

**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 March 2020 at 7.30pm**

**in the Village Hall, Westoning**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs A Rayment (Chairman), R Botterell, P Ellis, E Leftly, C Luff,

J Nethersole, B Rogerson

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs K Barker (Clerk), 7 members of the public were present

**7244 Apologies for absence** – Cllr E Bhasin, CBC Cllr J Jamieson

**7244.1 Councillor vacancy x 2**

Three applicants attended the meeting. Elaine Russell, Alan Marlow and Alan Robertson. The Chairman reiterated the process for filling the vacancies as agreed at the February meeting. He said that the short interview process with a small number of Cllrs is only necessary when there are more expressions of interest than vacancies.

**7245 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2020 were approved. Cllr Leftly proposed, seconded by Cllr Ellis the approval of the minutes as a true record. All agreed by those present and signed by the Chairman.

**7246 Declaration of interests**

Cllr Rogerson – planning Point 7253.1

**7247 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**7248 Reports and representations**

Central Beds Councillor J Jamieson was not present.

**7249 Public Participation**

A resident who attended the February meeting and expressed their concern regarding the behaviour of residents when some trees on the allotments were cut back asked whether the letter from the Parish Council had been sent. The Chairman said that he has drafted a letter and once approved by the Parish Council, it will be hand delivered.

The Chairman of the Allotment Association attended the meeting and reported problems with deer and rabbits destroying crops. See Point 7252.10

**7250 Finance**

7250.1 Bank balances and finance report:

The Clerk confirmed that the budget report was circulated by email.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **£** |
| TSB Community Account | 23,551.38 |
| TSB Instant Access Account | 85,856.83 |
| **TOTAL** | **109,408.21** |

7250.2 Cllr Botterell proposed, seconded by Cllr Rogerson the following payments, agreed by all:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Cheque Number** | **Payee** | **£** |
| 000333 | Clerk – salary | 470.36 |
| 000333 | Clerk – overtime website 12 hours | 131.44 |
| 000333 | Clerk – expenses | 44.80 |
| 000334 | HMRC – Clerks tax | 36.40 |
| 000335 | Parish Warden – village tidying | 275.00 |
| 000336 | Wicksteed – inspection October | 54.00 |
| 000336 | Wicksteed – maintenance of Rotaweb33 October | 216.00 |
| 000337 | D J Granger – grass cutting invoice 020225 | 402.94 |
| 000338 | Andy Muskett Ltd – 4 quarter maintenance charge | 186.00 |
| 000339 | E.on – electricity bill | 78.69 |
| 000340 | Clerk – website domain and yearly plan | 86.40 |
| 000341 | Westoning Village Hall – hall hire invoice PC0320 | 18.00 |
| 000342 | Neil Gates – remove Christmas Tree | 80.00 |
|  | **TOTAL** | **2,080.03** |

7250.3 Other finance matters:

7250.3.1 TSB - Mandate change form

Pending

Bank charges £5.00 per month

Pending..

7250.3.2 Rent received

The Clerk confirmed receipt of the rent from the Recreation Club £275, the School £250 and the Tennis Club £10.

7250.3.3 Allotment rent

The Clerk confirmed that £542.50 has been received so far.

7250.3.4 VAT refund

The VAT refund was submitted at the end of February and payment is awaited.

7250.3.5 Solar Farm - invoice submitted

The Solar Farm invoice was submitted at the end of February and payment is awaited.

**7251 Highways**

7251.1 Damaged village entrance signs/railings

Nothing to report.

7251.2 Traffic Management/Parking Control

The Chairman said that he will be meeting with a Representative from the Church as they have concerns regarding parking control proposals. The responses received from residents also need to be taken into consideration and then the final proposals drawn up and put on the website.

7251.3 Village Walk

A date for the village walk to be agreed. The Chairman reiterated that he needs a list of any highway defects/village issues so that this list can be identified on the walk.

