**Weston Colville Parish Council**

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 4th March 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, and Jess Ashbridge (Clerk).**

**In Attendance: 4 Parishioners, County Councillor Henry Batchelor and District Councillor Geoff Harvey in part**

1. **Chairman’s Welcome –** The Chairman welcomed those present.
2. **To accept apologies and reasons for absence –** Apologies were accepted from Cllr Rayner. **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Durham, All in fav.**
3. **To make any declarations of interest –** Cllr Vidler declared a pecuniary interest in Mines Park as a consultee.
4. **To approve minutes –** Amendments were made to the flooding section for the Weston Colville Parish Council minutes on 3rd January. **P: Cllr Garrod, S: Cllr Vidler, All in fav.**
5. **Co-option of a new Parish Councillor –** An application had been received from Rachael Jennings. The appointment of a new Cllr by co-option was approved. **P: Cllr Garrod, S: Cllr Durham, All in fav.** It was noted that another Parishioner had enquired about becoming a Cllr, but they could not attend until the May meeting.
6. **Declaration of Acceptance of Office to be signed by co-opted Councillor.**
7. **Register of Member Interests -** General Notice of Registerable Interests were to be completed and signed by co-opted Councillor. The co-opted Councillor was invited to join the meeting for discussion but was unable to vote because the papers and declarations had yet to be acknowledged by SCDC.
8. **Public Participation Session –** The Parishioners present were all interested in discussing flooding, and so the flooding section was brought forwards. **P: Cllr Durham, S: Cllr Pagonis, All in fav.**
9. **District and County Council reports and items of interest** – Reports were received, appended. The County Councillor was asked for an update on fixing potholes in the County. The County Council are reviewing the contract for pothole repairs in the new financial year. In the meantime, residents should continue to report potholes and other road faults on the County Council Highways Dept website.

The County Councillor was thanked for pursuing the request for repairs to the pavement down Horseshoe Lane. This action has now been added to the County Council footway patching rolling programme.

**10.1 Planning Applications –**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Address** | **Proposal** | **Planning Reference** | **Decision** |
| Naika Mill Hill Weston Colville | Erection of a garage  **No Comments** | **24/00236/HFUL** | **Awaiting Decision** |
| Mines Park Chapel Road Weston Colville | Erection of a country house, two staff dwellings, barn, together with parkland, associated site works and excavation of lake and pond. | **24/00192/FUL** | **Awaiting Decision** |
| 44 Mill Hill Weston Colville | S73 to vary condition 2 (Approved plans) of planning permission 22/03023/FUL (Erection of a 1.5 storey dwelling with associated off-road parking.) to include a side dormer on the southeastern elevation. **No Comments** | **24/00271/S73** | **Awaiting Decision** |

**Mines Park –** Objections were made to the application on the following grounds – the ecology report was 2 years out of date; Highways had refused the application due to the proposed road splay not being wide enough, and the road would not support increased traffic; the site lay outside the Parish envelope; plus the archeological report was incomplete.

**10.2**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Address** | **Proposal** | **Planning Reference** | **Decision** |
| 11 Church End Weston Colville | Two storey side extension and single storey rear extension. | 23/04318/HFUL | **Approved** |

* 1. **Flooding** – Cllr Garrod reported that the grips that had been reported on Chapel Road and Common Road had been cut recently, and had been more effective. Quotes had been received from three contractors for clearing the ditch by the Reading Room Car Park. It was proposed to instruct Daines-Lowe for £960 including VAT. **P: Cllr Pagonis, S: Cllr Durham, All in fav.**

The ditch by the Cricket Field was discussed following concerns raised by a parishioner during the recent rains, it was determined that the Clerk should contact the Reading Room again, suggesting that an annual/biannual working party was formed to clear the ditch on foot, as only part of the ditch was accessible from the adjoining paddock, which would allow clearance by a machine.

Cllr Harvey gave his report from his meetings on 4th and 5th January – appended.

Flooding on Common Road was discussed, Cllr Vidler reported that he had spoken with Brian Heffernan, and that he would hopefully be coming out in the new financial year with a team from Highways, Cllr Vidler would chase him to arrange the visit. It was suggested that the stream was last dredged 6 years ago, it was suggested that the footpath bridges by number 63, and number 14 The Green would benefit from being raised, Cllr Durham would request this again.

Cllr Durham advised that Parishioners were not allowed to block the road with sandbags or flood signs. Highways should be contacted as only they could close the road.

