

**STEEPLE MORDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Steeple Morden Cricket Pavilion  
on**

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at 7.30pm**

Present: Councillors: G Belson (Chairman), S Traverse-Healy, K Austin, J Courtney, C Upchurch, A Drew, N Badger  
District Cllr Williams, County Cllr Kindersley (part)  
In attendance: Mrs S Walmesley (Clerk) and 4 members of the public.

**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 7.30 PM**

**In the absence of Cllr Clayton the meeting was chaired by Cllr Belson**

**CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR**

There had been one application for co-option of Councillor from Mr Nick Badger. On a proposal by Cllr Traverse-Healy, seconded by Cllr Austin, Mr Badger was co-opted onto Steeple Morden Parish Council. He signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Clayton and Cllr Wheatley.  
There were no declarations made.

**2. COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

2.1 County Council

Cllr Kindersley had circulated a report. He stated that some potholes had been filled in Odsey and there were more markings up for work to be done.

There had been some complaints made about the cutting regime where wild flowers had been cut back. Cllr Kindersley stated that the County Council only had funding for two cuts per year unless junctions were a safety concern then they could be cut more often. There were limited number of teams and therefore if the grass was on a schedule to be cut then it would be. He suggested that the Parish Council consider taking responsibility for the cutting and management of verges which were currently the responsibility of the County Council. There were professional companies who could carry out the work. Councillors agreed that this suggestion could be considered in the Autumn when the grasscutting specifications were up for renewal.

A discussion then took place on the Mayor and funding issues. Cllr Kindersley was advised that Guilden Morden Parish Council had arranged a meeting with the Mayor and Steeple Morden Councillors had been invited to attend.

Cllr Kindersley was thanked for his report.

2.2 District Council

Cllr Williams reported that she was having issues with her SCDC e-mail and so would forward a report to Councillors via her personal address.

Liz Watts had recently been appointed as Chief Executive for South Cambridgeshire District Council. She was due to take up her position at the end of September 2019.

Staffing within the District Council was a key concern. Planning and Environmental Health Officers were leaving and not being replaced. Cllr Williams added that up until the previous week there had only been one EHO responding to all environmental planning issues. One of the reasons for the lack of recruitment was the organisation review taking place. Cllr Williams advised that she had voted against the review proposal. The meeting to discuss this also excluded the press and public which Cllr Williams voted against. She added that the District Council needed to be more open and transparent.

Communication with officers was still a problem and Cllr Williams welcomed anyone with issues relating to South Cambridgeshire District Council to contact her.

There had been lobbying to open up the Community Chest funding application process. There was now a chance that separate residential areas, for example Odsey, could apply for funding.

Cllr Courtney queried who South Cambridgeshire District Council was accountable to. Cllr Williams confirmed it was the Government and there was a process where intervention could be made.

Cllr Traverse-Healy asked about the recruitment issue where, apart from the organisation review, there was a national crisis for Planners and EHOs. A discussion took place on the

reorganisation and shared services.  
The Chairman thanked Cllr Williams for her report.

### **3. COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS FROM PARISHIONERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

#### 3.1 SMARTIES Pre-School update

Three representatives from SMARTIES were in attendance and an update was given on their current financial position. There had been changes to the team over the past months and the Committee had continued to closely review costs. Further changes had been made to the billing process which would continue to be monitored. The number of families using SMARTIES was stable with 446 hours of pre-school childcare used per week and 38 families that used the out of school club, between 22 and 32 children attending each day. The second half of the financial year had been much more positive, than the first, following the actions of the new committee. This meant that SMARTIES was now in a position to begin to build up reserves and prepare to pay back the loan from the Parish Council. An offer was made to begin repayment in January 2020.

