

SOUTHOE & MIDLOE PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

MINUTES of MEETING

Held on THURSDAY 5TH JUNE 2014

In SOUTHOE VILLAGE HALL at 7.30pm

PRESENT: - Councillors, Mr. D. Saw, Mrs H. Ramply, Mr. D. Felce, Mr. A. Marnes, Mrs. S. Gadsby, Mr M. Rawson, Mrs. S. Penton, District Councillor T. Hayward, the Clerk and seven members of the public.

The retiring Chair opened the meeting thanking Mrs. M. Farmery for her work as a Parish Councillor and welcoming Mrs. S. Penton to the Council.

1. A) ELECTION OF CHAIR: It was unanimously agreed to elect Mr. A. Marnes as Chairman, resolution passed. It was noted that Mr. A Marnes reported that he would not be able to serve as Chair for the full year. Mr. A. Marnes signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

B) ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR: The Chairman called for nominations for Vice Chairman, it was unanimously agreed that Mrs. S. Penton be elected as Vice Chair, resolution passed. Mrs. S. Penton signed the Declaration of Acceptable of Office form.

C) COUNCILLORS DECALRATION OF INTEREST FORMS AND ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE FORMS TO BE RECEIVED: As this had been a year of election of a new Council, all Councillors present completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and the Register of Interest forms. The Clerk to submit the appropriate forms on behalf of the Councillors and it was agreed that any Councillors who had not provided these to the Clerk by the end of the meeting would accept responsibility for submitting them to the local authority directly themselves.

D) TO REVIEW THE REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT AND COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS: All Councillors ahead of the meeting had been provided with an updated copy of the most recent Code of Conduct issued by the District Council, it was unanimously agreed to adopt the document that had been issued by the local authority. The Councillors took some time to review the latest NALC Standing Order document giving consideration to the existing document the Parish Council, it was agreed as the model document was very detailed that this item to be carried forward and the Clerk to circulate an edited version, relevant to the Council with tracked changes shown for the Councillors to consider at a future meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

County Councillor Wisson had sent apologies and it was noted that District Councillor Terry Hayward due to arrive late.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10th March and 23rd April 2014

These had been circulated to all Councillors, it was proposed by Mrs S. Gadsby and seconded by Mr. D. Saw, and unanimously agreed to accept these minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting, the Chair signed the documents.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that Mrs. H. Ramply had a declared interest in a planning matter to be discussed, no other declarations of interest were made.

5. MATTERS ARISING

All items to be covered during the meeting.

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Chairman closed the meeting for the next item

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were comments received regarding the recent grass cutting of the churchyard, with reports that after the most recent cut there were a number of gravestones that were left covered in cuttings especially at the back of the headstones. It was asked if the contractor could remove the cuttings, however, it was noted that the contractor does not have this facility and if this did take place the cost to the Parish Council would significantly increase for such work to be carried out. There were suggestions made regarding how this issue could be remedied and Mrs. H. Rampley agreed to liaise with the contractor to seek a solution.

There were concerns expressed regarding the local authority proposed street lighting changes for the village with residents feeling that it appears a foregone conclusion with the notices being placed on the lampposts prior to the end of the public consultation.

Cllr. T. Hayward arrived at this point of the meeting.

There was a general discussion regarding the proposed street lights to be removed, and Cllr. T. Hayward gave an example of a local parish who had met with the local authority Officer and had come to a satisfactory resolution regarding the lights that were to be removed in that particular parish.

It was asked if there was any official data or feedback following the recent installation of the average speed cameras along the A1, it was noted that there had been no data regarding the cameras reported on at the most recent A1 Safety Group meeting.

There was a question received regarding who would be maintaining the updating of the Parish Council section of the village website going forward, it was asked if Mrs. M. Farmery could continue with this, which she agreed to do.

Cllr. T. Hayward reported that he would be speaking at the forthcoming cabinet meeting regarding keeping the viaduct at the A14 giving valid reasons for this argument, encouraging people to respond to the current A14 public consultation document. It was agreed that a copy of Buckden Parish Council’s comments to be forwarded to the Clerk for circulation amongst Councillors.

Chairman reopened the meeting

7. ALLOTMENT PROVISION

There was no update, and had been no contact from Savills.

8. POLICING ISSUES/NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

It was noted that a new PCSO has been assigned to the village.

