

**LAVENDON PARISH COUNCIL**

 Clerk

The Pavilion

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 Lavendon

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Minutes of the Monthly meeting of **Lavendon Parish Council** held at The Pavilion on **Monday 13th November 2023**

**Present**: -

Cllr Alex Mountcastle - Chair

Cllr Steve Axtell

Cllr Gary Manning

Cllr Michelle Ramsden

Ward Councillor Keith McLean

Pam Ayres - Clerk

**Welcome by the Chair –** The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Meeting commenced at 19:30

1. **To accept apologies for Absence: -**

 Apologies were received from Cllr McKenzie, Cllr Rutherford, Cllr Kelcey, Cllr Ginepro, PSCO Ormston, Ward Cllr Peter Geary, Ward Cllr Debbie Whitworth

**2. Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda**

Cllr Ramsden declared an interest in item 9.1.

**3. To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2023**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2023 were discussed and clarification sought regarding item 9.5. The Clerk confirmed that both benches at the corner of Bedford Road/Harrold Road are to be replaced.

**Resolved**: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th October be approved. The minutes were duly signed by the Chair.

 **4. Public Questions**

 There were two members of the public present.

Mr. Simmons attended the meeting to ask if the tree work recently carried out at Soames Green was now finished as he was under the impression the hedges would also be cut back. The Clerk stated that all the work outlined in the scope of works provided to the contractor had now been completed and no further work was to be undertaken.

Mr. Simmons went on to ask if there was any further update on the planning application in respect of Land South West of Uphoe Manor Farm, Bedford Road. Ward Cllr McLean stated that there was no further update, adding that it normally takes around 13 weeks for an application to be determined.

Mr. Griffiths, Director of the Preschool, stated that he was at the meeting at the suggestion of the Clerk and Cllr Ginepro following his recent meeting with them to discuss the Preschool rental agreement. Mr. Griffiths thanked the Parish Council for its support over the last few years and went on to give a brief overview of the Preschool. The current directors took over the running of the Preschool in 2018. For the past few years, the Preschool has been open 30 hours a week, however from September due to very low numbers this was reduced to 21 hours a week. The reduction in opening hours has put a financial strain on the Preschool’s finances. Since September, the Preschool has reduced the amount of the monthly rental payments it makes to the Parish Council to reflect the reduction in hours of use. The Preschool is expected to return to full-time opening in January at which point it would be able to increase the amount of rent it pays. Agenda item 9.1 refers.

**5. To receive PCSO’s Report**

PCSO Arlene Ormston was unable to attend the meeting but provided the following crime report for the period 09/10/23 -13/11/23

 ***Crime Report Incidents from 09/10/2023 – 13/11/2023***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Theft | October 2023 |
| Drug Offences | October 2023 |
| Antisocial Behaviour | October 2023 |
| Business burglary on new build – theft of diesel, garage broken into & tools stolen, 4 new builds broken into and white goods stolen | October 2023 |
| Public Order | November 2023 |

***Other Incidents not crime related in Lavendon***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *None* |  |
|  |  |

***Other Incidents in surrounding villages***

|  |
| --- |
| Burglaries – Newport Pagnell, Olney and Lavendon |
| Theft out of vans / vehicles – Haversham, Stoke Goldington, Newport Pagnell |

 **6 Ward Councillors Report**

 Ward Cllr McLean’s report included the following items: -

**6.1 Blocked drains - Castle Road & Flood** **Alleviation Scheme**

Ward Cllrs have been engaging with residents regarding the blocked drains along Castle Road and funding for the Flood Alleviation Scheme and will continue to keep pushing MKCC for action on these. Ward Cllr McLean went on to state that Ben Everitt was disappointed that there had been no further progress and will also be pushing for action on these.

 **6.2 Ousedale School**

Ousedale is consulting on proposals to change its admissions policy and specifically the order of its oversubscription criteria. The proposal is to place ‘Children of staff’ as criterion 2 with ‘Children who live in the area served by the school’ moving to number 3. Ward Cllr McLean went on to comment that the proposed changes are unlikely to have any real impact as teachers’ numbers are likely to be relatively small. Ward Cllrs will continue to keep in contact with the administration team at Ousedale regarding the issue.

**7. Finance**

**7.1 To receive the Clerk’s financial report for the period 1st – 31st October 2023**

**Resolved:** That the schedule of receipts and payments made during October 2023 as circulated, be approved.

**7.2** **To appoint accounts scrutineer**

**Resolved:** ThatCllr Axtell be appointed as accounts scrutineer

**7.3** **Purchases for approval**

 **Cemetery Gates & Fire Risk Assessment**

The Clerk provided details of quotes obtained for the repair of the cemetery gates and a Fire Risk Assessment. The quotes were discussed, and it was agreed that the Clerk would obtain further quotes to see if the costs could be brought down.

**AP1**: Clerk to obtain further quotes.

**Christmas Tree**

Approval was given for the purchase of a Christmas Tree.

**7.4 To agree draft budget for 2024-25**

The draft budget for 2024-25 which was circulated prior to the meeting was based on actuals for the year to 31st October and the budget forecast for the remainder of the year. The meeting considered each budget head of expenditure and in income in turn. The structure of the budget remains largely the same as that adopted in previous years. In preparing the budget, consideration has been given to the economic situation and current inflation levels, as a measure of price rises. Whilst the principle of the budget was acceptable, it was felt that a more detailed analysis of actuals covering a full year would be useful as a comparison. It was agreed that Cllr Ramsden would compile a report based on actuals for a full 12month period for comparison. It was further agreed to defer making a final decision on the budget until the next meeting.