The Chairman congratulated the Committee for all their hard work in turning SMARTIES around. Councillors agreed that the committee should wait for a while to get some funds in reserve, in case of further difficulties, before the repayment of the loan commenced. The representatives were asked to provide a further update to the Parish Council in November 2019. The representatives were then asked to encourage their parents not to park on the bend in Hay Street. It was confirmed that the staff were concerned and regularly asked this and were liaising with the Primary School over the parking problem. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council had offered to loan some parking cones to the Primary School to put out but County Highways had stated that cones would not be allowed. The Chairman also advised that a request had been made for the refreshing of the road marking at the junction. A discussion took place on how the parking issue could be addressed. One of the SMARTIES representatives suggested that there could be a parents group set up, and with the help of their children, try and educate other parents.

The Chairman thank the SMARTIES representatives for attending the meeting and reiterated that the parking issue was on the Parish Council radar and any ideas as to how this could be addressed would be welcome.

### **4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF**

#### 4.1 The Parish Council Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019

On a proposition by Cllr Upchurch seconded by Cllr Austin the minutes as circulated were taken as read and then approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### **5. MATTERS ARISING AND CARRIED FORWARD**

#### 5.1 A505 Junction

Following the last meeting the Clerk had copied the response from Hertfordshire County Council to HCC Councillor Steve Jarvis and Sir Oliver Heald MP. Their responses had been circulated to Councillors. Cllr Courtney asked for the responses to be included as an addendum to the Parish Council minutes.

#### 5.2 Station Car Park Update

Cllr Courtney reported that he had followed up the SCDC zero omissions grant and was on a circulation list. There was to be £90,000 grant for the whole of South Cambridgeshire.

Another meeting had taken place following the receipt of more information from the landowner who was looking at extending the footpath from the T junction towards Ashwell Road. A letter of support from the Parish Council had been requested and this had been drafted and would shortly be sent. The draft was circulated to Councillors. It was agreed that the letter be sent once the wording was finalised by Cllr Courtney.

-Clerk

The Chairman stated that everyone was being sensibly realistic about the proposal and should still keep exploring other options including discussions with OMYA and looking at other land options. Cllr Traverse-Healy advised that the Local Transport Plan was currently out for consultation and agreed to see how this project could be included. He would circulate a draft to Councillors before submission.

-Cllr  
Traverse  
Healy

#### 5.3 Street Lighting Investigation for 2020/21

As agreed at previous meetings the Parish Council were investigating taking over the energy costs for the lighting. A communication had now been received from Cambridgeshire County

Council advising that they would no longer be buying energy on the Parish Councils behalf and recharging at the end of the year. This meant that parishes would now need to set up new arrangements for procuring and paying for street lighting energy themselves. A copy of the lighting inventory was provided with guidance on how to proceed.

-Clerk

Now that all Parish Councils were in the same position it was felt that it could be easier to obtain information on how to arrange this. The Clerk to continue with investigations..

#### 5.4 Blue Grass Festival 2020 –request to extend times

The Parish Council had been asked by the Festival organiser if people could arrive on the Thursday before the event. The main reason was the traffic especially those people travelling from the North and South of the M25.

Cllr Drew advised that she did not have a problem with the early arrival but expressed concern over the amount of litter, and dog waste, left behind following the recent Bluegrass event. She suggested that the organisers be asked to arrange their own litter clearance contract.

After discussion it was agreed that permission be granted on a condition that as a minimum the organisers arrange their own waste collection. Clerk to advise the Festival organiser.

-Clerk

#### 5.5 Request for Dog Waste Bin (Bogs Gap Lane)

The Clerk had urged the request. Cllr Williams offered to follow up with the District Council officer.

-Cllr  
Williams

#### 5.6 Clerk Appraisal

The Clerk to forward appraisal information to the Chairman and Cllr Upchurch as agreed at the last meeting with a view to the appraisal interview taking place before the next Parish Council meeting.

