

COLMWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

of a meeting of Colmworth Parish Council held on Wednesday 5th July 2017 at 7.30pm in the Roman Room of the Village Hall at Colmworth.

Present: Cllr. D. Michell (Chairman), Cllr K. Knight, Cllr. P. Ball, Cllr. B. Brightman (arrived at 7.45), Cllr R. Jones, Cllr T. Frew, L. Crawford (Clerk), and four members of the public.

1. Apologies: Cllr E. Pegler

2. Declarations of Interest and Confirmation of Changes to Registers of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last Parish Council meetings (25th May 2017 and 12th June)

Having been previously circulated these were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr. Michell, seconded by Cllr. Knight.

4. Public Open Forum

Members of the public explained that the only change to the Bryher Farm planning application has been to increase the dimensions of the link between the two buildings by 1m.

5. Highways

- A1. Respond to Stage 3 Report which proposes a new motorway (Package A) – possibly to the west, or improvements in situ (Package B). (LK)
Cllr. Knight explained that the decision was going to be taken regarding whether to proceed with Package A (a new road, probably to the west of the A1) or Package B (removal of roundabouts and improvements in situ) in the autumn. She proposed that we write to Highways England, Alistair Burt, Glenn Barcham at Bedford Borough Council, Tom Wootton and the Mayor in favour of Package B.

Cllr Michell explained that he felt that a new road with three lanes may well be required in the future, even if the roundabouts were improved, due to the amount of development planned in and around St. Neots.

Cllr Jones suggested that we could not comment on the A1 other than to point out that decisions are not being made in a logical order. He felt that it was illogical to upgrade the Black Cat until the route for the A1 and other infrastructure and development projects had been agreed.

Cllr Jones proposed the following motion: we write to say that in the absence of an option to "do nothing until everything is agreed" our preference is for Package B (removal of roundabouts, introduction of local bypasses and improvements in situ).

The reason for preferring to "do nothing until everything is agreed", is that we are concerned that decisions are not being made in a logical order. We don't believe it is possible to make a decision about the A1 until we can see the final plan for it in the context of:

- proposed large scale housing developments in St. Neots, Tempsford and Wyboston
- East-West Rail
- Oxford to Cambridge expressway
- the final route of the A1 and the Black Cat junction (to motorway standard or otherwise)

We strongly believe that no money should be spent if there is a risk of the parameters changing under the influence of other developments / infrastructure projects and the money spent being wasted and we would like to see more joined up thinking employed in the planning of housing development and transport infrastructure.

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Cllr. Knight seconded the motion. There were 5 votes in favour and one abstention. The motion was passed.

- 4 year Highways Maintenance programme – propose works needed (LK)
It was agreed to ask for the following: resurfacing of Bushmead Road from Bushmead Cross to St. Neots and Wilden Road between Bowies Cottage and Low Farm, repaint white lines and improve the drainage on both roads; reinstate and repair the pavement outside No.1 Church Rd. (trip hazard to disabled residents); repaint or paint red stripes and 30mph zone at both ends of the village (near Meadowview and at the Wilden end of the village near the new gates).
- HGVs (EP report). Cllr. Pegler sent a report for the meeting. She has written an article for the Chronicle explaining that there have been a number of incidents involving HGV's on Wilden Road and that the Parish Council are in discussions with the police (who direct us to the Highways Department at Bedford Borough Council). She has asked that parishioners notify the Clerk of any incidents or near misses to help us build an accurate picture of the problem. She is also taking statements from residents who use Wilden Road. Cllr. Brightman suggested that we should be careful of designating Wilden Road as unsuitable for HGV's without considering alternative routes for them. Cllr. Knight explained that they would still be able to use the road for access but would not be able to use it as a through road as they currently do. Cllrs. agreed with the article Cllr. Pegler had written for the Chronicle and with her proposal to gather evidence from local residents.
- Sign at the Honeydon Road T-junction. Cllr. Brightman reported concerns that the sign only shows Honeydon and there are now no signs pointing to eg. Wilden or Little Staughton. The Clerk also reported that a parishioner had raised the same concern with him and had reported drivers stopping to ask him for directions. Cllr. Knight explained that A. Prigmore of Bedford Borough Council had suggested removing the extra signs to reduce clutter and discourage through traffic on narrow country roads. She suggested we review it in November or January (at a meeting when she is present). Councillors agreed.
- Briag sign. The Clerk reported that a resident called to ask why the bend sign at Briag had not been replaced yet. He pointed out that it was a dangerous bend for which there is currently no warning; he has heard squealing tyres. She explained that the sign has been reported by Staploe Parish Council and Colmworth Parish Council but she will chase it again.