* 1. **Footpaths –** Nothing to report.
  2. **MVAS –** Two Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs (MVAS) had been donated by Tim Cockerill in memory of Chloe Cockerill. The signs had arrived, and would be operated by a former Cllr.
  3. **Policies –** The Disciplinary policy, Grievance policy, and Equality policy were reviewed and adopted. **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Garrod, All in fav.**
  4. **Handyman –** It was noted that the Handyman has been instructed to remove the broken fence in the Reading Room Carpark, and restore the bus shelters.
  5. **Community Hub –** There had been no representation from the Reading Room.
  6. **King’s Portrait –** Free framed portraits were available of the King, it was determined to accept the offer, as the cut off for applications was in the middle of March, and for the Clerk to contact the Reading Room, and offer the portrait to them.
  7. **Grass Cutting –** Due to an error by the Clerk, the grass cutting contracts should have been renewed from March 2024, the Clerk thought 2024 was covered. Simon Ratford had agreed to continue at the same rate for this year, Trevor Potter requested an increase in fees of £180-200. It was proposed to accept the terms for this year **P: Cllr Durham, S: Cllr Garrod, All in fav.** New tenders to be agreed in the autumn.
  8. **Website –** There had been some confusion over links on the website. These were corrected by Cllr Pagonis.

1. **Risk Assessment/Health and Safety –** The defibrillator was rescue ready.
2. **Playground – Working Party –** It was updated that with the help of the Working Party, funding had been applied for. The results of the survey had been published in the Challenge, the Working Party were thanked for their part in collecting and collating the results. Parishioners that had responded to the survey were thanked. The Reading Room had offered the area behind the Cricket Pavilion that was unutilised to increase the area of the fenced area. The Clerk had sought quotes, the scrub had been cleared without financial approval. It was determined to wait until funding started being approved before works on increasing the fenced area were to be made. It was suggested that a presentation of the plans would be made at the Annual Parish Meeting on 1st May, the Clerk would ensure this was advertised in the Challenge and via the village whatsapp group.

**Playground Inspection –** It was determined that David Bracey would be instructed to inspect the playgrounds in April – for both £135 + VAT **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Pagonis, All in fav.**

1. **Finance –** 
   1. **To Approve cheques – P:Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Durham, All in fav.**
   2. **Online Banking Update and mandate change**
   3. **Audit –** It was determined to request that CAPALC act as the Internal Auditor for 2023-2024.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Credit Received – Parish Nurse Scheme**  **Horseheath Parish Council – Clerk Training**  **Donation for MVAS Units** | £500  £25  £4178.98 |
| **Wages s/o rising to £254.67** | £235.17 |
| **Balance at Lloyds Bank on 22nd January 2024** | £22,461.11 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cheque number** | **Detail and Date** |  | **Amount** | **VAT** |
| D/D | Street lighting |  | £25.39 |  |
| 861 | TJ Potter Grasscutting 2023 |  | £1,728 | £288 |
| 862 | Simon Ratford – Clearing scrub behind Cricket Pavilion |  | £175 |  |
| 863 | Elancity – 2 x MVAS Units |  | £5014.78 | £835.80 |
| **Total** |  |  | £6,943.17 |  |
|  | **Total of Outstanding Cheques** |  |  |  |
|  | **After above Cheques** |  | **£19,696.92** |  |

1. **Matters for next Agenda – BT Digital Voice, Playground Presentation, Co-option of a Cllr.**

**Date of the next Parish Council meeting is: Wednesday 1st May.**

**Flooding Report by Cllr Harvey**

As promised some notes from our tour on Thursday 4th Jan and my subsequent visit the next day, Friday 5th January.

**4th January – Geoff Harvey, Cllr Garrod, Cllr Rayner, and two Parishioners.**

**5th January – Geoff Harvey and a Parishioner**

We started the tour at the bottom of Horseshoe Lane, where the brook turns right and heads out alongside a farm track. A Parishioner was able to informs us  that though the brook tends to breach its banks at this point and overspill onto the adjacent footpath / farm track, the level at that point is roughly constant during heavy rainfall events, which I take to indicate that is sufficient downstream capacity at this point to respond to most heavy rainfall events, and that therefore the flooding of the roadway along Common Raod is likely to be the result of resistance to flow along the section between this point and where the river runs close to the low point along The Green; the point where the flooding generally occurs.

We then followed the rather overgrown footpath along between the brook and the back gardens of the Horseshoe Lane housing. This land and footpath are presumed to be the property of SCDC and if so SCDC has a riparian responsibility to maintain the water course. A Parishioner (who maintains a section further up, adjoining their property) was able to contribute that though at least some of the flow restriction was due to (especially seasonal) encroachment of vegetation, it was also important to regularly dredge out the build-up of silt. The section supposed to by under SCDC control did appear to be in need of regular maintenance, with the flow quite constricted at some points. We discussed whether the regular maintenance could be augmented by a village ‘friends of’ group being set-up, involving families and supervised children but it was generally agreed that some sort of mechanised clearance was needed first as a platform for any such effort.

