



ASPLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Aspley Heath Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 24th February 2021 remotely starting at 8.00pm

Present: PCllrs S Smith (Chair) G Clough
G Harris P Garratt
A McKay S McQuillan
C Marshall

CBCllr Baker

In Attendance: Mrs D Batchelor (Clerk)
2 residents

2159 To Receive Apologies of Absence

Apologies were received from PCllr Jordan.

2160 To Note Declarations of Interest relating to Items on the Agenda

PCllr McQuillan declared an interest in 10 Silverbirches Lane.

2161 To Agree the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th January 2021 be signed as a true record of events.

2162 Open Forum – Members of the Public are Invited to Speak to the Parish Council

A resident confirmed he had received an answer to his question about the Neighbourhood Plan and surveys – a two year project with public consultation likely to happen later this year.

The increase in users of Aspley Woods was mentioned with a resident asking what the Parish Council was doing to be more proactive. PCllr Harris was in communication with the Bedford Estate, Greensand Trust and Central Beds Council (CBC). The Councillors agreed that a more proactive approach should be taken and they would invite all stakeholders to a meeting so that all identified problems could be shared with all parties. It was hoped that more residents would attend meetings to share their views, these would then be passed on in the hope that more would be done to curb excessive parking and traffic. There were some residents' views in the recent Parking and Traffic Survey and it was felt that this could be distributed more widely. It was agreed that a meeting should be set up with Dan Doyle, the Head

Ranger at Greensand Trust and John Hunter, from the Bedford Estates.

A resident asked about the minutes from the January meeting and whether the Chairman's statement had been added to these. They were advised that the statement was at the end of the minutes in Appendix 1.

2163 Central Bedfordshire Councillor Report

Actions carried forward:

2138 CBCllr Baker advised that the parts had been ordered for Bishop's Walk. There was no date given for these works as yet.

Action: CBC

2150a To Discuss Funding from Ward Councillor Grant Budget

CBCllr Baker advised that any grant awarded would need to be match-funded by the Parish Council. He asked that suggestions be forwarded to him and the most appropriate would be considered.

Action: PCllrs

This item was moved to later in the meeting (after Agenda item 2166).

CBCllr Baker advised that a second bin had been added to the south end of Sandy Lane and the damaged bin had now been replaced with a new one.

Highways had been asked to look into providing a new No Through Road sign for Silverbirches. This would be put on hold as there were personnel changes within Highways but CBCllr Baker would chase after the next meeting.

CBCllr Baker advised that Aspley Guise Parish Council had sent a letter to MKC about the South Expansion but this asked questions rather than providing views. He asked that any response include a clear indication of the Parish Council's support of the H10 extension to join Newport Road. Three other Parish Councils were also supporting this preferred option.

2164 Chairman's Report

Actions carried forward:

1995 Speeding and Parking on Church Road

The Traffic and Parking Survey responses from residents had indicted a need for a 20mph speed limit and double yellow lines. These suggestions would go to a future Parish Council meeting for discussion and progressing, if agreed. PCllrs Clough and McQuillan would use a map to identify the positions of these. The proposed additional exit to 102 Church Road would also need to be considered.

Action: GC/SM

There was concern that parking at the top of the woods was very busy and there were also campers staying overnight. There were no signs advising that this was not allowed, CBCllr Baker was to ask the question. The woods were advertised on a cycling website and there were logoed vans parking up which looked like they were offering services to cyclists and promoting their businesses.

PCllr McKay asked if CBCllr Baker could investigate the status of parking bays which were partly on the pavement. (Jul 19)

Action: JB

2022a The Clerk had gained information on gaining a .gov domain name for the website. She would now ask Wix if it was possible for them to action this rather than using another company who were advising that the website provider should be changed as well.

Action: DB

The Chairman advised that PCllr Southgate had sent in her resignation. She publicly thanked her for all her hard work over the past few years. It was agreed that a thank you gift be purchased, a £30 budget was agreed. PCllr Southgate had offered to continue delivering the newsletter and updating the noticeboards and Members agreed this. PCllr Garrett offered to take over the Trees and Sandpit roles, which was accepted. The Clerk would let CBC know that there was a vacancy however, it was likely that the post would not be filled before May when the Parish Council Elections were to be held. These Elections would be advertised on the website, Facebook and included in the next newsletter to encourage residents to come forward.

Action: DB/SS/GC/AJ

2165 To Discuss the Accessibility Statement for the Council's Website and to Analyse the Website for Issues

The Clerk had analysed the website for accessibility and advised that it did not fully comply. The Clerk would forward the analysis to all Councillors. The next step was to seek costs to make the website fully accessible. It was not considered viable that an upgraded version of the website known as Editor be used as this was too complex for the Clerk and would take much longer to use. The Clerk would contact Wix to see if they could offer some help and also an IT company to seek costs for help with accessibility. It was thought that the website may need to remain as it was and for the Clerk to be contacted regarding any accessibility issues, this would be added to the website once all the steps in the process had been completed.

