and outdoor gym equipment. Following the discussion Cllr Badger offered to carry out some background investigations on a basketball net and Cllr Upchurch on the gym equipment. **-NB & CU**

Details of a 'monkey challenge' (climbing wall) would be circulated for the next meeting.

## 8 **Reading Room**

### 8.1 Proposal for alternative electricity Supplier

Cllr Bird advised that the Parish Council was coming to the end of the contract with Eon and a contract with another company could half the amount paid.

It was agreed that Cllr Bird investigate a two-year deal and update Councillors at the next meeting. **-MB**

## 9 **Village Grasscutting**

### 9.1 Additional Grass verge cut

Due to the amount of growth the grass verge cut had already been carried out.

### 9.2 Bowls Club Hedge cut -proposal for temporary inclusion in PC maintenance programme

There was a problem with the hedge which needed to be cut. It had in the past been arranged by the club. A quotation for £600 had been obtained to cut the top and outside. The inside would be left to the club. Cllr Bird suggested that this would be a goodwill gesture.

A discussion took place on this setting a precedent for other clubs in the village. It was acknowledged that it should only be a one off cut which would help the Bowls Club. It was then agreed by all Councillors that Cllr Bird would arrange a letter of agreement stating that the cutting of the hedge was only for a one-off cut and not a permanent arrangement. **-MB**

## 10 **Parish Council Projects 2023/24**

### 10.1 Car Park Resurfacing -Section 106 Funding

Cllr Carroll agreed to obtain quotations for a basic resurfacing of the car park -levelled with no drainage, with a view to the work being carried out in the Springtime. The

earmarked Section 106 money would fund this. It was suggested that coded 'width barriers' be considered for installation to stop heavy vehicles going onto the car park.

**-MC**

## 10.2 Pavilion/Reading Room Decoration

Cllr Carroll advised that he had experienced a delay in obtaining quotations due to a corruption in a file. Quotations were now due to be returned by the end of September.

**-MC**

## 11 **Planning/Tree work Applications**

### 11.1 Planning Applications

#### 11.1.1 Planning Ref 23/02736/LBC (for information)

11 Cheyney Street -Remove existing damaged roughcast render, make good and prepare the surface of the building, apply new lime based breathable insulated render to the building onto breathable wood fibre insulated render board fixed to the surface of the building and finish with limewash.

#### 11.1.2 Planning Ref 23/02266/HFUL

16 Hay Street -New window and filling in of an existing door to side

**Recommendation -Support**

#### 11.1.3 Planning Ref 23/03917/HFUL

41 Bogs Gap Lane-Demolition of the existing conservatory, single garage, and shed and replaced with a single storey side and link extension

This application had been missed off the agenda. Councillors were asked to look at the paperwork online and if they had any concerns the Clerk would ask for an extension to the consultation deadline so that a Planning Meeting could be arranged.

**-Cllrs**

### 11.2 Update on Quarry Application

Cllr Traverse-Healy had been concerned over the lack of information on the County Council website and following enquiries by the Clerk had been made aware that the planning application was currently being determined with the officer's report finalised. The report would now be reviewed by the Team Leader so that a decision could be issued in the next week. The Clerk was asked to circulate the notification once received.

**-Clerk**

Cllr Parsons had observed a lot more lorries over the past few weeks turning right out of the site. It was acknowledged that until the new transport agreement was signed there was nothing that could be done. It was suggested that a record be kept of those vehicles causing concern with times, dates and photographs.

## 12 **To consider correspondence received including;**

### 12.1 CAPALC Conference -15<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The Clerk advised that she would be attending this conference.

### 12.2 CAPALC Review of Financial Regulations

A review of the regulations were taking place. Councils were asked for their view on technical aspects of the document by the 5<sup>th</sup> November. Cllr Bird offered to look through the adopted document.

**-MB**

### 12.3 County Council Weed Control -Petition

Correspondence had been received from a County Councillor trying to get a petition against a County Council decision. Further correspondence had been circulated relating to the policy. It was noted that this was a political issue and would not be followed up.

### 12.4 Cambridge Carbon Footprint

A question-and-answer session on the initiative was to be held on the 27<sup>th</sup> September. Cllr Parsons offered to investigate further.

**-OP**

Cllr Bird advised that he had been asked to attend a SCDC Climate Conference later in the year to answer questions about the experience of the EV Charger project.

### 12.5 Letters of Complaint

The Chairman advised that correspondence had been received and these had been dealt with internally.

### 13 Councillors' items for information and requiring the urgent attention of the Clerk

#### 13.1 Magpies Rusty Container

Cllr Badger to follow up with Magpies the removal of old container.

**-NB**

#### 13.2 Toilet Cleaning

Cllr Austin advised that the Village Hall had changed cleaning contractors due to the increase in price. The disabled toilet had not been cleaned since. He offered to ask the new Village Hall contractor to add the toilet to schedule which was agreed.

**-KA**

#### 13.3 Bluegrass Festival

It was noted that nobody had come forward to take over the festival arrangements so 2023 was the last year of the event.

#### 13.4 EV Charging

Cllr Carroll reported that there had been instances of fires, related to the charging, and the guidance and requirements now was for the charging points to be away from buildings. He would forward details to Councillors for information.

**-MC**

#### 13.5 Parking in Odsey

Cllr Parsons had received complaints about vehicles from the scrap yard parking in front of Zaheers in Odsey blocking the pavements. Odsey residents were advised to report the obstruction on the County Council website. Cllr Williams stated that this was a police issue too.

### 14 Date of next meeting – 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023

There was no further business. The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.20 pm

Chairman

Date