**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd January 2024 at 7.30pm in the Reading Room, 46 Chapel Rd, Weston Colville, Weston Green, Cambridge CB21 5NX.**

**Present: Ray Vidler (Chairman), Bridget Durham (Vice Chair), Constantine Pagonis, John Garrod, Emma Rayner, and Jess Ashbridge (Clerk).**

**In Attendance: 6 Parishioners, County Councillor Henry Batchelor and District Councillor Geoff Harvey in part**

1. **Chairman’s Welcome –** Cllr Vidler welcomed those present.
2. **To accept apologies and reasons for absence –** None.
3. **To make any declarations of interest –** None.
4. **Public Participation Session –** A couple came to discuss the building plot at the bottom of Horseshoe Lane, which they were in the process of purchasing. The site has outline planning. The Council were advised that Footpath 16 ran through the site, and would need to be diverted closer to the fence behind the houses. There were no comments from the Cllrs about the footpath diversion. They would also need to submit a reserve matters planning application. Parking concerns were raised during the outline planning application – it was confirmed that parking would be provided on the site. The Cllrs had no questions or comments, Cllr Vidler advised that the planning application would be discussed when it was submitted.
5. **To approve minutes-** The minutes of the Weston Colville Parish Council meeting on 6th November were approved. **P: Cllr Garrod, S: Cllr Vidler, All in fav.**
6. **District and County Council reports and items of interest** – Report appended. Cllr Batchelor reported that the Planning Application for the proposed solar farm (near Balsham) would be decided by the Secretary of State, as it would be so large. It was advised that the public plans would be released by the end of the month. Cllr Harvey would meet with Cllrs Garrod and Rayner on 4th January to discuss flooding along the Stour.

The Playground Rejuvenation was moved up the agenda.

**7.1 Planning Applications –**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Address** | **Proposal** | **Planning Reference** | **Decision** |
| 11 Church End Weston Colville  | Two storey side extension and single storey rear extension. | **23/04318/HFUL** | **Awaiting Decision****No Comments** |

**7.2 Decisions from SCDC**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Planning Appeal** | **Address** | **Proposal** | **Decision** |
| **23/00025/REFUSL PP-11094816** | College Farm House Common Road Weston Colville CB21 5NS | Change of use of agricultural land to residential and the retrospective replacement of an existing shed and construction of a cartlodge. | **Split Decision** |

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| **Address** | **Proposal** | **Planning Reference** | **Decision** |
| Old Orchard Common RoadWeston Colville  | Part single storey, part two storey front extension | **23/03747/HFUL** | **Withdrawn** |
| 5 The Green Weston Colville  | Dropped kerb and driveway alterations | **23/03291/HFUL** | **Approved** |

* 1. **Flooding** – It was reported that the drains on Common Road had been cleared, and Cllr Garrod had received a response that the drains on Mill Hill would be cleared within the financial year. It was determined that Cllr Garrod would seek quotes to clear the ditch near the Reading Room car park, and the Clerk would write to the Reading Room, and West Wratting Estate about clearing the ditch next to the Cricket field. Cllr Durham had reported the grips on Chapel Road, and Common Road – Cllr Garrod had also reported Common Road..
	2. **Footpaths –** Work had begun on Bridleway 14 and the permissive path, removing the hedge between them.
	3. **LHI Bid 2024 –** It was determined not to apply for and LHI for an MVAS. The Clerk requested that Cllr Batchelor chase up the price of a device from the County Council. Former Cllr Hubbard was thanked for putting the SID up in the village.
	4. **Policies –** It was determined to move discussing the Disciplinary policy, and Grievance policy to the next meeting.
	5. **Handyman –** The Clerk had sought quotes from Handymen – only one came to visit the village. It was determined that the Clerk would approach the Handyman to remove the fence in the Reading Room carpark, and restore the bus shelters up to £1,000 – determined at September’s meeting.
	6. **Community Hub –** Moved to March.
1. **Risk Assessment/Health and Safety –** The defibrillator was rescue ready on 3rd January.
2. **Playground –** A report was received and an update from the Working Party including showing proposed plans for the fenced in area and the outer area. Cllr Durham questioned why proposals had been put forwards before the responses from the survey had been received. Cllr Pagonis responded that the costs varied, and the Working Party wanted to seek quotes to find out what was possible, in terms of placement and costs. The two proposals that were put forwards could be fine-tuned following the results of the survey. It was suggested that multiple funding sources would be found, rather than carrying out fundraising in the village. An outline proposal was put forward that the Parish Council would contribute up to a maximum of £5,000 for the project. **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Garrod, All in fav.** It was determined that the Working Party would complete funding applications.
3. **Finance –**
	1. **To Approve cheques – P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Rayner, All in fav.**
	2. **Online Banking Update and mandate change –** Cllrs Pagonis and Durham are close to being set up for online banking. Once approved, Cllr Vidler and the Clerk would be added to the mandate.
	3. **Quarterly Accounts –** The accounts were received.
	4. **Budget –** The Budget for 2024-25 was determined.
	5. **Precept –** The precept for 2024-25 was determined at £12,500, remaining the same as 2023-24. **P: Cllr Pagonis, S: Cllr Durham, All in fav.**

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| **Credit Received – Precept** |  |
| **Wages s/o rising to £254.67** | £235.17 |
| **Balance at Lloyds Bank on 04 December 2023** | £23,171.17 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cheque number** | **Detail and Date** |  | **Amount** | **VAT** |
| D/D | Street lighting  |  | £15.73 |  |
| 859 | Challenge contribution + £10 for playground survey insert |  | £135 |  |
| 860 | Clerk backpay |  | £195 |  |
| **Total** |  |  | £345.73 |  |
|  | **Total of Outstanding Cheques**  |  |  |  |
|  | **After above Cheques**  |  | **£22,825.44** |  |

1. **Matters for next Agenda –** Co-option of Rachel Jennings.

