

**P A R I S H O F W E S T O N I N G**

**MINUTES of the Meeting of**

**Westoning Parish Council**

**held on Wednesday 11th December 2024 at 7.30pm**

**In the Village Hall, Westoning**

**PRESENT:** Cllr J Nethersole (Chairman), Cllr P Ellis, Cllr B Rogerson,

Cllr N McLoughlin, Cllr Y Omishore, Cllr E Russell, Cllr A Rayment,

Cllr C Luff, Cllr P Kelly

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs K Barker – Clerk

2 members of the public were present

Agenda published on the noticeboard and on the website

**8081 Apologies for absence** – CBC Cllr J Jamieson

**Absent** (no apologies given) – None

**8082 Cllr vacancy**

The Clerk reported that the vacancy has been advertised. No applicants have as yet come forward.

**8083 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2024 were approved. Cllr Rogerson proposed, seconded by Cllr Russell the approval of the minutes as a true record. All agreed by those present and the minutes were signed by the Chairman.

**8084 Declaration of interests**

Cllr J Nethersole – finance point 8088.2

Cllr N McLoughlin – finance point 8088.2

**8085 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**8086 Public Participation**

A resident from The Pound attended the meeting with regard to a patch of grass in the vicinity. He said that the Parish Council do a good job of keeping it cut but cars park on the grass and it has become very muddy and untidy. He said that he was told that a planter could be put there to prevent cars parking on the grass and would be happy to water it. There are many cars that park in The Pound, not only on the grass area but also parking on the pavement. He has contacted CBC but they cannot do anything about the issue. The Parish Council agreed to consider options for the grass area including putting up a ‘no parking’ sign. To be discussed at the January meeting.

A resident spoke about Christmas lights on the High Street and said they would be happy to be involved in fund raising. The Chairman thanked the resident and said that as this would be a project for Christmas 2025 the Parish Council would get in touch with her in due course.

**8087 Reports and representations**

CBC Cllr Jamieson sent in a report which was read out:

* Flitwick Road Closure - new housing estate connection to the sewage system. The work is due to be done from 10th to 28th February. Traffic Management has been asked to attend the January Parish Council meeting to explain how the road closure will be addressed. Currently the diversion route is via Greenfield Road, which raises the issue of the 7.5 ton limit. CBC Cllr Jamieson has asked for the following:
* Ensure that there are no other road closures/restrictions at the same time
* That efforts are made to speed up the works to enable the road to be reopened earlier
* That the developer/contractor look at also doing other works at the same time to avoid future road closures such as for the Zebra Crossing
* Flooding
* Village Hall – Highways have agreed to inspect all the drains and address as appropriate
* Home Farm – Continue to chase but unlikely to get a camera inspection until Spring as the pipe needs to be free of water. Flooding was less severe and water flowing in the drainage ditch in the September floods compared to previous events
* CBC Budget – CBC has substantially over spent this year and is looking to make substantial savings. While a number of significant cuts to services were raised early on, some of the worst examples have been stopped. However there are still reductions in HWRC hours and limiting quantities, some changes to Library services removal of Councillor grants and less investment in grass cutting and highways. The budget is predicated on significant savings in organisational operation which does come with a risk factor and something that will be monitored closely both for delivery and impact on council responsiveness.
* Footpath/Cycle Path – CBC Cllr Jamieson is continuing to push for the footpath/cycle path to Flitwick and Harlington and will again raise in the budget discussions.

**8088 Finance**

8088.1 Bank balances and finance report:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Account** | **£** |
| TSB Community Account | 72,196.40 |
| TSB Instant Access Account | 68,446.90 |
| **TOTAL** | 140,643.30 |

8088.2 Cllr Russell proposed, seconded by Cllr Luff the approval of the following payments, agreed by all Cllrs present:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Payment Method** | **Payee** | **£** |
| Transfer | Clerk – salary Dec | 560.03 |
| Transfer | Clerk – expenses Dec | 43.30 |
| Chq | HMRC – Clerk tax | 16.80 |
| Transfer | Parish Warden – village tidying | 275.00 |
| Transfer | Westoning Village Hall – hire Dec | 19.50 |
| Transfer | Flittabus – donation | 500.00 |
| Transfer | J Nethersole – flowers, Christmas expenses | 72.64 |
| Transfer | N McLoughlin – printing | 55.83 |
|  | **TOTAL** | **1,543.10** |

8088.3 Other finance matters:

8088.3.1 Budget/Precept 2025/26

Cllr Rayment proposed, seconded by Cllr Ellis to approve regular expenditure of £53,926. This was an increase of £934 over 2024/25. This increase was agreed by all present.