Action: DB

2166 Roads and Footpaths

Actions carried forward:

1514a PCllr Harris had liaised with Dan Doyle (Greensand Trust). A full audit of all trails and signage was hoped to be completed by April. There was currently a shortage of footpath signage posts but it was hoped some would be found so there would not be a delay in implementation. There was acknowledgement that due to a lack of funding the woods were not being managed and monitored sufficiently; funds from cycle permits did not cover the cost of an additional Ranger. It was suggested that maybe the cost of cycle permits needed to increase in order to pay for works in the woods. It was questioned why Bedford Estate had shut one car park at the Woburn end, which may be pushing more cyclists to Church Road for parking. All the money received from permits went to maintaining the cycle tracks. PCllr Harris would speak with John Hunter regarding cyclists use of woods and parking facilities

Action: GH

CBCllr Baker hoped it was possible to order the wooden posts for the top of Church Road but was unsure when CBC would be able to do the work. The poor condition of the BOAT was also hoped to be repaired by CBC. It had been filled in recently but was already starting to erode. Although the fencing repairs were unlikely to happen in the short term this would remain on the agenda. (Reviewed July 2020)

Action: CBC

2140a To Discuss Resident Complaints regarding Parking and Traffic on Hardwick Road

Yellow lines were to be re-painted on Hardwick Road but MKC did not see this as a priority, so no date was given for this.

Action: MKC

Residents had complained about the parking on Hardwick Road and the build-up of traffic caused by this. There were also plans for the Quaker Group to hold services at the churchyard which would also increase parking in the area. There was also a lack of parking at Nonna's. It was felt that residents' views should be sought so that these could be fed back to Milton Keynes and Central Beds Councils and an officer be asked to investigate solutions.

Action: PCllrs

The Clerk's internet lost connection at this point. CBCllr Baker was invited to discuss his items – Agenda Item 2163. The Chair took the minutes for this.

The Clerk returned at 8.47pm.

2167 Lights

Actions carried forward:

2117 The light outside 57 Church Road which had been hit by a builder's lorry had now been repaired. The owner of the company had offered to pay 50% of the costs. This offer was discussed but Members felt that the full amount should be paid as otherwise the taxpayer would be forced to pay for some of the repair. The Clerk would contact the owner with a formal request for full payment.

Action: DB

A light outside 67/69 Church Road was flickering intermittently. The Clerk had notified the contractor.

Action: Contractor

2168 Planning

Actions carried forward:

1861b 12 Silverbirches Lane. Councillors were concerned with the procedures undertaken to remove the enforcement notice. The website had not been updated. The Enforcement Officer was not aware of the recent decision. There were no details of the enforcement provided. The application referred to the addition of quoins that had not been on the house originally'. The Conservation Officer was not aware of this issue either which was particularly worrying as the house itself was featured in the Aspley Heath Conservation Area booklet written by CBC. PCllr McKay was to write up a one-page summary of all the concerns regarding this application which CBCllr Baker would take to the Head of Planning at CBC.

Action: AM/JB

2090 47 Church Road had installed new windows and render for which permission had not been sought. There were concerns with the alterations and also the

side elevation windows not being obscured. CBC had been in contact and advised that only the cladding or rendering would need planning permission as in the application it stated the same materials would be used. John Clancy at CBC would respond. The resident had had two trees cut down without planning permission. CBC were now investigating this

Action: CBC

**2130a To Discuss the Milton Keynes South East Expansion
(This would be merged with Agenda Item 2169a)**

Application updates

71 Church Road (PCllrs Clough and Harris declared an Interest in this property and took no part in discussions.

It was advised that CBC did not investigate extensions into garages linked to the main house which served as a family annex which it considered permitted development. However, correct documentation would need to be produced from Building Control when selling the property to show the work complied with Building Regulations.

10 Silverbirches Lane – there was no update on the decision from CBC.

New Applications since the last agenda

Heathwood, Narrow Path – PCllr McQuillan had looked at this application and advised the Council that the changes proposed seemed positive on the whole. Therefore, Members agreed that there were no objections to this application.

2169 Village Matters

Actions carried forward:

2155 It was suggested that the tree in the Jubilee Garden may need some repair work. Members were asked to have a look at the tree to discuss potential works.

Action: PCllrs

2155b To Discuss the De-listing of a Community Asset

It was reported that the Royal Oak had been sold to a private buyer. The Parish Council discussed the de-listing of the pub as an Asset of Community Value and agreed that it would seek re-listing. CAMRA would also offer their support. PCllr Jordan agreed to liaise with the new owners.

