MINUTES

1: Apologies
Apologies were received from Cllr Burnage and Williams. Apologies were also received from Bedford Borough Cllr Spice.
Cllr Melville welcomed Cllr Fraser back following her period of maternity leave.

2: Declarations on Interest in items on the Agenda
None

3: To consider any applications for dispensation
None

4: Public Participation
Dan Lewis attended the meeting on behalf of the Stewartby Youth Football Team. The team has now moved up to under 11's and require a larger sized football pitch (that can be marked out on one of the adult pitches) and goalposts. The team train on a Tuesday and play on Saturdays.
The plan is to grow the number of teams however there are issues recruiting additional coaches. They currently have two coaches but two coaches per team are needed. There was sufficient interest to start new teams this season however this has not been possible without coaches.

It was suggested that it may be worth approaching Sixth Form or FE Colleges to see if there is any interest from students becoming a the second coach for a team.

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 18th July 2024 as a true and accurate record.

6: Matters arising from previous minutes
Solar Panels – the Clerk has completed the online form to begin the registration process with E-On Next. Their initial assessment can take up to 8 weeks however the Clerk has been unable to provide some of the details required and, the company that installed them, no longer exists.

Website – no progress has been made on this as the Clerk has been struggling to contact Rob regarding the photos for the homepage.

The meeting was advised that the tree outside Stewartby Club had been dealt with. The tree in the Village Hall car park needs pollardising and the Willow trees on The Green need some attention.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should obtain a quote for the next meeting.
The Clerk was asked to provide an update on the retrieval of the Council's belongings from her former home so that the outstanding VAT Returns can be completed. They Council advised that this was being dealt with by the Clerk's solicitor and the Courts.

The Council may wish to seek legal action of their own if they are unable to reclaim the VAT as they are out of time.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk would do a VAT reclaim for 2023-24 and the first quarter of 2024-25.

7: Chairman's Report
The Chair advised that he and Cllr Banks had attended a meeting at Bedford

Borough Council about Universal Studios. It is still looking positive and it is hoped that, by October, the Government will have rubber-stamped the investment needed and that formal plans will be submitted. The Parish Council will be a consultee.

From January 2025, if the application is approved, then they will start the drainage works for the grounds. The build will start in 2027 – 28 with the Park opening in 2030. Universal will look at local grant applications from 2026-27. Any protective species will also be moved to another site.

In terms of transportation, they are no longer waiting for decisions around EWR and will look at buses from Milton Keynes Station. The land earmarked for EWR will be held until 2035.

Cllr Melville has begun to meet potential contractors to tender for the grounds maintenance works in the Parish (including the football pitches). The Caretaker is also obtaining quotes for just the football pitch works as the Council may consider using two different contractors.

Cllr Melville advised that he had been approached by Wixams Parish Council to join as a co-opted Parish Council. He attended a meeting earlier this week where he was presented to be co-opted however this was not agreed by the Council.

He advised that he concerned about the Government's decision to scrap the Winter fuel allowance. The Council RESOLVED that it would look into plans to open the Sports Pavilion or the Village Hall should the temperature drop below a certain level. The Council would provide soup and hot drinks. Some funding maybe available from Bedford Borough Council and it would need volunteers from the village to be able to run.

The initial idea would be to open 10 am – 3 pm if temperature is below 3 degrees. Cllr Melville will put a proposal together.

During the Summer there has been a rise in the youths engaging in anti-social behaviour. This has also been seen in Wixams. This is not just a Policing issue and requires parents and the community to engage in finding a solution.

Cllr Melville advised that we need to develop something for the youths, this could include:
• A BMX Club
• Youth Soccer
• Youth Club – awaiting further information from Groundworks.

The Borough Council is also open to supporting this financially.
It was agreed that the Parosh Council Christmas Meal would be held on Friday 13th December at Corner 5. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should add this item to the next Agenda.

8: Report from Bedford Borough Council

In Cllr Spice's absence, Cllr Melville advised that there would be 4 hours free parking at Lurke Street car park in the lead up to Christmas.

A Taskforce has been created to deal with anti-social behaviour at the Bus Station.

The 23rd November will be the Christmas Light Switch-On in Bedford.

The Ground Floor in the old Debenhams building is ready to be let.

Cllr Banks asked if the signage at the B530 Interchange could be looked a

9: Clerk's Financial Report

9.1 Authorise payments for BACS Transfer
The Council RESOLVED to authorise the BACS Reports for the Parish Council and the Sports Pavilion.

It was RESOLVED that Richard Thornton would not be used in future due to concerns.

The Clerk advised that the second precept payment had been received.

9.2 Balances of Accounts
Members were advised that as at the 31st August 2024, the balances of the Parish Council and Sports Fields accounts were as follows:

£4,941.28
£37,140.51
£10,866.47
£419,342.66

9.3 Budget Monitoring
The Clerk advised that a Budget Monitoring Report had been circulated for all Councillors to review. A further report will be provided at the next meeting.

9.4 Annual Return 2023-24 External Audit Report
The Clerk advised that they had spoken to the External Auditor in the Summer to address some queries and concerns however the final report and audited AGAR has not yet been received.

10: Quotations for authorisation

10.1 Goalposts
The Council REOLVED to accept the quote from Net Sports World for £927.

10.2 Laptop & Printer for the Caretaker
It was RESOLVED that a budget of £500 be approved for a laptop (or tablet) and a printer for the Caretaker.

