

**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 12th July 2023 at 7.30pm**

**In the Village Hall, Westoning**

**PRESENT:** Cllr J Nethersole (Chairman), Cllr E Bhasin, Cllr C Luff, Cllr P Ellis, Cllr P Kelly,

Cllr E Russell, Cllr Y Omishore, Cllr A Rayment, CBC Cllr Jamieson

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs K Barker (Clerk), 2 members of the public were present

Agenda published on the noticeboard and on the website

**7850 Apologies for absence** – Cllr B Rogerson, Cllr N McLoughlin

**7851 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2023 were approved. Cllr Russell proposed, seconded by Cllr Kelly the approval of the minutes as a true record. All agreed by those present and the minutes were signed by the Chairman.

**7852 Declaration of interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

**7853 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**7854 Public Participation**

There were no comments from members of the public.

**7855 Reports and representations**

CBC Cllr Jamieson gave a report:

* Highways walk – iron works identified are being dealt with on the High Street
* Entrance to Highfields – CBC will tidy the area with a view to the Parish Council potentially adding the area to the grass cutting contractors schedule
* Yellow Lines – an assessment needs to take place, a date to be arranged
* Drains – an inspection of the drains in the village to be requested

**7856 Finance**

7856.1 Bank balances and finance report:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Account** | **£** |
| TSB Community Account | 47,185.31 |
| TSB Instant Access Account | 67,147.13 |
| **TOTAL** | 114,332.44 |

7856.2 Cllr Ellis proposed, seconded by Cllr Luff the approval of the following payments, agreed by all Cllrs present:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Payment Method** | **Payee** | **£** |
| 000770 | Clerk – salary | 547.07 |
| 000770 | Clerk – expenses | 48.74 |
| 000771 | HMRC – Clerk tax | 7.60 |
| 000772 | Parish Warden – village tidying | 275.00 |
| 000773 | D J Granger – village etc Inv 023724 | 661.50 |
| 000773 | D J Granger – field Inv 023775 | 201.60 |
| 000774 | D J Granger – village etc Inv 023793 | 661.50 |
| 000774 | D J Granger – Sampshill work Inv 023809 | 115.20 |
| 000774 | D J Granger – field etc Inv 023823 | 201.60 |
| 000775 | Wicksteed – play area inspection | 144.00 |
| 000776 | Westoning Rec Club – use of bin | 63.30 |
| 000777 | Barbara Osborne – payroll | 69.00 |
| 000778 | Npower – electricity bill April to June | 206.05 |
| 000779 | A Muskett – light maint 1st quarter | 130.20 |
|  | **TOTAL** | **3,322.36** |

7856.3 Other finance matters:

7856.3.1 Online Payments

The Clerk said that she is able to pay invoices from the TSB Bank Account online but the mandate is only set up with one authorisation, ie the person setting up the payments. She said she had checked this with the Internal Auditor who indicated that this is quite a common problem for Parish Councils and this system is fine as long as the Parish Council are confident that they have rigorous procedures in place. The Parish Council resolved to go ahead with online payments from August as long as a list of payments is distributed to the Parish Councillors before the payments are made.

(**Action Clerk**)

**7857 Highways**

7857.1 Footpaths/Highways Issues

7857.1.1 Footpath 7

The Chairman said that the nettles are growing back and need clearing again. Cllr Ellis to ask Mr Frith if he would be happy to undertake the work.

(**Action Cllr Ellis**)

**7858 Recreation Ground**

7858.1 Recreation Club Licence

The draft licence to be circulated to all Cllrs. Cllr Rayment suggested that the Parish Council should show their appreciation to the Solicitor who spent many hours working on the new licence free of charge which took over 2 years to do. The Parish Council resolved to send the Solicitor a £100 meal voucher under the GPoC. Cllr Rayment to confirm the Solicitors details and Cllr Kelly to supply the voucher and a letter to be sent.

(**Action Clerk/Cllr Rayment/Cllr Kelly**)

7858.2 Bushes around football pitch

No action, remove the agenda.

7858.3 Recreation Ground – ongoing maintenance – estimate

The Clerk reported that the Football Club have had to change the contractors they use for the maintenance work at the Recreation Ground and have received a quote of £4,600 plus VAT. The Parish Council agreed that they are happy for the Football Club to proceed with the quote providing that the Parish Council are reimbursed by the Football Club when it is paid, for the invoice amount (excluding VAT).

**7859 Village Matters**

7859.1 Burial Ground

The Chairman and Cllr Rayment went to have a look at the land adjacent to the site at Westview Farm. It was felt to be a suitable location but there is currently no access until the new development is built.

