

**Minutes of the Steeple Morden Annual Parish Meeting held
on Wednesday 24th May 2023 in Steeple Morden Pavilion at 7.30pm**

Present: Fourteen parishioners plus Mr Jeremy Clayton (Chairman) and Mrs Sally Walmsley (Clerk).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Avril Gilbert/Peter Garner (Tennis Club). Annie Bowes (St Peter & St Paul Church), Annette Traverse-Healy (Allotment Society), District Cllr Williams

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH MEETINGS ON 9th May 2022

The minutes had been circulated and agreed a true record.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no Matters Arising.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT 2022/23

Copies of the Receipts and Payments account had been circulated and hard copies were available at the meeting.. There were no questions raised.

5. REPORTS:

All written reports would be made available on the Parish Council website www.steeplemordenpc.org.uk

PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN –Mr Clayton

The Chairman presented his report which is shown at the end of the minutes. His report would be the only one included in these minutes. He explained the rest could be found on the Parish Council website. He stated that potholes were a particular issue in the village feeling that rural communities were getting left behind with money being spent on for example cycle paths. Cambridgeshire was second from bottom in the country for repairs. The decline in the County Council service was not acceptable.

THE REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Kindersley presented his report which is on the website.

He responded to the statement made by the Chairman on potholes confirming that ‘managed decline/ was not a County Council policy anymore acknowledging that it was until 2021 when the joint administration ended. He gave an update on the number of potholes reported and filled adding that the County Council was proactive with their approach and only too aware of issues and consequences. The climate change and weather pattern all contributed. Cllr Kindersley stated that inflation was also having an impact as the cost of repair had increased to £65 per pothole. A discussion took place on the grading of repairs with a suggestion that contractors should be given leeway on whether they repair unmarked potholes or not.

Cllr Kindersley than advised that he had received a reply from the Director of Highways regarding the Parish Council paying for repairs. The answer was a definite No but parishes could fund the repairs carried out by the County Council. The Chairman offered to meet with the Director for a walk around the village which Cllr Kindersley agreed to arrange.

A question was raised on representations to County Council planning applications especially the one relating to the quarry. It was observed that comments made by consultees were not put on the website. Cllr Kindersley agreed to check with the County Council Planners.

He was asked about the arrangements with the Royston refuse centre. Cllr Kindersley confirmed that discussions were ongoing with a suggestion of a funding contribution to Royston.

Cllr Kindersley concluded that he had been elected Chairman of Cambridgeshire County Council at the recent Annual meeting. The Chairman congratulated him and thanked him for everything he did for the village.

THE REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr Williams was not in attendance. She had provided a report which was on the website.

THE TOWNLANDS CHARITY –Mr Clayton

The Chairman had provided a report for the website. He added that there was money in the charity for those needing help asking them to contact one of the Trustees.

BASSINGBOURN VILLAGE COLLEGE

A report had not been provided.

STEEPLE MORDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

A representative was not in attendance. A report had not been provided this year.

SMARTIES PRE-SCHOOL

A report had not been provided.

Councillors thought that a representative would be in attendance as they were expecting an update on the loan situation. The Clerk was asked to write to the Chairman of the committee and ask for a report on their financial position. Cllr Parsons was aware of the committee and was surprised they were not represented. He added that the Pre-School was still on the turnaround from the pandemic.

MOBILE WARDEN SCHEME

A report had been provided and included at the end of the minutes.

Mrs Belson, a Trustee of the charity, was in attendance and offered leaflets to attendees. She added that the Trustees were trying to raise awareness of the existence of the charity. She added that a new warden had been recruited recently and urged anyone interested in the service to get in touch.

ST PETER & ST PAUL CHURCH

A report had been provided and included on the website. The Chairman advised that the Church now had a Church Warden. They were looking at the recruitment of a vicar following the retirement of the Rector in the summer of 2022.

ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE

A report had been provided and included on the website. It was noted that the allotments were at full capacity.

VILLAGE HALL

A report had been provided and included on the website..

MORDEN PLAYERS

A report was not available.

SCOUT GROUP

A report had been provided and included on the website.

BROWNIE GROUP

A report was not available.

REPORTS FROM VILLAGE SPORTS CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONSCRICKET CLUB

A report was not available.

FOOTBALL CLUB

A report was not available.

MAGPIES FOOTBALL CLUB

A report was not available.

TENNIS CLUB

A report had been provided and included on the website..

BOWLS CLUB

A report had been provided for the website.

TREE PLANTING WORKING GROUP

A report had been provided for the website. The Chairman thanked all people involved in the project adding that a lot of trees had been planted over the past few years. The Chairman was made aware of a

large Beech tree which was being stored in a parishioners garden. Cllr Badger agreed to liaise with the working group co-ordinator over planting.

LITTER PICKING WORKING GROUP

A report had been provided for the website. The group were still collecting a large amount of litter on their litter picks.

RECREATION GROUND WORKING GROUP

Cllr Badger advised that litter was also an issue on the recreation ground. Everything else was okay.