The Chairman said that he will draft a letter to a resident in Newlands Road drawing their attention to a large amount of garden rubbish and tree cuttings that have been thrown over the fence at the bottom of their garden and are occupying the space between the rear boundary of the property and the recreation ground. This rubbish is in contact with the tennis court fencing and is likely to cause damage to that fencing unless removed. The material must be removed and disposed of legally as soon as possible and failure to clear this area of all material by the end of April may result in the Parish Council engaging a contractor to do the work and recovering the cost from the occupiers of the property. (**Action Chairman**)

* 1. Fencing – Newlands Road

Following emails from a resident regarding the fencing which has been damaged by the recent storms, Cllr Ellis said that a notice has been put up by someone saying that the alley and fence is the responsibility of the Parish Council. The Chairman said that he will draft a letter to send to the resident confirming that at times in the past, the Parish Council has contributed towards the cost of replacing a small number of damaged fence panels as a gesture of goodwill. Many of the fence panels are now in a very poor condition and need replacing, not through damage but through the normal wear and tear of many years. This is not a responsibility and liability that the Council feels can reasonably be laid at its door. It appears that the footpath alongside their property is not a registered footpath. The Parish Council understand that Central Bedfordshire Council may take steps to register the footpath which would involve CBC taking on responsibility for the footpath but not the fence on the boundary. The Parish Council is unaware of any document in its archives that accepts responsibility and liability for the maintenance of the fence between the property and the footpath. It is the belief of the Parish Council that originally the narrow strip adjacent to the property was not designated as a footpath but that through use over several years that passageway became a footpath and a short cut to and from the recreation ground and school. It may have been the County Council or Mid Bedfordshire District Council that arranged at some point for the tarmac surface to be laid for the convenience and safety of those residents who used it. When the property was constructed the developer should either have transferred responsibility for the maintenance of that boundary to the owner of the property or have retained it as their own responsibility. The Parish Council has no record of the developer entering into a legal agreement with the Parish Council to take on that responsibility. The Parish Council is also aware that the boundary fence erected by the developer to the properties in this part of Newlands Road was of a much more basic nature. The original concrete posts and angle iron straining posts are clearly visible to the rear of the properties. The resident may want to check with the company they used for the conveyance about the search they conducted in this respect when the property was purchased. The conveyance plan provided by the resident dated 15 December 1978 does not indicate who is responsible for the boundary between Plot 12 and the footpath. Westoning Parish Council is not prepared to accept liability for the maintenance of this fence unless evidence can be provided that the Parish Council entered into a legally enforceable agreement with the developer of Newlands Road at the time of construction or occupation. The Clerk to send the letter when drafted. (**Action Chairman/Clerk**)

**7252 Village Matters**

7252.1 Community Christmas Event – storage of equipment

Cllr Botterell said that there has been no progress.

7252.2 Burial Ground

The Chairman said that there have been some responses in opposition to the proposed area for the new burial ground.

7252.3 Recreation Club/Ground

7252.3.1 Land Registry/New Lease/Dissolving the Charity

Cllr Nethersole said that a meeting was held with the Recreation Club and Steve Maker from the Football Club. The Recreation Club needs to be run more as a business, it is not used to its full potential. The Parish Council need more input on the Recreation Club Committee. The Chairman said that the new lease will include conditions for the Recreation Club to make changes to the changing rooms available for sporting activities and be open at appropriate times. The Clubs prime function is to support sport and recreational activities in the village.

The Chairman said that he has not received a response from the Charity Commission to transfer the sole asset to the Parish Council. He said that he will write again. (**Action Chairman**)

7252.3.2 Disabled parking

Nothing to report until a decision is made on the burial ground and the lease.

7252.3.3 Recreation Ground improvements/maintenance

7252.3.3.1 FA Grant Scheme – submitted. A decision is awaited.

7252.3.4 Recreation Ground play area

Nothing to report.

7252.4 Hard surface area

7252.4.1 Block paved area/hard play area

7252.4.1.1 CBC Improvement grant scheme

The Chairman said that he has submitted an application for the grant scheme.