-Clerk

## 6. FINANCES

### 6.1 To receive the financial statement and to approve the payment of bills

The invoices were checked by Cllr Drew

E-ON

Reading Room electricity June 2019 DD		£ 19.00
---------------------------------------	--	---------

IN & OUT

Disabled toilet clean June 2019		£ 15.00
---------------------------------	--	---------

HALES PRINTERS

Newsletters July/Aug019		£ 42.00
-------------------------	--	---------

SUMMERS ELECTRICAL PARTNERS LTD

Repair to disabled toilet light (inc £18.00VAT)		£108.00
---	--	---------

CAPALC

Clerk/Councillor conference 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2019		£ 50.00
--	--	---------

STEEPLE MORDEN VILLAGE HALL

Contribution towards car park lights		£ 250.00
--------------------------------------	--	----------

MD LANDSCAPES

Cut and removal of fallen trees (inc £130.00 VAT)	£ 780.00	
---	----------	--

Rec Grasscutting April/May 2019 (inc £112.00 VAT)	£ 672.00	£1452.00
---	----------	----------

MRS S WALMESLEY

Clerks salary & expenses 1/4/19 -30/6/19		£1008.10
--	--	----------

HMRC

PAYE 1/4/19-30/6/19		£ 234.30
---------------------	--	----------

MD LANDSCAPES

Rec Grasscutting June 2019 (inc £56.00 VAT)	£336.00	
---	---------	--

Verge Cutting 9INC £52.00 VAT)	£312.00	£648.00
--------------------------------	---------	---------

TOTAL

£3826.40

AGREED PROPOSED Cllr Traverse-Healy SECONDED Cllr Courtney

### 6.2 Bowls Club Water usage

The Clerk reported that she was again experiencing problems with the Bowls Club water meter reading. The latest invoices from Cambridge Water showed that the meter was read on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019 showing the usage of a total of 136 cubic metres. The Bowls Club had advised the usage of 175 cubic metres for the same period. The Clerk would follow up the query with the Club before sending out the invoices to the other clubs.

-Clerk

## 7. RECREATION GROUND/CONSERVATION AREA

### 7.1 Recreation Ground Maintenance –working group update

Cllr Drew advised that the work highlighted in the RoSPA report was being planned for September. A meeting with the working group would take place to discuss what was needed. She added that the disabled toilet light had now been repaired and a new fan was on order.

#### 7.1.1 Dog Training

The dog trainer had asked if the group was allowed to use the conservation area during the winter months. A discussion took place on the area and the management of the grasscutting. It was suggested that, to get the best out of the ground, a cut and rake of the grass should be arranged every so often. It was agreed that a proposal for a cut and rake every three years would be put forward in the next budget round. The Clerk reminded Councillors that the grasscutting contracts were up for renewal in 2020.

-Cllrs &  
Clerk

It was then agreed that permission be granted for the dog trainer to use the conservation area between the months of September and March. Councillors were asked to inspect the area before September and revisit in the new year to monitor the condition.

#### 7.1.2 Dog Signs

A link had been provided to sites where signs could be purchased. Cllr Drew to arrange.

-Cllr  
Drew

#### 7.1.3 Tree Behind Village Hall

The Clerk advised that she had asked the grasscutting contractor for a quote to cut back the suckers from around the tree.

#### 7.2 Tree Inspection (Recreation Ground)

Cllr Drew had prepared and circulated a draft Tree Policy. She asked Councillors to look at the content, advise on any amendments, and this could then formally be agreed at the next meeting.

-Cllrs

#### 7.3 Leylandii Tree Work

It was agreed that an updated quote should now be obtained from the contractor. The position regarding the Football Club floodlights would also be confirmed so that the work could be carried out in early Autumn. Clerk to arrange.

-Clerk

#### 7.4 CCTV Camera Maintenance

Cllr Austin advised that a member of the Recreation Ground working group, and holder of the key to the CCTV equipment, had offered to liaise with the company who installed the cameras. He had the contact details. This was agreed and the Clerk was asked to confirm.

-Clerk

## 8. MAINTENANCE

### 8.1 Footpaths/Footways

#### 8.1.1 Craft Way Footway

There was no further update.

#### 8.1.2 Footpath 10 –Minor Highway Improvement Scheme 2017/18 Application

There was no further news.

#### 8.1.3 Footpath 7

It was reported that a tree had fallen across footpath 7. This would be reported on the County Council website.