With expected income of £8,021, Cllr Rayment proposed, seconded by Cllr Ellis to approve a precept of £45,905 for 2025/26. This was agreed by all present. This amounts to a 2.3% increase on the Parish Council element of the council tax bill for 2025/26. The Clerk to return the precept request form to Central Beds Council. The approved budget to be placed on the website and attached to the minutes. (**Action Clerk**)

**8089 Highways**

8089.1 Footpaths/Highways Issues

* Layby on A5120 – there has been little response either for or against removing the layby. A significant response is needed in order for CBC to take action. Cllr McLoughlin agreed to mention it on Westoning Cares and ask for feedback.

(**Action Cllr McLoughlin**)

**8090 Recreation Ground**

8090.1 Recreation Club Licence

The Clerk was asked to contact the previous Clerk to ascertain whether he has any old files or documents. (**Action Clerk**)

8090.2 Food Van

The Clerk said that she did email CBC. The Chairman said that she has asked for the van to be moved to the hard standing area. The Recreation Club have assured her that it will only be used occasionally and they have all the relevant certificates and licences that are required. The Chairman said that she will ask for copies of these documents and the Parish Council agreed that this needs to be monitored. It was noted that the bottle bank has been placed in the disabled bay and the Chairman to ask for it to be moved. (**Action Chairman**)

**8091 Village Matters**

8091.1 Burial Ground

The Chairman said that she will contact the new Vicar, Reverend Edwards to discuss this further. (**Action Chairman**)

* 1. Defibrillator training

Cllr McLoughlin said that attendance has been good at the last two training sessions. More sessions may be held in the Spring.

* 1. Noticeboard repair

Cllr Rayment said that the old noticeboard definitely cannot be repaired. Remove from the agenda.

8091.4 Allotments

Cllr Ellis said that he has had some interest in the vacant plots. There are still some rents outstanding. He said that he will remind allotment holders that plots must be cultivated. The Clerk reported that she has had further contact from a resident regarding the undermining of their fence by the adjacent allotment plot. The Chairman said that she will take a look as the plots should not be cultivated close to the boundary. (**Action Chairman**)

8091.5 Christmas Event  
The event date was changed to Sunday 1st December due to bad weather. The event went very well with a very good turnout. Thanks were given to Cllr McLoughlin and her family for all their hard work. The amount of money raised amounted to £371 and it was agreed for this to be given to those in need in the village. Details to be confirmed at the next meeting.

8091.6 Flagpole

The Chairman proposed, seconded by Cllr Rogerson for Cllr Kelly to order an 8 metre flag pole at a cost of £216, this was agreed by all present. (**Action Cllr Kelly**)

8091.7 Youth events

Nothing to report.

**8092** **Play Area**

Cllr Ellis said that he will purchase a lock for the gates behind the goal posts as they are regularly

left open. He will give the padlock code to the grass cutting contractor.

**8093 Planning**

8093.1 No planning applications received.

8093.2 Other Planning Matters:

8093.2.1 Solar Farm

Nothing to report.

8093.2.2 Land Off Flitwick Road

Nothing to report.

8093.2.3 West View Farm, Park Road

Nothing to report.

**8094 Committees/Sub Groups/Representatives/Reports**

Nothing to report.

**8095 General correspondence:**

8095.1 Letter from Blake Stephenson MP

The Clerk read out a letter from MP Blake Stephenson offering to attend a Parish Council meeting. The Parish Council to discuss this in January with the possibility of inviting him to attend the Annual Parish meeting in May.

**8096 Date of next meeting: Parish Council Meeting**

**Wednesday 8th January 2025 at 7.30pm**

**In the Village Hall**

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Approved: ………………………………………………. Date: ……………………………………………………….