**AP2.** Cllr Ramsden to compile a report based on actuals for a full 12month period for comparison.

**8. To receive Clerk’s Report**

**8.1 Lavendon Flood Alleviation Scheme – Update**The Clerk reported that following a request for an update, she had received an email from Ben Everitt (MP) stating that he’d been advised by MKCC that the study, which was due to be completed in September, is still ongoing. The delay was due toadditional information that needed to be included in the study. Ben Everitt is disappointed by the lack of progress and will continue to put pressure on MKCC to ensure the project is delivered as soon as possible.

**8.2** **Speeding and traffic management**The Clerk shared the following update from MKCC via Ben Everitt in response to concerns raised by residents regarding speeding and traffic management.

“*Unfortunately, due to the alignment of the road and current vehicle speeds, Thames Valley Police would not support a reduction in speed limit without physical measures to reduce vehicle speeds – i.e. traffic calming features of some kind, such as humps, cushions or similar.  If residents are already concerned about traffic noise, then additional traffic calming measures will only make that worse, particularly on a strategic A road such as this with significant traffic flow with numerous HGVs. However, there may be some interventions that we could consider to encourage slower speeds, and we will discuss this with Thames Valley Police.*

*Regarding HGVs, a weight limit on the A428 would simply displace the problem to another location, where the residents would then request the same solution.  Unfortunately, A roads are designated as A roads for their connectivity importance and they are intended to carry traffic of this sort – although it is appreciated that the nature of the traffic has changed hugely as the village has evolved over the years with more and larger lorries – but sadly this is far from a unique situation across the country.*

*However, as part of the upcoming Local Transport Plan development process, a freight strategy will be developed to identify designated preferred HGV routings across the Council area (and cross boundary into neighbouring authorities) to try to tackle these sorts of issues with main roads in villages and to manage HGV impacts.  Sadly, however, a weight limit is not an option on a road of this nature, and these are only appropriate on classes of roads that are below A roads in the road hierarchy (i.e. B, C and unclassified roads)”.*

**8.3 Kissing Gates - Update**The Clerk reported that she had recently met with the Rights of Way Officer at MKCC to discuss the possibility of installing kissing gates at the field at the top of Castle Road and in the field behind. MKCC to follow up on the possibility of installing gates with the landowners concerned.

**8.4 Pavilion – Insurance claim**Following site investigations, it has been concluded that the current damage to the Pavilion is due to foundation movement, exacerbated by moisture abstraction from vegetation growing to the property’s foundations. Once the vegetation has been removed, arrangements will be made for the damage to the building to be repaired.

**8.5** **Old School - Insurance claim**
The leak in the toilets has been fixed, however there now seems to be a secondary issue with moisture which may or not be covered by insurance depending on the cause. Specialist advice is now being sought to identify the cause of the problem.

**8.6**.  **Drains along Castle Road**Following concerns raised by residents regarding the gully outside 18 Castle Road being blocked, Highways have carried out an inspection of the gully. The conclusion reached was that cleaning the gully was unlikely to resolve the problem and will require further investigation. This will be looked at by Highways with a CCTV camera to see if any obstruction is in the pipe or something that was washed in at the time of the heavy rain resulting in this one gully overflowing. The work will be scheduled for the new financial year to check upstream and downstream of the surface carrier.The concrete channel section of the brook between 1 Joiners way and the side of 16 Castle Road was also inspected and the old wooden structure removed, allowing the free movement of water.

**8.7 Sl06 funding – Basket Swing**MKCC have advised that it is currently undertaking a review of all public funds allocations, including Section 106 funds and as a result there will be a delay in receiving S106 funding for the Basket Swing.

**8.8 Allotments**

There are currently 4 vacant plots. Vacant plots to be advertised on the website and via Facebook.

**8.9** **Zip Wire**

MKCC have advised that they will not be able to carry out the repairs to the Zip Wire until the ground conditions allow for the installation of scaffold tower.

**9. Specific Agenda items**

**9.1 Preschool Rental agreement**

Having regard to representations made by Mr. Griffith’s earlier in the meeting, the matter was discussed at length, and it was agreed that the Parish Council would support the Preschool in the short term and in doing so it would accept a reduction in rental payments based on opening hours up to 31st January 2024. From February 2024 the rental charge would be a flat fee.

**AP3**: Clerk to inform the directors of the Preschool of the Parish Councils decision.

**9.2** **Community Heartbeat** **– Defibrillator Awareness Training**

 In the absence of Cllr Kelcey, it was agreed to carry this forward to the next meeting.

**9.3** **Proposed Transfer of land** **on the east side of Harrold Road to Lavendon Parish Council**

Details of the instructions sought by the Solicitor acting on behalf of the Parish Council in respect of the proposed transfer of land were discussed and responses to the points raised were determined and agreed to by all.

**AP4:** Clerk to notify the Solicitor of the Parish Councils instructions.

**10. Planning Applications**

10.1 **Application no: 23/02230/TPO** - The reduction by up to 2.5m all round (no crown lift) and the removal of dead wood of Ash Tree currently 18m in height protected by Milton Keynes Council Tree Preservation Order no. PS/540/15/57 At: 18 Olney Road, Lavendon. **No objections**

10.2 **Application no: 23/02499/HOU -** The erection of a single storey side extension At: 5 Hulse Close.
**No objections**

**11. Parish related matters**

None

**12.** **Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as **Monday 11th December 2023** at 19:30 to be held at the Pavilion.

The meeting closed at 21:55

Minutes agreed …………………………………………………………

Date ……………………………………………………………