6. Street lights. Examine the options for the village street lights and approve article for the Chronicle (LK / DM / LC)

Councillors examined the options for the street lights: disconnect, continue with existing lights (but they are old and will need to be replaced or decommissioned soon), upgrade the existing lights to energy efficient LED's and keep them on all night, upgrade to LED's but keep them on for only part of the night (eg. switch them off from midnight to 5am) or upgrade the lights and pass ownership to Bedford Borough Council. Cllrs voted unanimously in favour of the latter option to pass ownership to Bedford Borough Council providing there is support for this from parishioners. The article written by the Clerk and Cllr. Michell was approved by Councillors with the addition of a reference to the Parish Council's preferred option.

7. Social Events (LK)

- Bedfordshire Day 28th November (LK and EP). This item was postponed at the request of Cllr. Knight.
- Village Day (LK). This item was postponed at the request of Cllr. Knight.

8. Bringing the village together; access to village assets for groups and residents who reside in the Parish . (LK)

- Cllr. Knight reported that residents had expressed concern to her about different groups in the village eg. the Parish Council, Village Hall and the Church not working together as they would like. In particular, some residents have been concerned that the Village Hall are charging for the use of the car park when there is a village event. She explained that this Village Hall policy is still under review but felt that it would be better if different groups in the village supported each other. She proposed that the Parish Council lead the way in this by making advertising for the Village Hall and any church or other social events free of charge. Cllr. Michell explained that the Chronicle does not charge not for profit organisations to advertise but that the

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Hall is charged because it is a money making enterprise. However, he had no objection to allowing the hall to advertise free of charge in future. Councillors were unanimously in favour of allowing the hall to advertise in the Chronicle free of charge.

- Cllr. Knight also proposed that the Parish Council hold an afternoon tea or similar for all the volunteers who help in the parish, funded by the Parish Council and with a proper invitation. Councillors were unanimously in favour of this proposal. It was agreed that the following would compile a list of names and submit them to the Clerk:
 - Cllr. T. Frew – Gardening Club and Country Park
 - Cllr. Knight – Church and Humphrey Chetwynd-Talbot
 - Cllr. Pegler – Friends of St. Denys and Cars and Bikes of Character
 - Cllr. Jones – Neighbourhood Planning Committee
 - Cllr. Ball – Steven, the Bowls Club, the Village Hall Committee, John Douglas
 - Cllr. Michell – Jeremy and Jill Freedman

9. Finance

- Receipts and payments – see p4. These were proposed for payment by Cllr. Knight and seconded by Cllr. Jones.
- Sign schedule of payments and cheques. Cllr. Knight and Cllr. Jones signed the list of regular payments.
- Review signing arrangements. It was agreed to retain the current signing arrangements where Cllr. Michell, Cllr. Jones and L. Crawford are online signatories and Cllr. Ball is an “offline” signatory (for cheques and letters to the bank).
- Check credit ratings and FSCS rules for Parish Councils. The Clerk reported that credit ratings for Barclays are A with Fitch and Baa3 with Moodys. This is similar to many other high street banks and the FSCS rules apply to Parish Councils up to £85 000 so we would be covered if the bank were to fail. Councillors agreed to remain with Barclays.
- The Transparency Code fund has approved a grant of £457.56 to pay for the Clerk’s additional hours required to meet the requirements of the Transparency Code.