9. HIGHWAYS MATTERS REGARDING THE VILLAGE

Following the comments received at this meeting and the April Parish meeting it was agreed that a site meeting to be called in the village as soon as possible with the relevant Officer to discuss the proposed street light changes and highlight to them the lights that need to remain and to suggest suitable alternatives that could be removed. It was noted that the Clerk had already sent communication to the relevant Officer expressing concern over the displaying of notices and alerting the local authority that the Parish Council would be submitting comments with proposed changes to the originally published scheme within the public consultation time frame.

Following on from the Parish Council’s successful application to the County Council Highways Improvement Scheme Fund, there had been a meeting arranged with the appointed Highways Officer, which all Parish Councillors had been welcome to attend to discuss a draft scheme. The meeting was held on 22nd May and one Councillor attended, Mr. A. Marnes reported back that the Officers original idea prior to the site meeting was for two sets of cushions similar to the ones at Eaton Socon. However, after discussion regarding vibration to nearby houses, the direct entrances onto the road and traffic flow problems, it was felt that a raised area may be a better option to draft for the Parish Council to consider. The draft document with drawings had been sent to Mr. A. Marnes and copied to the other Parish Councillors since the site meeting. The Chair went through the draft document and explained what the drawings showed, it was reiterated that any drawings being reviewed were just draft proposals for consideration. There were different opinions expressed and different scenarios talked through with Councillors being mindful that

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any measures that are introduced are potentially going to have an impact or seek adverse comments from some residents or businesses. Councillors considered the draft and it was expressed that yellow lines might not be the best option, however, Councillors also agreed that it was not possible to do nothing, that some safety measures do need to be in place for this crossing. It was proposed the Chair should speak to the nearby residents and show them the draft plans of the High Street and explain the drawings, with the plans to also be put in the village notice board and displayed at the Village Hall. The Council will then arrange a village meeting to discuss with all concerned residents the draft plan and any other ideas, before the Council decide the best option to pursue, this it was agreed will be arranged after the Chair had spoken to local residents. It was also outlined by the Clerk that any proposals that mean a change to the highway do require a period of consultation and appropriate notices to be displayed by the local authority.

The Parish Council's formal response to the current A14 public consultation was discussed, Mr. D. Saw agreed to collate the response and circulate to all Councillors for their comments and feedback, ahead of the forthcoming submission deadline with the Clerk to submit the final agreed response.

Mr. A. Marnes reported that a ditch in Lees Lane had been partly filled in and part of a new bridge had been placed over the ditch, contact regarding this had been made with Highways Officer, Ian Winfield as this would have an impact on drainage in the local area.

Mr. D. Felce reported that there has been an application made for the bridleway path at Midloe that goes to Highfield Farm to be resurfaced, the relevant Officer has been contacted and there will not need to be a diversion put in place and the appropriate signage will be displayed so users are aware of this work.

It was noted that the next round of the County Council Highways Improvement Scheme Fund would be opening shortly, given the timescale of the applications to be sent in it was agreed that this to be a future agenda item, with a possible suggestion being an application for passing bays along Rectory Lane.

It was agreed that Mr. D. Saw to send an email thanking the County Council for the recent filling in of pot holes in Bell Lane and Rectory Lane.

10. A1 MATTERS

Mr. A. Marnes reported back from the recent A1 Safety Group meeting where the issue of U-turns at Southoe had again been raised. There had been further requests made for the vegetation to be cleared along the central reservation as visibility is very limited at present and therefore very dangerous, the Parish Council had been given a date for the work to be done.

There has recently been published a new A1 London to Leeds strategy document which Mr. A. Marnes gave an overview of the items relevant to the village.

Following the installation of the average speed cameras it was noted that there had been three accidents recently, and the Safety Group had raised that they would be looking for a new Chair shortly, and as other parishes had had someone carry this role out, the Group would be looking for a Chair from Southoe if possible.

10. FINANCE

The following invoices were presented:

Mr R Holdaway grass cutting totalling £550.00

Barnicoat Ltd clerking service £286.29

These were unanimously agreed and approved that they be paid.

There had been notification from Eon of recent direct debits for £19.29 and £41.33 for the Village Hall electricity.