7252.4.2 Artificial Grass

Pending due to work to resurface the hard play area.

* 1. Youth Facilities/Club

The Chairman suggested asking some young people to act as the link between them and the Parish Council, probably around the age of 14/15, to express their views. They could attend some of the Parish Council meetings. Cllr Leftly agreed to talk to the local youths as to whether they would be interested in this initiative as well as their views regarding facilities in the village. (**Action Cllr Leftly**)

7252.6 Website

The Clerk reported that the website is progressing well. She said that she will share the website before going live at the end of March.

7252.7 Noticeboard

The Chairman proposed, seconded by Cllr Botterell to purchase a green 2 door noticeboard with finials with ‘Westoning Parish Council’ as the header strip and the suppliers to install at a cost of £1,800, agreed by all. The noticeboard to be placed by the School near to the Christmas Tree site and the bush in the vicinity to be removed. (**Action Chairman)**

7252.8 VE Day event sponsored by the Chequers on 8th May

Various events will be held and volunteers will be needed to help set up. Cllr Rogerson to ask Vicky from the Chequers to attend the next Parish Council meeting.

(**Action Cllr Rogerson**)

7252.9 Litter bin – Recreation Ground – request for larger bin

The Clerk said that CBC cannot find any information to say when the bin was installed and normally the land owner would pay for a bin but CBC would be willing to pay half of the cost of changing over the bin to a larger one. The Chairman confirmed that the original litter bin was supplied by Mid Beds Council and it was on their land but was moved into the Recreation Ground as it kept getting damaged. The Clerk to respond. (**Action Clerk**)

7252.10Allotments – crop losses

The Parish Council discussed the issue of deer and rabbits destroying crops which was raised by the Allotment Chairman. It was suggested that a fence could be put up around the allotments but this would be a cost to the Parish Council. The Chairman said that the Parish Council has tried to obtain full utilisation of the allotments so that they are well tended and cultivated and there is a danger that if the Parish Council does nothing that the allotments could deteriorate rapidly. The Parish Council ‘Resolved’ that the Allotment Association be given permission to arrange for the rabbit population in the vicinity of the allotments to be destroyed provided that the method used conforms to Government guidance. The Parish Council do not, however, give permission for the removal of the deer. They request that the Allotment Association investigates ways to prevent the deer entering the allotments such as fencing or whether they can be re-sited elsewhere. The Parish Council asked for the Allotment Association to feedback their findings. The Clerk to put a letter in writing to the Allotment Chairman. (**Action Clerk**)

7252.11Allotments – lawnmower

The Clerk said that the Allotment Chairman has requested the purchase of a lawnmower at a cost of no more than £100. The Parish Council said this is an allotment issue and the Parish Council will not contribute to the purchase of a lawnmower. The Clerk to respond.

(**Action Clerk**)

7252.12Dog bags

Cllr Nethersole agreed to purchase some more dog bags and dispensers. The Clerk to inform CBC that there is a problem with dog waste in the alley in Newlands Road.

(**Action Clerk**)

7252.12Great British Spring Clean

The event will be held on 4th April.

**7253 Planning**

7253.1 Planning Applications:

7253.1.1 CB/20/00663/FULL – 36 Church Road – single storey rear extension

The Parish Council has no objection to the application.

7253.2 Other Planning Matters

There were no other planning matters.

**7254 Parish Council Administration**

7254.1 Parish Council documents – for annual review

The documents to be reviewed at the April meeting.

7254.2 Annual Parish Council Meeting – Wednesday 13th May

Annual Meeting of Parish – Monday 18th May – hall availability to be checked (**Action Clerk**)

**7255 Committees/Sub Groups/Representatives - Reports**

Cllr Luff said that the Spensley Trust can now start work on the hall project.

**7256 General correspondence:**

No correspondence

**7257 Date of next meeting: Parish Council Meeting**

**Wednesday 8th April 2020 at 7.30pm**

**Village Hall, Westoning**

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

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