10. Planning (RJ)

- Planning Application Bryher Farm. The Parish Council were unanimously in support of this application.
- New Town at Tempsford. Cllr. Jones reported that Central Bedfordshire are considering an application for a new town at Tempsford airfield. He will try to obtain further information and expressed concern that development appears to be proposed without sufficient regard to infrastructure, utilities and traffic.
- Neighbourhood Plan update. Cllr. Jones reported that a Neighbourhood Plan Executive Committee meeting had been held on Monday in which the committee agreed that a supplementary survey will be required to determine what size of development is wanted in the village. 1-3, 1-6, 1-9, 1-15, 1-25 or 1->25 houses. Councillors suggested that there be an option for no development. Cllr. Jones reported that they would not be applying for more funds yet as the plan is proceeding too slowly to meet the deadlines but may do so later in the year if necessary.
- Cllr. Jones reported that he had heard that there would be a pre-planning application for some houses on land owned by the Brightman family opposite Cllr. Ball’s house near the bungalows.

Colmworth Parish Council				
Summary of Transactions for Approval at Meeting on 5th July 2017				
Receipts to Main Parish Council Account 73419584				
Date	Payee	Details	Cheque Number / Reference	Amount
08/06/2017	Hutchings	Donation to Country Park from J. Huthings funeral		£205.00
13/06/2017	Anonymous donor 1	Final payment towards village gates		£1,250.00
15/06/2017	HMRC	VAT returned		£537.78
Total				£1,992.78
Receipts to Chronicle Account 10232793				
Date	Payee	Details	Cheque Number / Reference	Amount
20/06/2017	Kitchen Culture	Chronicle advertising	10163	£60.00
19/06/2017	Colmworth Village Hall	Chronicle advertising	10160	£12.00
21/06/2017	Select Travel	Chronicle advertising	10165	£96.00
27/06/2017	Rose Cottage Hollistics	Chronicle advertising	10164	£60.00
30/06/2017	The Pad	Chronicle advertising	10159	£60.00
Total				£288.00
Payments from Main Account 73419584				
Date	Payee	Details	Cheque Number / Reference	Amount
08/06/2017	NEST	Clerk's pension May 2017		£71.26
31/05/2017	W.T. Saunders Ground Care	Grass cut no. 3, rake, moss and weed control playing field	7528	£782.40
14/06/2017	Beds & Cambs Whole Home Maintenan	Weekly inspections and fixing gate playing field May	170602	£13.50
15/06/2017	Toner Giant	Magenta printer cartridge	69037A	£79.35
06/06/2017	Opus Energy	Electricity for street lights 6th May to 5th Jun		£22.72
23/06/2017	BATPC	R. Jones new Councillor induction		£25.00
04/07/2017	NEST	Clerk's pension correction for May		-£4.19
25/05/2017	Viking Direct	Stationary		£38.45
30/06/2017	Colmworth Village Hall	Parish Council Hall Hire 1/4/2017 to 30/6/2017		£35.00
30/06/2017	Colmworth Village Hall	Neighbourhood Plan Hall Hire 1/4/2017 to 30/6/2017		£36.00
30/06/2017	W.T. Saunders Ground Care	Grass cut no. 4 playing field		£67.20
05/07/2017	L. Crawford	Expenses May-Jun	100180	£4.58
05/07/2017	St Denys Church Wardens	Churchyard maintenance	100181	£300.00
05/07/2017	NALC	Book (Local Councils Explained)		£19.99
05/07/2017	SLCC	Book (Minute taking)		£16.76
05/07/2017	Rest Express	Osma wood protection		£52.25
05/07/2017	F. Frew	Country Park maintenance sundries	100183	£25.68
31/07/2017	L. Crawford	Clerk's salary July 2017	100182	£336.53
20/08/2017	CPRE	Annual subscription	940984	£36.00
Total				£1,958.48
Payments from Main Account 73419584				
Date	Payee	Details	Cheque Number / Reference	Amount
05/07/2017	David Michell	Chronicle expenses		£73.43
Total				£73.43
Posted balances after the above transactions clear				
Main Parish Council Account 73419584				£19,207.06
Chronicle Account 10232793				£2,524.95

