

SOUTHOE & MIDLOE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES of MEETING

Held on WEDNESDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 2014

In SOUTHOE VILLAGE HALL at 7.30pm

PRESENT: - Councillors, Mrs S. Penton, Mr D. Saw, Mr. A. Marnes, Mr M. Rawson, the Clerk and six members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

District Councillor T. Hayward, County Councillor J. Wisson, Parish Councillors Helen Ramply, David Felce and Sandra Gadsby, had sent apologies which were accepted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest received for this meeting.

Chairman closed the meeting for the next item

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was disappointment that Balfour Beatty had not supported any changes to the original proposals regarding the alterations to the streetlights in the village.

A member of the Village Hall Management Committee had met with a member of the Football Association and discussed the opportunities for the village, such as renting out the playing field in order to generate some income, with approximately £20 a game a reasonable level to expect.

It was reported that the village website was six months out of date, as the Clerk had not been forwarding items to the individual who is maintaining the site.

It was raised, if anyone knew who had sanctioned the recent use of the field, when rugby had been played and the additional vehicles in the village had caused problems with parking. It was suggested writing to the organisation which the players had come from, Huntingdonshire RUFC, detailing to them that if they wish to use the field then a fee will be charged and highlighting the associated car parking should not disrupt the village as much as it did. There had been previous communications with this club regarding one off usage of the Southoe field, which at the start of the year the Parish Council had been informed about, however, on this occasion there had been no such communication.

A resident challenged the Chairman for not responding directly to an email sent 10 weeks ago that directed questions from the resident to the Chairman, expressing that they feel this is not an adequate length of time to have to wait for a response from the Chairman. The resident detailed that was now asking the same questions to the whole Parish Council, expressing that they felt that the Chairman had not been open and transparent.

Chairman reopened the meeting

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH July 2014

These had been circulated to all Councillors, it was proposed by Mr M. Rawson and seconded by Mr. A. Marnes, and unanimously agreed to accept these minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting, the Chair signed the documents.

5. MATTERS ARISING

It was reported that the District Council had been asked to cut the Playing Field ahead of the forthcoming summer fayre, with a number of compliments being received regarding how good the field looks.

The Clerk reported that there had been communications with Balfour Beatty in relation to whether an alternative contractor could quote for the moving of a street light column, it had been fed back that this would not be allowed.

All other items to be covered during the meeting.

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6. ALLOTMENT PROVISION

There had been communications received between meetings from a landowner in the village who had a piece of land that they had indicated they would be willing to rent out for allotment use. The land is currently being used as grazing for horses and is approximately one acre in size. The Parish Council was very pleased to hear that there is now potential land for allotments. It was agreed that the Clerk to enquire with the individual the length of time the land could be leased for, for allotment use, and when the land would be available from. The Clerk once this information is known would contact the Southoe and Midloe Allotment Association as well as the national organisation to seek guidance on the next steps. The landowner had noted that any costs associated with preparing the area for allotments such as work to the land and fencing would not be the Parish Council's responsibility.

7. POLICING ISSUES/NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Mr D. Saw detailed that the Parish Council had previously considered having some type of surveillance cameras in the village, a resident who has experience in this area had met with Mr D. Saw and they had walked round the village looking at the different options potentially available. Their independent recommendation was to have a camera placed by the lichgate on a pole so that the cameras could pick up the number plates of vehicles. Having looked online, Mr D. Saw provided Councillors with details that a starter camera set with high resolution (including night working) with a four-camera system and eight recorders would cost approximately £2,200. Councillors were fully supportive in principle of having a system in place that would cover the whole village and hopefully assist with reducing local crime. Mr D. Saw agreed to find two other quotes and the local resident to be invited to the next Council meeting.

