

## **STEEPLE MORDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

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

**Present:** Councillors: J Clayton (Chairman), C Upchurch, O Parsons, K Austin, S Traverse-Healy, M Bird, A Gear, N Badger  
District Cllr Williams (part)  
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**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Carroll and County Cllr Kindersley.  
Cllr Traverse-Healy declared a non-pecuniary interest under Item 10.2.1 as a relative of the Area Woodland Trust Warden.

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

##### **2.1 District Council**

Cllr Williams had earlier managed to circulate her latest report adding that she hoped the distribution would go ahead monthly in future. A full meeting of the District Council had taken place on the 30<sup>th</sup> November where she had an unsuccessful motion. The four day week continued to be controversial. The Government had issued a Best Value notice and an extraordinary meeting of the District Council had been held to discuss this. The District Council had agreed to comply with the notice so that they were able to continue the trial. Cllr Williams added that legal advice had been obtained but she had not been involved.

Plans for a consultation by the GCP had been discussed earlier in the day for the Hills Road junction in Cambridge. This would impact on drivers.

Cllr Williams had heard that Cllr Bird had made a good presentation at the recent Environment conference.

Cllr Williams had been in contact with the SCDC lighting officer following a request at an earlier meeting. She had been told that permission to erect the MVAS was given before there was a policy. Now there was one adopted the columns were no longer suitable. Cllr Austin stated that a new pole was being investigated.

Cllr Parsons asked what Best Value meant for the District Council. He was advised that data had to be provided regularly, some historic and some current. Councillors agreed that this was a question that could be asked of the Chief Executive when she attended the January Parish Council meeting.

Cllr Bird asked about the CPE power and whether it would be extended out to this village. Cllr Williams stated that this was the responsibility of the County Council but she was aware that it covered South Cambridgeshire. There were only one or two officers and they would be looking first at the areas causing most problems such as outside schools. Cllr Bird then referred to the recently shared details on the Prosperity Fund. He asked if the fund would include sports facilities. Cllr Williams was not sure so agreed to find out and report back.

**-HW**

Cllr Parsons advised that the LHI application form needed to show the support of the District and County Councillors. Cllr Williams confirmed that she would support an application for Odsey.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Williams for her update.

##### **2.2 County Council**

Cllr Kindersley had circulated a report.

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

##### **3.1 Light on Pavilion**

It was reported that the car park floodlight was not working. Cllr Bird agreed to investigate and if a repair was needed to cost was authorised by Councillors.

**-MW**

#### 4 To approve the minutes of

##### 4.1 The Parish Council Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023

On a proposition by Cllr Traverse-Healy, seconded by Cllr Austin, 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

Cllr Bird reported that the PCC was very pleased that the Parish Council had agreed to cover the full cost. The proposal was now with them. The Chairman added that he was aware there had been some disagreement over the proposal. The PCC needed to be made aware that the broadband link would make the Church more accessible to the general public.

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

The position had been agreed with the County Council Local Highway Officer.

##### 5.3 Update on Six Free Trees

Details of the proposed position for the six trees had been circulated to Councillors.

##### 5.4 Confirmation of Meeting with SCDC Chief Executive 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024

As discussed with Cllr Williams, Ms Watts had agreed to attend the meeting. The Chairman asked that any questions from Councillors be forwarded to him by the 31<sup>st</sup> December. He would then meet with Cllrs Parsons and Badger to allocate the questions. Cllr Badger would now advertise to residents and point out that there would be a limited time for comments.

**-Cllrs & NB**

##### 5.5 Update on the Waggon and Horses -ACV Bid

Councillors were not aware of any group in the village wanting to buy the premises. Cllr Badger advised that he had spoken to the new manager who confirmed that things were going very well with good support from the village. He had offered the Parish Council the back room of the pub to hold meetings but, as there were other premises in the village, the offer could not be accepted as it was licenced premises. The Manager would be thanked for his offer.

The intention to bid had been registered with South Cambridgeshire District Council and any bid from the village would have to be made by May 2024.

#### 6 Finances

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

SSE	
Street light electricity November 23	£54.46tbc
THE PRINTWORKS(ROYSTON)LTD	
Newsletters	£60.00
NETWISE	
Website hosting, support. Mtce 9/1/24-8/1/25 (inc £66.00 VAT)	£396.00
WAVE	
Sewage charge May -November 2025	£593.96
TOTAL	£1104.42

The following payments were also made between meetings –

CHRIS ROGERSON	
Tree watering Summer 2023	£340.00
MD LANDSCAPES	
Cut of Bowls Club hedge	£650.00
Cut of grass verges Nov 23	£320.00
MELANIE ARCHER	
Disabled Toilet Cleaning Nov 23	£ 15.00

Agreed. PROPOSED Cllr Upchurch, SECONDED Cllr Bird

##### 6.2 Renewal of Streetlight energy contract from December 2023

Cllr Bird had reported that he had negotiated a one year deal with SSE which he hoped was now in place. He was thanked for his work on the contract renewal.

##### 6.3 Budget/Precept 2024/25

The Clerk had circulated the receipts and payments to date along with the forecast for the end of the financial year. As in previous years the Finance Working Group, the Chairman and Cllr Bird, would meet to discuss the budget and bring back a proposal for

the January Parish Council meeting. Cllrs Gear and Badger would also contribute to the proposal.  
-**JC,NB, OP,AG**

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

### **7.1 Recreation Ground Checks**

Cllr Badger reported that all was okay. One of the long serving litter pickers had resigned and Cllr Badger would arrange for a note of appreciation to be put on the village Facebook page.  
-**NB**

### **7.2 Update on Play area repairs**

Due to the weather the repairs would now be carried forward until the new year. It was agreed that Cllr Badger arrange for some bare rooted whips to be planted around the play area.  
-**NB**

#### **7.2.1 Outdoor Gym Equipment (December 2023)**

Cllr Upchurch had asked for quotations to include the installation of equipment. She was no further forward.