Action: AJ

2155c PCllrs Marshall and Harris had attended the East/West Rail meeting. They reported that four trains were to run each hour, some stations were missing from the plans and the Woburn Sands station was planned to be moved 500-600m away closer to the grid road with the shutting of Newport Road. With so many high-speed trains it was thought that level crossings were unlikely to remain. The consultation would start in March with options for all the crossing points. All Parish Councils were urged to engage with their residents and ask them to respond with their views particularly about the potential closure of Woburn Sands station.

Action: DB

2155d It was reported that a Johnson's Sweepers van had unloaded concrete waste onto Church Road. It was felt that this should be reported to CBC as it was fly-tipping. PCllr Marshall agreed to progress the reporting. It was also advised that the Environment Agency could

be informed. CBCllr Baker felt that Bedford Estates should also be updated.

Action: CM

There had been several comments from residents about overhanging hedges in the Parish. A letter had been prepared by PCllr Southgate and would be forwarded; this would then be sent to residents who needed to cut their hedges back.

Action: SM

2169a To Discuss the Council's Response to the SEMK

2130a Minutes had been sent to all Councillors following the meeting. A complaint had been made to MKC regarding an interest that had not been disclosed. A summary would be added to the next newsletter.

Action: GC

Two meetings were upcoming and PCllrs Clough and Harris would be attending and would also submit a question on the H10 option and the effect this would have on the Leys and Hardwick Road, and also why it was shown as a proposed corridor rather than an extension to Newport Road. PCllr Marshall also expressed an interest in attending. CBCllr Baker responded that the MKC designated area did not include Newport Road and felt MKC should be asked to move the boundary although it was outside its remit. If the V11 was put in and the H10 not extended he felt that this would be a worse proposal. A question was asked about plans for Bow Brickhill. There was a proposed bypass from the station to the other side of the village which would go through a field. There was no detail on this yet just a reference to a 'restricted traffic junction' which was not clearly understood. PCllrs Clough and Harris agreed to prepare the Parish Council's response to SEMK.

Action: GC/GH

2170 To Receive an Update from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Work was progressing and grant funding was being sought. The Parish Council would need to apply for and approve all funding opportunities.

A project plan with timescales had been drafted and it was hoped that public engagement would be undertaken later this year.

2170a To Approve and Adopt Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

The Terms of Reference had been distributed to all Councillors and were duly **APPROVED**.

2171 Finance

a. **To approve payments to be made in February**

Payee	Chq No	Amount	Description
TBC	1152	£TBC	Allocated for tree removal on Sandy Lane
LIW Advertising Ltd (Hogsty End)	1153	£36.00	Article in March 2021 Hogsty End
D Batchelor	1154	£138.35	Clerk's salary - February

The above payments were agreed and **APPROVED**.

b. To agree the financial statements for January

Actions carried forward:

2132a To discuss information received from NatWest on switching bank account

Paperwork had been sent to the Co-Op regarding switching the Council's main account. However, there would be a monthly charge to maintain the account and this was not felt to be fair. Therefore, the Clerk would apply for the Sandpit account to be switched to the Co-Op with all details remaining the same. It was agreed that the Metro Bank be contacted and the main Parish Council account be switched over to them as they offered free banking for organisations with a balance of over £5000.

Action: DB

The financial statements were **APPROVED**.

c. To discuss the Clerk's hours

The Clerk advised that 15 hours per month (approximately 3.5 hours per week) was not enough to complete all the work required especially during busy times. It was agreed and **APPROVED** that the Clerks hours be increased to 4.5 hours per week. The Clerk would advise on her working hours from now on and if necessary, the hours would be revised up or down as appropriate.

Action: DB

2172 To Note Correspondence Received Since the Last Meeting

Actions carried forward:

2158 PCllr Smith agreed to look at the Land registry survey.

Action: SS

	From	Subject	Action
1955	NatWest	Bank Statements	
1956	SEMK	Consultation launch	Reply during 8 th Feb – 19 th April
1957	Central Beds Council	Local Plan – Inspector's letter	
1958	Central Beds Watch Scheme	Crime Statistics – January – no reported crime in AH	
1959	Greensand Country	Workshops – photography and creative writing, call for oral histories and archive materials	
1960	East West Rail	Online event – invitation and consultation introduction	

1961	Greensand Trust	Local voices information – people required to provide an oral history of living in the Greensand Ridge	
1962	Central Beds Council	Garden waste collections – starting 1 st March	

The garden waste collection information was to be added to the notice board.

The meeting closed at 9.26pm.

Signed:
Chairman