Parish Council
Thursday 16-Nov-2023 @ 18:30
Dave Law Sports Pavilion, Park Crescent, Stewartby

MINUTES

1: Apologies
No apologies were received.
Cllr Burnage advised of lateness due to work commitments.

2: Declarations on Interest in items on the Agenda
None

3: To consider any applications for dispensation
None

4: Public Participation
Cllr David Whiteley from Wixams Parish Council attended the meeting.

5: Minutes of the previous meeting
The Council RESOLVED that Cllr Melville should sign the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on the 19th October 2023 as a true and accurate record.

6: Matters arising from previous minutes
The Clerk provided an update on the draft agreement that Woodfines Solicitors are drawing up with the Bowls Club. The Parish Council is not satisfied with the timescales therefore it was RESOLVED that the Chair would write to them.
The Clerk will speak other Clerks to see who they use as an internal auditor.
The Clerk provided an update on the ongoing complaint with E-On regarding the supply of electricity at the Sports Pavilion. It was RESOLVED that the Council would write to E-On to advise if there was not an outcome by the end of the day on the 24th November 2023 then legal remedy would be sought.
Cllr Law confirmed that she had instructed Biffa to do a second lift at the Sports Pavilion.
Cllr Melville advised that the cost of Cherry Trees for the Memorial Garden had increased. Warners have been advised to supply one less tree to compensate for this.
Cllr Melville asked Cllr Serino to arrange a date for the Speedwatch training and to advise the volunteers.

7: Chairman’s Report
Cllr Melville advised that the Council had received a notification from Bedford Brough Council that it would receive additional funding of £33,444. This is to be moved into reserves on receipt and has conditions of spend attached to it and can only be spent on community infrastructure.
The Chair advised that he was waiting for Andrew Prigmore from Bedford Borough Council to provide additional options for Park Crescent. The situation with Montgomery is also still ongoing and a number of residents are upset.
Cllr Melville has spoken to Cllr Coombes and he will be attending a meeting with Cllr Weir, Portfolio Holder for Transport, to discuss the issues with the Grant Palmer bus service.
He also advised that there were no plans for the Broadmead School site beyond 2027 however the Council’s view that this should be a medical or pre-school facility has been fed back to Chris Morris who heads up Education at Bedford Borough Council.
Cllr Melville advised that he would be attending the Awards Ceremony on the 29th November 2023 with our MP for the Council of the Year Awards.

8: Report from Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Spice tendered her apologies for the meeting however she provided an update via e-mail. She advised that she had arranged for the land around the old School Caretaker’s Bungalow to be tidied up. This should happen by the end of next week.
Cllr Spice also asked for dates for the Speedwatch training.

9: Clerk's Financial Report

9.1 Authorise payments for BACS Transfer
9.2 Balances of Accounts
Members were advised that as at the 31st October 2023, the balances of the Parish Council and Sports Fields accounts were as follows:
£47,577.90
£30,804.08
£33,405.81
£444,945.72
9.3 Internal Auditor's Report
The Clerk shared the outcome of the Internal Auditor's Bank Reconciliations Reviews of Quarters 1 and 2. It was noted that all actions from the last review had been undertake and only one action point had been identified.
9.4 Budget Monitoring
9.5 Scribe Update
The Clerk provided the Councillor's will an update on progress to date on Scribe Accounts. All transactions have from April to October have been added to the system. Over the next few weeks, the Clerk will be attending a number of training courses to progress the use of the system.
It is hoped that the Council will be able to cease using the manual systems in December 2023.
9.6 Confidential Item – Pay Award 2023-24 & Pay Review
Please see separate Minutes.
9.7 Agree Date for Budget Setting / Precept Meeting in January 2024

10: Quotations for authorisation

10.1 Fire & Security for Sports Pavilion and Village Hall
10.2 Replacement Locks
10.3 Caretaker Van plus Insurance
10.4 Section 137 request from Wootton Charities Trust
10.5 Other

11: Planning Applications & Decisions

The Council considered one application from Licencing at Bedford Borough Council as follows:
Applicant: Nirmal Badhan TA Dave's Snax
Location: old A421 lay-by between Wootton Roundabout & Broadmead Road (Stewartby)
Times: Monday to Friday 06:30 – 14:00, Saturday 07:00 – 12:00
Articles to be sold/trade: hot and cold food and drink, breakfast baps, burgers, sandwiches, snacks & drinks
Time span: 12 months
The Council RESOLVED that it had no objections.

12: Amenities

12.1 Highways/Lighting
Cllr Law to review.
12.2 Recreation Area
12.3 Newsletter
The next newsletter will go out in January 2024. Copy deadline to be confirmed.
12.4 Sports Field/Pavilion
The Caretaker will trim the grass away from the paths.
It was noted that tree guards will be required when the saplings are planted.
12.5 Village Hall
The Village Hall will be recharged for the Caretaker's hours given the recent changes in managing bookings.
Concerns were raised that the Village Hall door were left open on Wednesday evening. Cables have also been tabled to the floors and walls. Photos will be taken and the damage assessed. Compensation maybe sought from the hirers.
Cllr Fraser highlighted that the shed was a major fire safety risk. It was RESOLVED that Cllr Melville would discuss this with the Village Hall Clerk.
12.6 Policing

Cllr Melville advised that the crime statistics remained low for the village. It remains a concern that there is no community sargeant.
The Council were also advised that the elections for the Police & Crime Commissioner are in May 2024.
12.7 Covanta
The Councillors had an excellent visit to Covanta. It was RESOLVED that Cllr Nelsey would pass on the Council's thanks to them.
It was suggested that visits should be arranged for members of the community. This is something that the Parish Council would need to arrange

13: Dave Law Pavilion Committee – including Bowls Club Agreement

The quote from Warners to reposition the goalposts was approved earlier on in the meeting.
The DLP raised concerns about two bookings that there were not on the system however the Clerk had already previously advised the reasons for this earlier in the meeting.

14: Community Events 2023

The meeting was advised that setting up for the Christmas Fair will begin on Friday 24th November 2023 from 1.00 – 6.30 pm. It will then restart on Saturday 25th November at 8.30 am with the event from 1.00 – 6.00 pm.
The Clerk advised that she has received an offer for the main sponsor for the event however the company would like to do a contra arrangement and reduce the cost of the outdoor cinema next year.

15: Village Hall Expenditure Review

Please see attached spreadsheet for details.

16: Code of Conduct Review

17: Memorial Garden Fees Review

18: Items of an urgent nature or for inclusion on the next agenda

None

19: Close of Meeting and items for the next Agenda.

Meeting closed at 9.09 pm. Please see above for items for the next Agenda.

20: Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Thursday 21st December 2023 @ 6.30 pm. This meeting will consider financial matters only.