In light of the new Parish Council it was agreed that the bank mandate would need to be updated to ensure that it reflects the current Councillors, therefore it was resolved that Mrs. M. Farmery to be removed as a signatory and Mrs. S. Gadsby to become a new signatory for the Parish Council.

An updated Financial Regulations document had been circulated to all Councillors ahead of the meeting, the Parish Council reviewed and agreed to adopt the document, the Clerk to make some further updates with the inclusion of the correct bank signatories as per recently agreed and this document to be recirculated.

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The Parish Council reviewed the 2014/15 internal audit control associated documents which had been circulated ahead of the meeting, it was unanimously agreed to adopt these with no changes, resolution passed.

The Parish Council reviewed the revised Financial Risk Assessment document, which was more comprehensive than the previous document, it was unanimously agreed to adopt the document.

The Clerk reported that feedback is due shortly from the Internal Auditor, this will be a future agenda item, and between meetings the Clerk will be submitting the appropriate documents to the external auditor who had agreed a revised date of 30th June for documents to be submitted by.

11. PLAYING FIELD

It was agreed that Mr. M. Rawson to continue with the role of carrying out visual inspections. A draft revised maintenance schedule and reporting document had been circulated to all Councillors, it was agreed that this new document template would be used. It was noted that an external play area inspection is due shortly and it was agreed that an accompanied inspection to be carried out on this occasion, Clerk to organise.

It was also discussed that there needs to be a spraying of the field to kill the excessive number of weeds, Mr. M. Rawson agreed to try and locate a quote locally and the Clerk to ask Greenthumbs if they could provide a quote for the work, it was noted that any spray used on the field must be child and animal friendly. The litter bins have not been emptied even though this has been reported, it was suggested having a District Council sticker on them may act as a visual remind to the operatives that they should be emptied as part of the regular route.

12. VILLAGE HALL

Mrs. S. Gadsby raised would it be possible to rent out the field to provide some additional income with publicising locally that it is available for hire, this was discussed and it was felt on balance that for the level of income it may generate there would realistically be a lot of associated work involved with this.

There have been two new Village Hall Management Committee members recruited, there has been a recent energy survey undertaken of the building and the full report is still to be received. To help with the analysis of the energy usage a recent Eon bill is needed so the report author can access the usage fully, so this to be provided.

13. CHURCH MATTERS & BURIAL GROUND

A letter had been received from a resident requesting a footpath in the cemetery part of the churchyard to allow better access and reporting that the taps need replacing. The cost of a path would be considerable, however, it was recognised that access could be improved so it was suggested placing grass matting down to form a path. Mrs. H. Rampley and Mr. D. Saw to enquire with the Diocese if this agreeable or if formal permission is needed.

There is ongoing work to the clock and to the oil tank it was noted.

There was also a request for a future agenda item for the Parish Council to consider contributing to the Church's insurance cost.

14. PLANNING

It was discussed that it had been brought to the Council's attention that there had been a planning application in the village recently that the Parish Council had not received supporting papers for regarding a number of solar panels to be sited at Common Barn. The Parish Council had come across the application by chance, and a decision had been granted for approval by the District Council and the Parish Council have looked into this with the District Council.

There was a planning application for consideration at the meeting, reference number _____, the Council had no objection to the application though noted that some of the drawings illustrated are different to the actual positioning.

15. CORRESPONDENCE / EMAILS

The correspondence was reviewed including a request from St Neots Museum for a donation, it was unanimously agreed that a donation be made of £50.00, resolution passed and cheque signed.

It was noted that following previous communications that the Parish Council had been notified that an invoice would be sent for the street lighting costs, this had still not been received and the Clerk had queried with the relevant Officer that this had still not been received to date.

The Council considered whether to become members the Cambs and Peterborough Association of Local Councils, it was agreed that membership would not be taken.

16. WIND FARM UPDATE

There had been no update on this item.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Former District Councillor Terry Clough was thanked for his help and support during his term as Councillor for Southoe, the Clerk to forward these on.

There had been an invite for the Chair to the Paxton Pits 25th Anniversary celebration it was noted.

Mr. A. Marnes reported that he is due to meet the local MP recently and asked if there were any matters relating to the village that should be raised during this meeting, it was felt the need for a footpath out of the village should be highlighted.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This would be Wednesday 16th July at 7.30pm, the Council then would meet generally on the first Wednesday of every month thereafter starting in September. The meeting was closed at 10.10pm