8. HIGHWAYS MATTERS REGARDING THE VILLAGE

8a. Highways Improvement Scheme

There was then an update on the highways improvement scheme for the High Street. After the last meeting the Clerk had collated a summary document with the latest information on at that point, this was viewed by all Councillors and then circulated to every house in the village. Shortly after the circulation, the Highways Officer, fed back to the Parish Council that it would be possible for the temporary build to be left on site in situ for a longer period of time i.e. a few weeks, rather than just a few hours, as he had previously detailed. The Council was then notified that the Officer would be leaving their role and a new Highways Officer would be appointed to the scheme. A new Officer, Chris Foyle, contacted the Parish Council, and in order to ensure the best communication it was agreed that a site meeting should be held on the High Street with the Officer and Parish Councillors. Also, between Parish Council meetings, the Parish Council were notified that the residents of the High Street who would be affected by a highways scheme near the entrance to the Village Hall, had met themselves and discussed the situation. On receipt of feedback from this residents' meeting, the Parish Council were supportive that the nearby affected residents should also be in attendance at the site meeting with the new Highways Officer. The residents had put forward that they were supportive of Option 2, which was a raised hump (raised speed table).

The previous day, the site meeting had taken place, with nearby residents, Parish Councillors and the new Highways Officer. The different options were discussed, it was noted that the previous proposal of having a Transcon speed hump which would be a temporary speed hump that could be trialled alongside the narrowing of the road (Option 1), is no longer possible, other options were therefore considered. Those at the meeting, felt on balance that going with Option 2, a raised speed hump will focus drivers and that this be the option proceeded with. At the meeting there had been questions raised such as whether parking on the hump is illegal. The cost of the scheme would total £8,680, and the expenditure needs to be committed this financial year in order to secure the funding it was noted. It was proposed by Mr. M. Rawson to proceed with the raised speed hump (Option 2), this was seconded by Mrs S. Penton. There was then a counter proposal by Mr A. Marnes to continue with the previously suggested option of a road narrowing (Option1).

A vote was taken on the raised speed hump scheme; there were three votes in favour of this, resolution passed. The Clerk to notify the Highways Officer of the Parish Council's decision to proceed with this option and enquire as to realistic timescales. It was noted that there would then be the publishing of the public order notice and a summary of the associated highways legal process was given by the Clerk.

At the previous Council meeting, the Council had reviewed the resident's questions that had been directed at an individual Councillor regarding the highways scheme for the High Street. The Clerk reported that a response had been sent to the resident as agreed at the last Parish Council meeting. The response sent was from the Parish Council as a corporate body, apologising for any misunderstanding from any information that may have been circulated, adding that from now on all correspondence to residents regarding this would be issued from the Clerk and a full update was being worked on to circulate very shortly. It was noted the response to the resident had been sent promptly after the last Parish Council meeting, and the circulation to the village had been done (as previously detailed at this meeting). The resident had sent a number of further communications to the Clerk and Parish Councillors since the Parish Council's formal response. The questions previously from the resident directed to the individual Councillor, had now been sent asking the whole Parish Council the same questions. The resident was present at the meeting and did make comments and address the Parish Council on this matter. The Council discussed the questions that had been sent from the resident, with some Councillors expressing that they were unable to answer the questions as they had not been present at the site meeting on 22nd May. Some Councillors also were unsure whether they had or had not received prior notification of the site meeting on 22nd May, and could not recall who had organised the site meeting, therefore, feeling they are not in a position to answer the questions being directed at the Parish Council fully. It was concluded that only Mr. Marnes can answer these questions but again he declined to do so. After much discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk to collate a timeline of communications including emails to show how the meeting on 22nd May was arranged. This information would then be sent to all Councillors for them to view and the Clerk to respond to resident with summary of the meeting discussion on the matter.

8b. Next round County Council Highways Improvement Scheme Funding

The Councillors present then discussed the next round of the County Council Highways Improvement Scheme Fund which is open till mid September, it was agreed that the Parish Council support £1,000 of expenditure towards a scheme for reducing the speed of vehicles in Rectory Lane. Mr D. Saw agreed to collate the application and present to the panel when the application is considered.