-Cllr  
Austin

#### 8.2 Odsey Fencing

Cllr Courtney expressed his frustration at the length of time it was taking to get the traffic calming fencing repaired. Damage had been reported on the County Council website following an accident in July 2018 and followed up in August and December 2018. Cllr Courtney had again reported the damage which had still not been repaired. He urged Cllr Kindersley to follow up with the Local Highway Officer.

-Cllr  
Kindersley

## 9. SPEEDING TRAFFIC

### 9.1 MVAS Update

Cllr Austin reported that he had attended an interesting training session in Huntingdon. At the session it had been advised that the easiest way to use the MVAS was with an android tablet. He suggested that it would be a good idea to buy a tablet which would be used solely for this purpose. Councillors agreed that Cllr Austin investigate costs for approval at the next meeting.

He then advised that two units were now up and running at two ends of the village. He added that it had been advised during the training that the units were best moved around rather than left static. A discussion took place on the latest results where 79mph had been recorded on a vehicle travelling into the village via Litlington Road. Cllr Williams was working on a simpler database to record the information so that the peak times could be seen. Cllr Austin advised that the

-KA

batteries tended to go out during the third week so suggested that the moving of the units be timed to coincide with the change in batteries. He had received a costing for a solar charging unit, which was £399 plus VAT, but the supplier had expressed caution on purchasing these as the County Council did not like the units/panels left in position. Councillors suggested that this could be related to the need for planning consent. Cllr Williams agreed to find out.

-Cllr  
Williams

Cllr Austin then reported that he had spoken to a resident regarding the recording of Community Speedwatch data. The resident, who had compiled the data before, was not keen on being involved again but would show someone else what to do. This response had been passed back to the main contact who was in the process of contacting the people involved in the previous Speedwatch team. Cllr Austin agreed to report back progress at the next Parish Council meeting. Cllr Traverse-Healy advised that he had attended a SCDC Parish Council liaison meeting where support for a PCSO was discussed. The District Council at this time received no revenue for car parking and therefore could not have a civilian officer. They were asking Parish Councils to write a letter of support for a paid PCSO.

-KA

#### 9.1.1 LHI Application 2020/21

-Clerk

As agreed at the last Parish Council meeting an application would be made for a further MVAS. Clerk to arrange.

#### 9.2 Offer of Cones loan to Primary School

The offer was discussed under agenda item 3.1 while discussing safety suggestions for outside the Primary School with the SMARTIES representatives.

#### 9.3 Request to Police for Support

It was agreed that more information was needed before the Police were asked to attend the village. The right time would be when feedback from the MVAS and the Community Speedwatch team was available so that the best location/time would be known.

#### 9.4 30mph Bin Sticker Costs

The Clerk had circulated details of websites where sticker could be purchased at an average cost of £90 per 100. A discussion took place on whether the sticker were effective as refuse bins were on 'display' for only a couple of hours a week whilst they were emptied. It was agreed not to proceed with a purchase at this time.

### **10 PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE**

#### 10.1 Agreement of Budget

Cllr Drew confirmed that she had forwarded the brief for the website but was concerned that the proposed website, and budget, needed a proper discussion on requirement. She would notify the contractor that this was in hand and a decision would be made at the next meeting.

-AD

### **11. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

#### 11.1 To consider Planning Applications

There were no planning applications for consideration.

### **12 TO CONSIDER CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED INCLUDING:**

#### 12.1 Guilden Morden Parish Council invitation to meeting with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mayor

As discussed under the County Council report the meeting was to take place on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2019. To date Cllr Traverse-Healy had expressed an interest in attending. The Clerk was asked to confirm his attendance with Guilden Morden Parish Council and ask if they would welcome agenda items.

-Clerk

#### 12.2 Greater Cambridge Local Plan –Workshop 17<sup>th</sup> July 2019

An invitation to a workshop on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2019 had been received. This related to the plan for the future development in the district and would identify areas of land for development of homes, jobs and services. The Plan would also include policies against which all planning applications were considered.