10.3 Baby Changing Unit for the Sports Pavilion
It was RESOLVED to accept the quote from ICP Hygiene for a horizontal changing facility. Further advice needs to be sought about where it can be positioned due to the radiator.

10.4 Christmas Tree
It was RESOLVED to accept the quote from Badger Hill Christmas Tree Farm for a 25ft tree at a cost of £520.

10.5 Christmas Lights
It was Resolved to accept the quote from Andy Muskett.

10.6 Christmas Tree Lights & Pit
It was RESOLVED to accept the quotes from Andy Muskett and the additional materials required to make a new pit for the Christmas Tree.

10.7 Replacement Roundabout for the Sports Field Play Area
The roundabout detailed in quote EST0379 from JMR Groundworks was the preferred option.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should obtain a revised quote as this one includes the removal and disposal of the old roundabout which has already been done. The quote should be sent to Cllr Haley to look at possible grant funding.

10.8 Plumbing Works at the Village Hall

The Council RESOLVED to accept the quote received from Aspects for £360.

10.9 CCTV Equipment
The Chair asked for a late quote from ACE Fire & Security to be considered as the CCTV equipment needs to be removed along Stewartby Way as the Borough Council is replacing the streetlights next week.

The quote is for £1,666. The Council asked for clarification that this included putting the equipment back up.

It was RESOLVED to accept this quote in principle however the Chair will check that it includes putting the equipment back up.

11: Planning Applications & Decisions

11.1 Ref: 24/01563/LBC Listed Building Consent Application proposal for demolition of existing site buildings (excluding retained outer kiln walls) within the curtilage of the listed building @ Former Stewartby Brickworks Broadmead Road Stewartby Bedfordshire

The Council RESOLVED that it had no objections to this planning application.

11.1 Ref: 24/01608/S106A Modify/Discharge S106 Agreement Application Proposed request to Modify the S106 agreement relating to 11/01380/M73 affecting the following: (i) Sport, Recreation and Play Facilities (ii) Community Facilities (Scheme 2-including removal of the Gateway Park) @ Wixams Settlement Land Formerly at Elstow Storage Depot Bedford Road Wixams Bedfordshire

The Council RESOLVED to object to this application as the facility is already in place and is a well-used green space by the local community.

11.3 Ref: 24/01684/FUL Full Planning Application for propsed Installation of heat pump system @ 194 Wavell Close Stewartby Bedford Bedfordshire MK43 9LW
The Council RESOLVED that it had no objections to this planning application.

11.2 Planning Applications & Planning Decisions received after the despatch of the Agenda

Ref: 24/01368/FUL Full Planning Application proposed single storey side and rear extension with pitched roof @152 Montgomery Close Stewartby Bedford Bedfordshire MK43 9LP

The Council RESOLVED to resubmit the previous objections in relation to the second door at the front of the property. The flue has been removed.

12: Amenities:

12.1 Highways/Lighting
Cllr Law advised that they had looked yesterday evening and that there were two lights out on the Wixams roundabout and no potholes of concern.

Cllr Melville advised that the streetlights on Stewartby Way were being upgraded next week and that the Council has previously agreed a contribution to accommodate the hanging baskets in future years.

12.2 Recreation Area
Cllr Melville advised that ROSPA would be testing the timber next week and the Council would then have a clearer idea of how to move forward.

Two quotes have been received for £90k to replace the existing equipment like for like which is clearly not achievable. He advised that a grant could still be obtained from the Borough Council for up to £20k. There is also a potential grant of £5k from Grantscape.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Law/Burnage should share the quote electronically and that Cllr Haley would continue to assist in identifying grant funding.

12.3 Newsletter
It was RESOLVED that the new style newsletter should be produced every 8 weeks. Cllrs Banks and Fraser will be responsible for this.

12.4 Sports Field/Pavilion
None

12.5 Village Hall
Cllr Melville advised that bookings for the Village Hall had increased therefore they would not need financial support.

There has been no progress on solar panels as the Council would need to submit a pre-planning application.

Cllr Melville also discussed the possibility of the Police using the Committee Room at the VH. This was agreed in principle and he will explore further with the Police.

12.6 Policing
Cllr Melville outlined the issues with anti-social behaviour in the community and the key areas. He is working with the Police on this matter.

It was RESOLVED that the Council needed encourage residents to report concerns to the Police so that action can be taken. The Community Policing Team will be designing a poster/leaflet.

12.7 Encyclis
Cllr Law advised that there have been complaints about lorries staying overnight at the Brickworks. Environmental Health need to be involved because of concerns about toileting.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Law would look into this matter and report back to the Council.

13: Community Events 2024
It was RESOLVED that the Clerk would chase up the Christmas Fair poster design tomorrow.

14: Grants
Please see comments under Recreation Area.

15: Council Surgery / Community Engagement
Cllr Melville advised that the Council Surgery had been well attended. Concerns were raised about Hansons Reach, whether there should be school signs on Broadmead Road, concerns about the noise from the kennels at Rose Cottage, speeding and Montgomery.

16: Bedford Borough draft Statement of Community Involvement 2024 – your comments are invited
It was RESOLVED that the Council had no comments on this matter.

17: Items of an urgent nature or for inclusion on the next agenda
None

18: Close of Meeting and items for the next Agenda.
Meeting closed at 9.02 pm.

19: Date and Time of Next Meeting
It was RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 16th October 2024 @ 6.30 pm.