11. Country Park (TF)

- Terms of reference for the Country Park Working Group. Following input from the Group these were approved with one amendment: the group will be responsible for **making recommendations** for management of the Country Park rather than being responsible for the Country Park. The responsibility for management of the park lies with the Parish Council. The Clerk asked Cllr. T. Frew to explain to members of the Group the reasons for the terms of reference ie. only executive committees made up solely of Councillors are able to make decisions about spending Parish Council funds. However, the Parish Council are extremely grateful for the work the Group does and will take their recommendations very seriously.
- Bird hide incident. On 5th June three teenage girls were suspected of solvent abuse in the bird hide and some graffiti lead to concern about the wellbeing of the girls. After further investigation, the girls were identified and it became clear that the girls had been smoking but there had been no solvent abuse and parents were made aware. Cllr. T. Frew expressed concern that he felt the incident had been blown out of proportion by the Parish Council. A lock has been fitted but the bird hide has been left unlocked without incident since mid- June. There is a "no smoking or naked flames" sign in place. Cllr. T. Frew asked whether the Parish

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Council would like to display the Police Patrol signs offered by Bedfordshire Police. Councillors unanimously agreed not to display these signs as they did not feel they were in keeping with the rural nature of the park and did not believe they would act as a significant deterrent.

- Consider how to use the donation of £205 made at Jennifer Hutchings's funeral
 - Councillors unanimously agreed with the Country Park Working Group's proposal to use the money for a specific project(s) as opposed to routine park maintenance. The Group recommend the purchase of a second Barn Owl box (approximately £150) and a commemorative plaque. The second box is required as once the chicks hatch the male owl is excluded from the box, due to lack of space, and requires a separate roost. If Cllr. T. Frew can get some more wood he will make another bench in the dogleg opposite the site of the new owl box. Councillors unanimously agreed with this recommendation and the Clerk asked Cllr. T. Frew to request that the group provide three quotes for the box and plaque. A letter of thanks has been sent to the Hutchings family.
- Meadow Management. Cllr. T. Frew reported that the Woodland Trust recommended that we carry out a full hay cut in June followed by topping in August/September. This is to reduce fertility which will discourage undesirable species such as nettles and thistles. The Country Park Working Group agreed at their meeting on 11th June that the advice from the Wildlife trust was the best way forward. Following a cut and clear in late Summer of 2016 they have achieved a very good show in the main meadow this year. In the interim, in order to minimise costs and increase diversity, the agreement was to get a quote for cutting and clearing the main meadow only in late June/early July, and for volunteers to attempt to manage the dog leg with Chana's field being left uncut. A cut later in the year would depend on funds available. The grass cutting contractor had already commenced on 12th June but it was agreed that there will be no further grass cutting until later in the summer when the main meadow will be cut and cleared. This will be done within the allocated budget of £400. The Country Park Working Group recommend that the budget for next year should be set to fund the Wildlife Trust recommendations. The Clerk asked Cllr. T. Frew to obtain three quotes for grass cutting according to these recommendations in advance of the October budget setting meeting. Councillors expressed concern about Chana's Field as it was infested with thistles last year. Cllr. T. Frew and the Clerk will check the records and find out who is responsible for maintaining it.
- Ash dieback. Cllr. T. Frew reported that the Forestry Commission representative thought it sounded like the young ash trees in the Country Park were fighting the disease and he recommended that they are left alone and just monitored to see what happens.
- Operation Turtle Dove. The area at the eastern end of the dog leg is being prepared for planting.
- Dog bins. The Country Park Working Group had reported some concern that they were not going to receive the new dog bins which they had requested. Councillors asked Cllr. T. Frew to explain to the group that the Parish Council will be providing the dog bins and this was minuted after the last meeting.
- Cllr. T. Frew reported that Bletsoe are making a small Country Park and will be coming to visit to get ideas and advice.
- Tree work – Brightman Brothers have been approved as the contractor at the reduced price of £650. Councillors agreed to the overhanging branches at the playing field being cut back as soon as possible and that the Clerk should book Brightman Brothers to do the remaining tree work in the Country Park in the second week of November to reduce any risk to bats or nesting birds which might arise if the work was carried out earlier.
- CPRE membership. Consider subscription renewal (£36 on 20th August – in budget). Cllr. T. Frew requested that this membership be renewed. Councillors agreed.