PAVILION /READING ROOM REPLACEMENT/REFURBISHMENT

Cllr Badger and Bird reported that they had met with the sports clubs who were unanimously more keen to pursue a purpose built building recognising that funding would be needed. It was envisaged that this would take 3-5 years to organise.

Cllr Carroll advised that he had approached three contractors with one happy to re-tender to make the buildings water tight and safe in the meantime. The Chairman added that the Parish Council would have to take that option as the clubs were given until this meeting to put forward their proposals. It was disappointing that representatives were not in attendance. Cllr Bird advised that the Cricket club had plans to carry out some works internally in the Pavilion themselves in the short term. The Reading Room electrics, which had previously been a concern for Cllr Bird, were a lot better since the upgrade of the external lights.

Cllr Carroll referred to the long term plan for a replacement building suggesting that an Architect be appointed to come up with some drawings. It was stated that this had happened in the past and the best course of action now would be to wait for the clubs to come back with their proposals. In meantime Cllrs Badger and Bird would continue discussions with the clubs.

The Chairman thanked them for all their efforts.

UPDATE ON TRAFFIC CALMING IN THE VILLAGE

The Parish Council had been active in traffic calming over the year. Cllr Austin and Cllr Bird had made an application for a 20mph speed limit around the Church and school area the result of which would be known in July 2023. The Chairman explained the scheme to attendees which was partially funded by Cambridgeshire County Council. Cllr Austin advised that he was arranging the moving around of the MVAS but it was still difficult to locate the equipment in Odsey due to the shrubbery. It was suggested that the 40mph in Odsey should be reduced to 30mph. This would be something that the Parish Council could consider for the next LHI application later in the year.

A discussion took place on police enforcement. Attendees were advised that the police had been asked for their support but they were not interested as there was not an active Community Speedwatch team in the village. Cllr Traverse-Healy advised that there was going to be a change on parking enforcement which was to be transferred to South Cambridgeshire District Council. This might have some impact on the parking issues in Odsey. He added that the SCDC officers could also be given the power to carry out speed checks.

8. ANY OTHER PARISH MATTERS

Cricket Nets

Concern was raised over the long grass around the cricket nets on the recreation ground. The nets belonged to the Cricket Club who had the responsibility to keep them safe. It was suggested that the resident contact a member of the club directly.

Ex Charity Land

The meeting was advised that a discussion had taken place with two surveyors who had been looking at the charity land and asked what the village needed in terms of housing. Cllr Traverse-Healy advised that applications for housing on the land had been made before but as it was outside the village framework it would either have to be a single development of architectural importance or affordable housing on an exception site if a need could be proven. An application could also be made for the land to be included in the next Local Development Plan.

Drive parallel to Recreation Ground

Ownership of the land was questioned as the drive was in need of repair. The resident was advised that the drive was shared and he should consult the other parties with access to the road.

9. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

To be agreed.

There was no further business and the Chairman thanked everyone for coming and declared the meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Signed _____ (Chairman) _____ (Date)

REPORTS 2023

Chairman's report – May 2023 – Jeremy Clayton

A quiet year in 2022/2023, a welcome relief after the Covid years and a welcome return to the normality of meetings held in person.

The parish council has been carrying on its normal work, making sure the recreation ground, play area and buildings are looked after. Our sub committees have as always done a great job with no fuss.

Making the most of grants that became available, we now have broadband up and running at the recreation ground with free Wi-Fi access available around the buildings, plus two Electric Vehicle charging points. I believe these are the first to be installed by a parish council in south Cambs, we should all be very grateful to Malcolm Bird and Keith Austin for their efforts.

Ginny Belson, whilst not now a councillor, has again kindly organised the litter collection with her helpers, I dread to think what our village would be like without their efforts. It amazes me that people think it okay to drop their litter on the roads and streets.

On road safety in Steeple Morden we now have the 40 mph gateways, our speed monitors and we have bid for a twenty is plenty zone around the school. Our records would indicate that our efforts have slowed the traffic down but unfortunately there are some people who, whatever we do, cannot help themselves and recklessly speed. I know this frustrates many parishioners as it does the parish council.

We would like to transform our sports facilities, this however needs buy in from all the clubs. We have provisionally set aside some funds but the clubs will also need to raise significant amounts. Discussions are on-going and this is a long term project.

Potholes. I, like pretty much everyone, am very fed up with the state of our roads. We have asked whether we can do some repairs ourselves but have yet to receive a reply. It should not be necessary for us to do this but I believe there are around 150,000 potholes reported in Cambridgeshire. The council budget allows for 60k to 70k to be repaired per year. So the problem is unlikely to be solved unless funds are diverted from other areas. We continue to push for repairs in our villages.

I am grateful to all councillors for their help, wisdom and practical contributions. In particular, I would like to thank Nick Badger our vice chairman, who has ably stood in for me when needed and Sally our clerk who keeps us in order and handles our accounts and paperwork.

I would also like to thank our district and county councillors, who keep us well informed and are very supportive of our villages, fighting our corner as necessary.