

## Cotton End Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Cotton End Parish Council held at Cotton End Baptist Church Hall on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

Present: Councillors A Merel, G Bangher, K Nicholls, A Stimson, A Simpson and L Seymour.

Also present Linda Carter (Clerk). Cllr S Gallagher (BBC) PC Foster (Bedfordshire Police)

**22/065 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Murray.

**22/066 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RELATED TO BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations were made

**22/067 PUBLIC SESSION**

PC Foster of Bedfordshire Police attended to speak to Councillors, and any residents present, regarding recent police action in relation to reports of Anti-Social Behaviour at Bunkers Drive. They had carried out a letter drop and patrols which appeared to have acted as a deterrent. There was some suggestion that the activity may have moved to the old bus shelter on High Road.

**22/068 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR**

Cllr Gallagher attended the meeting and reported that she had met with the Highways team to discuss various issues including the Trow Close junction which was a cause for concern and the speed camera location to the south of the village. The double yellow lines on High Road should be removed by the end of November and a scheme for DYL's at the meeting Close junction would come to the Parish Council for consultation.

She also checked that the Council had received confirmation of the allocation of £2,000 from her ward funding towards the cost of the safety surfacing at the Village Hall play area.

**22/069 MINUTES**

Councillors received and approved the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> August and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

**22/070 FINANCE AND RELATED MATTERS:**

a) Members APPROVED payments as follows:

HMRC September (paid)	£57.40
HMRC October	£57.20
September Salary – Parish Clerk (paid)	£228.82
October Salary – Parish Clerk	£229.02
M Green Invoice 152, 153, 154 (paid)	£671.00
M Green Invoice 157 (paid)	£267.00
M Green Invoice 159	£267.00
CPM Playgrounds	£156.00

Andy Muskett	£61.20
N Power (street lighting electricity supply)	£130.14
Broxap (Goalposts)	£372.00
Mazars (External Auditor)	£240.00
P Simpkins (Installing goal posts)	£80.00
	<b><u>£2816.78</u></b>

- b) NOTED that the second instalment of the Precept had been received, (£10,500).
- c) Members received the Bank Statement dated 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022 showing balance of £31,966.90.

## 22/071 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Application	Proposal	Location	Comment
22/02156/FUL	Two storey side extension including single storey front extension to accommodate a new porch, and a new parking space.	9 Hall Way Cotton End MK45 3AF	No objection

## 22/072 PLAY AREAS

To consider any matters associated with the play areas and open space.

- 1) Playground inspection reports – previously circulated – the rotator which had faulty bearings had been removed and various other repairs completed.
- 2) Safety Surfacing replacement. Three quotations had now been received, and Councillors AGREED to place the order for the work with Redlynch for £13,041.00
- 3) Trow Close Play area – the shrubs had been trimmed and the area tidied as part of the Village Tidy Week
- 4) Goal posts – delivered, and the installation had been carried out by P Simpkins for the sum of £80.00
- 5) Ditchwork – Contractor had advised that there was a large tree in the ditch, overhanging a neighbouring garden, which needed attention. It was AGREED that Cllr Stimson would contact the tree surgeons from Cople and ask them to carry out the work as a matter of urgency.

## 22/073 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The six-week consultation period had been notified to the relevant contacts on the consultees list from the Borough Council. The period would end on 21<sup>st</sup> November.

## 22/074 COMPLETION OF AUDIT

The External Auditor completed the audit in September, and the AGAR form and accompanying letter had been published on the website. The Clerk was criticised for not entering 'zero's in certain boxes on the form and for an incorrect date on the bank reconciliation (which was subsequently amended).

No further actions were required.

Cllrs **NOTED** the comments contained in the Auditor's letter.

**22/075 PARISH CLERK - Training and support**

This item was withdrawn following notification that the new clerk would NOT be taking up the post.

Members considered the position going forward and **AGREED:**

- 1) Not to re-advertise the post immediately,
- 2) To retain the services of the current clerk
- 3) To move to bi monthly meetings until the Annual meeting and review
- 4) To **delegate** to the Clerk the responsibility to respond to planning applications, between meetings, after consultation with members by e-mail.
- 5) Councillors would continue to meet informally on those months when a formal meeting did not occur.

**22/076 MEMBERSHIP OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME**

This item also withdrawn

**22/077 BUS SERVICES**

Councillors were aware that the decision to cut services was based on usage and felt that the local services to Shortstown could be extended to Cotton End. There was also concern regarding resident using buses for work/school/c college etc who could be disadvantaged by the cuts. It was suggested that smaller buses could be used, but also noted that there was a shortage of drivers to operate the services.

**22/078 MOBILE PHONE SIGNAL**

Members considered lobbying for improved services in the village but were unsure as to who would be able to help. The Clerk would make some enquiries and report back.

**22/079 CORRESPONDENCE**

Bedford Association of Town & Parish Councils was holding its AGM on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30pm in Henlow. The Council was entitled to send two Councillors (or the Clerk), but no-one was available to attend.

**22/080 MATTERS FOR INFORMATION OR DISCUSSION**

- 1) HIGHWAYS - High Road drainage and Shocott Spring footpath repairs – Cllr Gallagher is dealing with these
- 2) Old School site – up and running now – remove from future agendas.
- 3) Village enhancement Tidy Week was very successful, the area around the Village Hall Car Park was strimmed, Trow Close play area shrub beds were cut back and tidied, and bulbs were planted.
- 4) Shocott Spring
- 5) Village Hall events – the sponsored walk raised£440.00 for the Alzheimer's Society.  
Cllr Stimson asked if Councillors wished to contribute to the distribution of bulbs to residents for Christmas again? Councillors supported the idea and AGREED to approve a grant payment as last year.

- 6) Complaints - The clerk had received a complaint regarding the grass cutting on Hall Way, which was the area proposed for maintenance by volunteers for the next growing season. There was also a request for permission to plant a memorial tree for the Queen.
- Councillors supported the residents in maintaining this area and would remove it from the grass cutting schedule for next year. They also supported the residents in planting a tree in memory of the Queen. The residents were advised to plant either a Crab Apple (*Malus sp.*) for blossom or a Rowan. A cherry tree should NOT be planted as its roots could cause problems for the houses close by.

Date of next meeting – Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (Informal)  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022 Council Meeting.