12. Gardening Club and Triangle

- Terms of reference for Gardening Club (TF). Following feedback and amendments from the Club these were approved and adopted. Cllr. T. Frew explained that there was some concern about Gardening Club funds becoming Parish Council funds. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council are not permitted to hold funds on behalf of another organisation. However, if the Gardening Club become a Working Group of the Parish Council we can hold the funds for them in an earmarked reserve for their use.

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- Meter reading for Triangle lights (RJ). The meter was read by Cllr. Jones on 27th June and read 43.82 kWh which is the total electricity used since the installation of the Triangle lights and meter in December 2015.. This equates to approximately £5.26 at current rates of 12p per kWh. Cllr. Jones will arrange for the Parish Council to receive an invoice once the Manor Farm Barns management company has been set up. The Clerk emphasised that she was assuming there would be no standing charge for this electricity supply but that if there was she needed to know as soon as possible and certainly before the next meeting. Cllr. Jones will talk to Chris and find out.
- The Gardening Club raised £496 at the Open Gardens day.

13. Chronicle

- Photoshop upgrade. Cllr. Michell requested approval for an upgrade to Photoshop editing software used for the Chronicle at a cost of £59.99. This is within the budget of £120 for the year. Councillors unanimously approved this payment. This, along with £13.44 for postage are listed in the Chronicle payments on p4
- Cllr. Michell reported that the Chronicle has a number of new advertisers.

14. Consider revising the time limit for Parish Council meetings in Standing Orders (currently 3 hours).

Cllr. Michell proposed that the time limit be revised to 2.5 hours so that meetings finish by 10pm unless Councillors vote to continue. Councillors unanimously agreed. The Clerk will revise the Standing Orders accordingly. Cllr. Knight requested that the Clerk add times to the agenda.

15. Approve Lone Worker Policy

Councillors unanimously agreed to adopt this policy which specifies that the Clerk will not accept visits alone from parishioners at her home address. Any meetings with parishioners (eg. to inspect the accounts) will be held at the Village Hall, by appointment, with a Councillor being present.

16. Review Data Protection and Media Policy (this year and then every 3 years thereafter)

The media policy and social media policy were both merged, revised to clarify that the policy does not seek to regulate Councillors in their private capacity, and a sentence added to enable the Clerk to use social media to publicise Parish Council events and to direct people to new material added to the Parish Council website. The data protection policy was revised to exclude references to a password protected, encrypted external hard drive.

17. Training

- Councillors. Cllr. Jones will attend New Councillor Induction Training on 6th July. BATPC's new training programme has yet to be issued but Cllr. Brightman will endeavour to attend an induction course if possible once the programme has been issued.
- Clerk's book purchases. The Clerk requested permission to purchase "Local Councils Explained" £19.99 and "Minute Taking" £16.76 – both books recommended on her Introduction to Local Council Administration Course. This is within the budget of £60 for literature and information. Councillors approved the purchase. Staploe Parish Council have bought "Arnold Baker. Local Council Administration" so the Clerk now has access to that as well.

18. Clerk's pay scale – respond to trade union proposal for 5% increase

The Clerk is paid according to NJC pay scales which are agreed between the unions and the government (employers). The unions have opened negotiations for the 2018-19 pay award with a claim for a 5% increase. NALC are seeking the view of Parish Councils on this increase before 28th July. Councillors agreed to delegate the decision on how to respond to the Staffing Committee. Cllr. Michell explained that the Staffing Committee have not been able to meet to discuss this proposal or the Clerk's salary point for 2017/18 but expect to meet before the deadline.

19. Book a date for budgeting meeting in October

This was set for Wednesday 3rd October. It was agreed that the Clerk should provide budget templates to Councillors in advance of the meeting.

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20. Correspondence

- Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes Healthcare Review – outcome of recent consultation. A report on “What We’ve Hear So Far” has been published summarising the results of the consultation.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 13th September 2017