A discussion took place on funding and the Section 106 Community Open Space earmarked fund. It was noted that this fund would also be used for the car park refurbishment. Councillors agreed that Cllrs Upchurch, Badger, Parsons and Gear work on this project together. The budget amount was carried forward to Item 9.1 for confirmation.  
-**CU,NB,OP,AG**

#### **7.2.2 Basketball Net (December 2023)**

Cllr Badger reported that he had received two quotation for the equipment and an area of safety surfacing both £20-£22,000. Councillors were shocked at the cost and agreed that they could not justify the expenditure for a small minority of users. They agreed that it would be a better option to install a few pieces of outdoor gym equipment.

#### **7.2.3 Monkey Challenge (awaiting outcome of application)**

The Parish Council application had been unsuccessful. Councillors were however encouraged to have another attempt at funding with revised wording. It was agreed that Cllr Parsons and the Clerk pursue.  
-**OP & Clerk**

## **8 Village Grasscutting 2024-2026**

This would be carried forward to the next meeting as the Clerk was still awaiting the return of the tenders.

A discussion took place on the pitches used by the Magpies, also discussed at the November meeting, which were not included in the specification. The Clerk was asked to write to the Magpies Chairman and remind the committee of the agreement which gave them responsibility for the maintenance of the pitches including the grasscutting. If they wanted the Parish Council to include areas in their specification then the Magpies would be charged the cost.

The Clerk would also urge the return of the tenders.  
-**Clerk**

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

### **9.1 Car Park Resurfacing -Section 106 Funding**

Cllr Carroll had provided details of three options which had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

A discussion took place on each option with their advantages and disadvantages. It was stated that least expensive option was similar to that which had taken place over the past 30 years -top dressed and rolled. This did need maintenance every 2-3 years. Repairs to the second and third option would be a lot more expensive.

On a proposal by Cllr Traverse-Healy, seconded by Cllr Parsons, it was agreed to go with the first basic option with a budget of up to £5,000.

Cllr Bird reminded Councillors that the school drop off car park needed attention. Cllr Traverse-Healy expressed his concern that carrying out repairs to this area might set a precedent as the area was the responsibility of the school. After discussion it was agreed that the school could be advised that if there was any materials spare they would use this to repair the area. The school would also be reminded that the area was their responsibility for maintenance in future.

The discussion then went back to the provision of gym equipment where it was agreed that two substantial pieces, most likely to be used, be purchased to start so that the use could be monitored. A budget of £7,500 was also agreed.

## 9.2 Pavilion/Reading Room Decoration

Cllr Carroll had advised he was awaiting a quotation. He was having difficulty finding contractors willing to quote for the work. Councillors recognised that this was an issue everywhere.

## 9.3 LHI Application 2024/25

Proposal for Odsey traffic calming/speed reduction.

Cllr Parsons reported that he had looked at the application form and now wanted to check the process with Cllrs Bird and Austin. He questioned whether the application should be for more than a speed limit change.

A discussion took place on the traffic island which had been knocked down over four weeks ago. This was a health and safety issue as, with limited street lighting, the obstruction was difficult to see.

The Clerk was asked to write to the Local Highway Officer urging the repair and pointing out that this was a health and safety issue. **-Clerk**

## 10 **Planning/Tree work Applications**

### 10.1 Planning Applications

### 10.2 Tree Works

#### 10.2.1 Planning Ref 23/04483/TTHR (For Information)

Land between North Brook End and Morden Hall, North Brook Road -removal of 2.5m of existing hedgerow owned by the Woodland Trust at its Tween Town woods site.

It was noted that this was so that a kissing gate could be installed bringing the wood closer to the village. There were no comments made.

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

### 11.1 Steeple Morden Cricket Club

Correspondence had been received from the Cricket Club Chairman, Fraser Dawes, concerned over the electricity usage and their charges. Mr Dawes referred to the winter flood lights used by the footballers often left on during the night, and wanted confirmation that the Cricket Club would not be billed for this.

Cllr Bird suggested that a review of the 'split' arrangement take place but was reminded that the clubs had agreed to this. Councillors were also reminded that the Parish Council paid for the painting of the exterior of the Pavilion. The Football Club also paid for the new distribution board in the Reading Room. Councillors agreed that the current arrangement would remain in place. Clerk to reply. **-Clerk**

It was noted that only the Village Hall and Allotment Society had paid the water invoices sent out in July 2023. Now that the Wave invoice had been received further invoices would be sent out to the clubs and organisations from May -November 2023.

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

### 12.1 Additional Poles for MVAS

The Clerk was asked to arrange for an additional pole for the MVAS to replace the streetlight. Cllr Gear referred to the two poles in Odsey and asked if the equipment could be mounted there. Cllr Austin advised that he had tried the post closest to the A505 but the second was obscured by shrubbery. The Clerk to also ask for a second post there.

The Chairman asked that County Cllr Kindersley be copied in on the correspondence as the Odsey area was particularly dangerous. **-Clerk**

## 13 **Date of next meeting – 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

There was no further business. The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.21 pm

Chairman

Date