We then crossed to the eastern bank along the section where the brook heads towards Common Road. In the first part of this section, the ownership of the land on each side of the brook is not certain and may or may not involve SCDC. In general the condition the first part of this section has some quite obvious impediments to flow and in one case a partial dam behind an accumulation of undergrowth.

We all agreed that water management was a complex field and that expert input was needed to create an overarching plan. Nevertheless, the Parishioner suggested that initial maintenance of the existing, especially downstream of the flood zone would be low risk and would almost certainly help and this was agreed by all.

We then saw the footpath next to 63 The Green, along which flooding of the road primarily drains to the river. Further along the road we saw the combination of drain surrounds inspection cover and rather inadequate looking (in diameter), and already partially blocked, culvert from roadside to river. I learnt from a Parishioner the following day that the planning permission for the development opposite had originally conditioned that the culvert was made larger but this had not happened. The drainage from road to river in this area is obstructed by the land there having been raised by the spoils from the same development, I understand.

On my Thursday visit, though I was too late to witness the high water of the morning flooding, the high water mark was very clear and it was also clear that access to housing would be very difficult except perhaps in a 4x4. Without sandbagging by the locals to direct flow across the road way toward the river, flooding can be much worse. Therefore, again, it is clear that part of the flooding issue is due to poor management and maintenance of the water flow across the road and into the river

**Actions**

I have asked Lee Hillam of SCDC to visit, accompanied by me and the PC representatives with the following objectives

* Clarify the ownership and riparian responsibilities
* Ask for basic maintenance to be put into the forward works plan.
* Discuss how SCDC with County can work towards more interventionist improvements, for example, increasing the culvert capacity.

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

**Civil Parking Enforcement**

The County Council have a list of problem areas in each of our villages, supplied by Henry with support from Parish Councils, but if anyone feels that there are specific areas where parking is really an issue, do let him know directly.

**Home Energy Support**

The District Council is in a partnership with 6 other local authorities in Cambridgeshire, called Action on Energy. This partnership is aimed to help people create more energy efficient homes, therefore making them cheaper to run. There are various grants available which many people aren’t aware they may be entitled to. Full information, and links, can be seen here - <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/home-energy-support-for-south-cambridgeshire-residents/>

**Household Support Fund**

Earlier this year the government announced that it would stop funding the Household Support Fund, which was administered through the County Council. As this fund was vital to many in Cambridgeshire, and would have put some in difficulty to not have it, the County Council has decided to keep funding it themselves. The County Council website will be updated soon to reflect this.

The same approach from the County Council applies to Free School Meals, which also recently had its funding pulled by central government.

**Bespoke Wedding Services**

The County Council has broadened its offering of wedding ceremony, should people choose to use the Registration Service. People can now register to get married in non-approved venues, such as private gardens or community centres. It’s aimed at making the day more bespoke to suit the couple getting married.

**Cambridge 2040/2050**

At time of writing, we are awaiting an official announcement from Michael Gove, the minister leading this project, on what the next steps are and, hopefully, a more detailed plan. The announcement will be the first week of March, so by the time many of you are reading this, the news will be available.

**Budgets**

Both the County and District Councils have set their budgets for the forthcoming municipal year. Both opted to raise Council Tax, which means, in real terms, this equates to:

County Council – increase of 4.99% - £76.98 per year on band D properties.

South Cambridgeshire District Council - £5 per year on Band D properties.

Also, this year will be the second that the Mayor of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority will have a precept too, meaning that you will still see this line on your tax bill. This money goes exclusively towards public transport.

**Anaerobic Digestion Plant Proposals**

The two planning applications for biodigesters in our area, Acorn in Haverhill and Streetly End Farm in West Wickham, are edging closer to a decision. If you’d still like to comment upon either, email the planning officers directly: 1. Acorn, Haverhill – [andrew.rutter@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.rutter@suffolk.gov.uk)

<http://suffolk.planning-register.co.uk/Planning/Display?applicationNumber=SCC%2F0045%2F23SE&fbclid=IwAR0aj4d4JMd9Yr3cP-Etp9rxdR4kKDwvzX0wMyHkfOomG45fCq0khXRbyrE>

2. Streetly Hall Farm, Streetly End, West Wickham - [helen.wass@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:helen.wass@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

<https://planning.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S0BB1JDYKNQ00>

**Weekly Food Collections**

DEFRA (the government department that has responsibility for the environment) announced that they will be changing the law around food waste collection and all local councils will eventually need to collect this separately to other green waste. Local councils have been asked how much it would cost for them to do this and have offered money to them to help with the transition.

After some lengthy negotiations an agreement has been reached and we will be getting separate food collections in South Cambridgeshire before the end of 2026.