-Clerk

Cllr Traverse-Healy offered to represent the council which was accepted. Clerk to book a place.

#### 12.3 Offer of Oak tree sapling for the conservation area

The offer had been made by a parishioner. Councillors agreed that the offer be accepted but the parishioner be asked to keep the sapling until the Autumn. She would also be asked to check the planting conditions for an Oak sapling as the conservation area was chalk. If this was not suitable an alternative site could be found for the tree. Clerk to reply.

-Clerk

### **13 COUNCILLORS' ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND REQUIRING THE URGENT**

. **ATTENTION OF THE CLERK**

13.1 Operation London Bridge

The Clerk had circulated details of the District and County Council Plan for the death of a Statesman. This would be discussed at the next meeting.

**14 JUBILEE AWARD**

- . Cllr Upchurch had collected the nominations and advised Councillors of the nominees of which one was chosen to receive the award for 2018. This would be presented at the September Parish Council meeting. Cllr Drew agreed to arrange for the engraving of the trophy. -AD

**15 MEETING DATES UNTIL THE END OF 2019**

- . Cllr Clayton had advised that he would be unable to attend all scheduled second Monday dates until 2020. He had been liaising with Cllr Belson and the Clerk on his availability. The following dates for meeting were suggested – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September, Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October, Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November and Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Cllr Belson would chair the meetings that Cllr Clayton could not attend. These dates were agreed.

There was no further business and the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.30 pm

-----  
Chairman

-----  
Date

**Addendum 1**

**–A505 Responses from Hertfordshire County Councillor and Sir Oliver Heald MP**

Thank you for letting me have a copy of your letter and the County Council’s response. I had seen their response when it was posted on Facebook and have been in touch with the council’s director responsible for highways regarding its contents.

As explained in the Programme Manager’s letter the detailed assessment of the safety issues on the A505 came up with a series of proposals that I am told cannot be funded at this time, with the exception of the works at the Litlington junction which has marginally the worst accident record and is relatively simple (and therefore cheap) to deal with. The junction at Odsey has slightly fewer injury accidents recorded but is clearly most unsatisfactory. Any solution to this, other than banning right turns which I do not believe would be acceptable, is unfortunately much more costly.

Whilst I understand that in the present circumstances with substantial cuts in government funding for all councils it is difficult to fund such schemes I do not regard the approach of waiting until a developer can be found to pay for changes (which is not likely to until after 2031) as acceptable. I will continue to argue that steps to deal with unsatisfactory junctions should be taken long before then.

In the interim I have secured agreement that lower cost measures will be investigated and that proposals for these (which I hope might include measures such as reduced speed limit past the Odsey and Slip End junctions) will be available by September.

Regards,

Steve Jarvis

County Councillor for Royston West and Rural

Many thanks for your message about the Odsey turning on the A505. Of course, Heidi is your MP, but we share the road.

There has been concern for many years about safety and I have taken this up many times over the past 20 years. There have been works to improve signage and cut back plants and trees to improve sightlines. Particularly for those coming from your direction and wishing to turn right onto the A505, it was felt strong signage was needed. As you will know, there have been incidents where motorists have turned into the eastbound carriageway by mistake, leading to traffic danger.

About 10 years ago, I proposed a roundabout at Odsey, but this was rejected on cost grounds. They installed extra speed cameras and signage on the westbound carriageway, where speeds were higher than on the eastbound one. This did reduce speeds. I again argued for a roundabout, but after a roundtable at Jeremy Fordham's with all the Herts Highways team, it was rejected.

About 2 years ago after a near fatal accident at Slip End, I walked the A505 with council officials, the HCC portfolio holder and Councillors Hill and Hunter. It was agreed that a detailed survey would be done of the road from north of Royston to Baldock, looking at measures that might improve safety and rating the risks. I have followed up on this, but have not yet seen the outcome.

The maintenance and road building budgets have increased, but particular schemes will always be judged against each other for priority.

I will ask HCC for an updated briefing.

Best wishes,

Rt Hon Sir Oliver Heald QC MP

Member of Parliament for North East Hertfordshire