**13. Employment -** Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and in accordance with 3d pursuant to Standing Order 11, it was resolved that the Public are excluded from any discussion on this item as it concerns employment matters **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Garrod, All in fav.**

The NALC National Salary Award pay scales had been released. It was determined that the Clerk’s salary would remain on grade 9, and be increased inline with the pay scales to £254.68 per month. Backpay would be awarded from April 2023 – January 2024 of £195. **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Pagonis, All in fav.**

**Date of the next Parish Council meeting is: 4th March**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.46pm.

**District and County Councillor’s Report – January 2024**

Happy New Year

We hope that everyone had a happy and restful Christmas break. We’re both looking forward to working with you all again in 2024.

**Solar Farm Application – update -** We have previously reported on a potential planning application coming forward in our area for a solar farm. The size of the area being considered is fairly significant, some 900 hectares. Unlike we have previously reported, the total application site area is 900 hectares, not the area they are searching in – this turned out to be over 2000 – so if this were to gain planning permission, it would currently make it one of the largest solar farms in Europe.

The geographic area being looked at is from the north of Linton/Abington up to Balsham and west, roughly following the route of the Roman Road, across the A11 to the edge of Fulbourn.

The promotors of this idea, Kingsway Solar, were due to be going public with their plans on December 14th, but we understand this has been delayed until this month, January.

**Stagecoach Updated Timetable -** Stagecoach announced some proposed changed to the 13 service back in December, coming into force on March 3rd. On further inspection it only relates to some of the places that the bus will stop at in Haverhill, so won’t really affect us in Cambridgeshire. Full detail can be seen at - <https://haverhill-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/Stagecoach-East-Haverhill-Network-Overview.pdf>

**Uttlesford Local Plan -** Some may recall that a few years ago Uttlesford District Council (our neighbours in north Essex) were proposing a new town of circa 5,000 houses to be built at Great Chesterford. They were told by a government planning inspector that this wasn’t sustainable and to think again. They have recently published their next proposal which doesn’t include any large-scale developments near to the Cambridgeshire border. So those who were concerned, especially the parishes south of the A1307, can hopefully rest easy!

**Budgets** - February is always the time when local authorities set their budgets for the forthcoming municipal year. The County Council needs to find around £2m worth of savings whilst maintaining the services they provide, not an easy task. The District Council is in a much healthier financial position and won’t need to make savings this coming year.

**Brief A1307 Update -** The cones have been removed from the Dean Road junction section of the road, with the new remodelled crossing now finished and operational. The final stages are the completion of the roundabout and associated footpaths. Bartlow Road, Linton is currently scheduled to reopen mid-February, but as with all construction projects, this is subject to weather etc.

**Anaerobic Digestion Plant Proposals -** In our area we have not one, but two planning applications submitted to the relevant local authorities for bio energy digestion plants. These are plants that breakdown agricultural materials and turn them into energy. For reference there is one on the A505 between Royston and Baldock.

1. The first application is located just over the Suffolk border outside of Haverhill and off the A1307. The site runs up the Cambridgeshire border and ends at the edge of West Wickham/Weston Colville. You may have seen signs for the anti-lobbying group ‘Muck Off Acorn’ – this refers to this application. As the application is in Suffolk it will be Suffolk County Council that will make the decision on this but whilst the time for public comments has closed, you can still look at the plans and write to the case office dealing with the application – andrew.rutter@suffolk.gov.uk <http://suffolk.planning-register.co.uk/Planning/Display?applicationNumber=SCC%2F0045%2F23SE&fbclid=IwAR0aj4d4JMd9Yr3cP-Etp9rxdR4kKDwvzX0wMyHkfOomG45fCq0khXRbyrE>

2. The second application is in the parish of Streetly End, West Wickham. This site is smaller than the first and as it is in Cambridgeshire will be decided by Cambridgeshire County Council. The council are taking public comments now and this can be done via the website - <https://planning.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S0BB1JDYKNQ00>

The period for public comments on this application closed in early December but you can always contact that planning officer directly, should you want to raise concerns after this time – helen.wass@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

**Rural Prosperity Fund** - There is a new fund, soon to be released by the District Council, called the Rural Prosperity Fund. This is money from the government to aid economic and social activity in rural areas, such as ours. More detail to follow as the Council makes a decision on how to distribute this money, but there is a fairly significant amount available. Watch this space.

**LHI Bids -** This years round of Local Highway Improvement (LHI) bids are now open for parish councils to submit a proposal for funding for a small highway improvement project in our area. Our parishes have been successful in the past and funding has enabled some small, albeit much needed, improvements to the highway network that wouldn’t usually form a part of the Highway budget. Full detail and application forms can be seen here - <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/improving-the-local-highway/local-highway-improvement-funding>

**Mobile food hub -** There is a mobile food hub that visits Linton Village Hall on Coles Lane every Tuesday between 1pm and 2pm. There is no registration required just turn up on the day. If any more information on the scheme, this can be found on the Hope CIC (the charity running the scheme) website - [https://hopeagainst.org/hope-cic-mobile-food-hub or on 07474725477](https://hopeagainst.org/hope-cic-mobile-food-hub%20or%20on%2007474725477).