The Chairman said that she had received a reply from the Diocese:

*‘Whilst there is provision in Church of England law for a parish to obtain a faculty permission to designate part of a churchyard for further burials, that could only be done with the support of the Parochial Church Council. In this case, the PCC notes that all parts of the churchyard are likely to contain burials – and indeed necessary digging for soakaways over the years to improve the drainage system has involved costly attendance by an archaeologist to record the human remains that were found each time. The Church of St Mary Magdalene dates from the 14th century and whilst the surrounding churchyard has not formally been closed for further burials, it would be expected that the churchyard contains thousands of unmarked burials from earlier centuries, before memorials became generally affordable. The area which is free of memorials is used for the Church Fete as well as other communal events and throughout the year this area, like most of the north side of the churchyard, is managed for wildlife and biodiversity.’*

*The church has gone to some lengths to maximise the number of grave spaces in God's Acre, at some cost to the PCC, for example by removing a memorial mound area to provide over 12 extra spaces. The PCC is conscious that it will be desirable for further burial space to be found within the parish of Westoning, to avoid the additional cost which may arise for Westoning residents if they apply to be buried in a neighbouring village, once God's Acre is full. For these reasons, it would be preferable to continue to explore whether a suitable new site can be found within the parish of Westoning.*

7859.2 Grass cutting – schedule/contract

The schedule/contract to be agreed at the September/October meeting.

The Parish Council agreed to look into the cutting of the Recreation Ground separately to the rest of the village. Cllr Rayment said that he will ask Mr Gates if he is interested in quoting for the work. Cllrs Bhasin and Luff also said that they would try to get quotes.

(**Action Cllrs Rayment/Bhasin/Luff)**

7859.3 Christmas Events

The sub-groups to meet and report back at the September meeting.

7859.4 Flagpole

The flagpole has been delivered. The flagpole will need a ground socket to prevent movement. Cllrs Kelly and Ellis to look into it. (**Action Cllrs Kelly/Ellis**)

7859.5 Planters/Oak Tree

It was reported that a resident would like to sponsor a planter in Sampshill Road. The Parish Council agreed to build some of the remaining planters.

The Parish Council agreed that they would like to replace the Oak Tree on the Village Green. The Chairman said that she will ask Dycol if they are able to remove the dead tree.

(**Action Chairman**)

7859.6 Litter Pick

The Parish Council agreed to hold a litter pick event on 16th September at 9.30am commencing from the Chequers.

7859.7 Community Benefit Group

Cllr Ellis said that he attended a meeting in the Council Offices in Ampthill. The Government are supplying funding to Councils. Community South has been set up to look at large projects that the whole community can benefit from. The Parish Council do not need to be involved at this stage.

**7860 Play Area**

7860.1 Picnic Bench x 2

The benches are now in place and look very good.

7860.2 New swing seats

The Parish Council resolved to accept the quote of £298 for the replacement of two new swing seats. Cllr Ellis to contact Wicksteed. (**Action Cllr Ellis**)

**7861 Planning**

7861.1 Planning applications:

7861.1.1 CB/23/01948/FULL – 16 High Street – two storey rear extension

The Parish Council has no objection to the application.

7861.1.2 CB/23/01848/FULL – Flitwick Cricket Club – demolition of an existing single storey clubhouse and the erection of a larger single storey clubhouse in the same location, along with associated external works. Erection of single storey changing barn and external works associated with its construction.

The Parish Council has no objection to the application.

7861.1.3 CB/23/01771/VOC - 4 Westoning Manor, Manor Gardens - variation of condition number 3 of planning permission CB/21/01390/FULL (Erect a wooden gazebo). Variation sought to the height of the gazebo.

The Parish Council has no objection to the application.

7861.2 Other Planning Matters:

7861.2.1 Solar Farm

Nothing to report.

7861.2.2 Land Off Flitwick Road

Nothing to report.

7861.2.3 West View Farm, Park Road

Nothing to report.

**7862 Parish Council Admin**

7862.1 Areas of responsibility

The Parish Council agreed the revised list of responsibilities, the list to be circulated.

7862.2 General Power of Competence

The Government’s intention in providing eligible parish councils with the general power of competency is to better enable them to take on their enhanced role and allow them to do things they have previously been unable to do under existing powers. Eligible Councils have “the power to do anything that individuals generally may do” as long as they do not break other laws. It is intended to be the power of first, not last, resort. There are 3 conditions which have to be met for a parish to adopt a GPoC:

- It must pass a resolution that it meets all the criteria and adopts a GPoC. The

resolution can be passed at any time at an ordinary meeting of the council

- At the time of passing the resolution at least two thirds of the council are there

by virtue of being declared elected even though the election can be

uncontested.

- At the time of passing the resolution , the parish clerk must hold a recognised

professional qualification

Once the resolution has been passed the parish council has the freedom to Act with the same powers as individual persons (except where prohibited by law). The GPoC stays in existence until the next “relevant” meeting where the GPoC lapses unless a repeat resolution is passed and all three criteria are still met. The next “relevant” meeting is the annual meeting following the four yearly elections

This information was noted by the Parish Council. The Chairman proposed, seconded by Cllr Bhasin and agreed by all present to hereby confirm that the Parish Council meets the eligibility criteria for adoption of a General Power of Competence as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and SI 965 The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 20 and further resolve to adopt a General Power of Competence.

**7863 Committees/Sub Groups/Representatives/Reports**

No reports were given.

**7864 General correspondence:**

There was no correspondence.

**7865 Date of next meeting: Parish Council Meeting**

**Wednesday 13th September 2023 at 7.30pm**

**In the Village Hall**

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

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