8c. Street Lighting

It was noted that there was no feedback to date to the Council's requested information relating to other parishes and the proportions of lights they had had removed, as Southoe seemed to be having a high number of lights removed.

9. A1 MATTERS

District Councillor T. Hayward and Parish Councillor A. Marnes had been invited to the Sandy A1 Group to see if they shared the same visions as the local group of parishes, Mr A. Marnes fed back that the visions are shared and they also would like an upgrade for their section of the A1.

The next meeting of the local A1 Group is on 30th September where it is expected the first feedback from the average speed cameras will be detailed. Those present at the meeting were asked for their feedback on the cameras, there was a general consensus that it is now a lot safer accessing the village but at peak times of the day it does take longer to get out of the village.

10. FINANCE

The following invoices were presented (Mr. A. Marnes declared an interest in this item so took no part in the discussion):

Mr R Holdaway grass cutting totalling £220.00

Oxford University Chest Playing Field rent £327.50

Barnicoat Ltd clerking service £334.01

Mr A Marnes reimbursement of printing costs for leaflet £15.00

These were unanimously agreed and approved that they be paid.

There had been notification from Eon of recent direct debit for £15.31 for the Village Hall electricity.

It was noted that previously it had been agreed that the bank mandate would be updated removing Mrs. M. Farmery as a signatory and Mrs. S. Gadsby to become a new signatory for the Parish Council, however, Mrs S. Gadsby had

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expressed wish not to become a signatory. This was discussed and it was unanimously agreed that Mrs S. Penton become the new signatory.

The Clerk reported that there had been no feedback to date from the External Auditor.

There had been a cheque received and banked from the Village Hall Management Committee as a contribution towards the Village Hall maintenance work to the building.

The Parish Council insurance renewal policy had been received and circulated to all Councillors, Mrs S. Penton agreed that she would spend some time looking into the policy to ensure that some of the items detailed are accurate in terms of asset valuation and relevant to the Council to see if there are any opportunities for savings. The Parish Council unanimously agreed to continue with Broker Network Ltd, and having a three-year long term agreement with them, therefore authorising expenditure up to £688 for this policy, following Mrs S. Penton's review. It was also suggested that it may be cost effective for the Village Hall Management Committee to have a policy with the same insurers as the Parish Council, it was agreed to explore this possibility and a copy of their policy documentation to be forwarded to the Clerk and then to the insurance company.

The Council then discussed the PCC insurance, following a previous meeting request that the Parish Council consider a donation towards this cost. It was noted that the insurance at present is being paid by instalments, due to the number of Councillors present and with declarations of interest the Council not being quorate it was agreed that this matter would need to be carried forward to the next meeting.

It was noted that Classic Windows required a £300 deposit and contract signed ahead of the commencement of maintenance work to the Village Hall, it was unanimously agreed to pay the £300 deposit and sign the contract.

11. PLAYING FIELD

The Clerk to follow up the annual play area inspection of the play equipment.

12. VILLAGE HALL

It was reported that the Village Hall energy survey had been completed and the report showed the building was graded 'F', there is the possibility of new light fittings being looked at as a way of reducing costs.

13. CHURCH MATTERS & BURIAL GROUND

It was agreed that paving slabs would be used to mark reserved plots for ease of future referencing, and the plot number for Mrs Smith needs to be confirmed.

14. PLANNING

No items to be discussed.

15. CORRESPONDENCE / EMAILS

The correspondence was reviewed and items had been circulated to Councillors that may be of interest, the letter from Mr Djanogly MP regarding the street lighting was detailed as well as the response to date from the District Council regarding the continued lack of communication and problems arising in the village with the removal of so many lights.

Cllr. T. Hayward's report had been made available to those present.

16. WIND FARM UPDATE

There had been no update on this item.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None received.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This would be Wednesday 1st October at 7.30pm; the meeting was closed at 10.25pm

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