Parish Council

Thursday 20-Feb-2025 @ 18:30
Dave Law Sports Pavilion, Park Crescent, Stewartby

MINUTES

1: Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Melville, Law, Burnage and Bedford Borough Councillor Graeme Coombes.

2: Declarations on Interest in items on the Agenda

None

3: To consider any applications for dispensation

None

4: Public Participation

None

5: Presentation from Grant Palmer

The representative from Grant Palmer unfortunately was unable to attend and has asked to attend a future meeting.

6: Minutes of the previous meeting

7: Matters arising from previous minutes

VAT reclaims for 2021 and 2022 remain outstanding and the Clerk is still unable to retrieve the files due to being denied access. This matter has been referred back to Court.
The Clerk and Cllr Spice confirmed that the Parish Council had received the Ward Funding and were awaiting delivery of the bins from Glasdon and the wheelie bins from Bedford Borough Council.
Cllrs Banks and Law carried out a survey of the highways and street lighting. All faults/issues have now been reported. Cllr Spice asked for the reference number so that she could chase.
Cllr Banks advised that streetlight (PC5) was also not working. The Clerk will raise this with the contractor.
Cllr Fraser to update Cllr Melville on the damaged paths and also circulate relevant policies.

8: Chairman’s Report

Due to personal issues, the Nursery at the Village Hall will not be going ahead at the current time.
There is a request for £2,000 which is supported to maintain the Village Hall bank balance due to high energy costs. New energy contacts come into play in March, 40% lower than current contract.
Cllr Melville attended a Bedford Borough Council planning briefing around the Local Plan 2040. Councillor’s will recall that this plan was not approved by the inspectorate and the Council asked for an extension to revise on recommendations. If the extension is approved, they will have 3 months to do some work on the plan, however now that Universal Studios is on the agenda the section of development at Kempston Hardwick is null and void. If the extension is not approved then a complete new plan will need to be produced (a 2045 or 2050 plan.
The Fire Authority visit of the Sports Pavilion went very well no issues identified. Thank you to the Caretaker who did an excellent job.

A reminder that Avison Young will present at the next Parish Council meeting about the Brickworks Site and on Saturday 12th April from noon there will be a public consultation in the Village Hall.

9: Report from Bedford Borough Council

Cllr Spice advised that the2025-26 revenue and capital budgets for Bedford

Borough Council had been approved.
There is still no update on Universal Studios.
Cllr Spice advised that the issue with the signage at the Interchange Retail Park had been resolved. Cllr Banks and Haley advised that it was still confusing.
Cllr Spice apologised for not being in a position to let the Parish Council know that the bungalow was going up for sale so quickly.
The Greyfriars roundabout area is due to be redeveloped later this year and Cllr Spice suggested that the Parish Council might like the statute that relates to the Brickwork's family. The Council agreed in principle that it would like to have it. Cllr Spice will raise this with the Borough Council.
Cllr Spice asked for a date for a joint surgery to be arranged. She suggested after the 12th April 2025.

10: Clerk's Financial Report

10.2 Balances of Accounts
Members were advised that as at the 31st January 2025, the balances of the Parish Council and Sports Fields accounts were as follows:
£7,089.90
£78,928.93
Clerk/Cllr Law to
action
Clerk to continue to
monitor
ASAP
£33,418.83
£386,465.75
10.3 Internal Audit Bank Reconciliation Review Quarters 1, 2 & 3
The Clerk advised that there had been severe delays in getting the quarterly internal audit bank reconciliation reviews carried out as the Council's own internal audit mechanism had failed. This meant that three quarters were reviewed at the same time.
Whilst the bank accounts reconciled on Scribe, the internal auditor noted that there was a minor discrepancy between the bank reconciliation and the cashbook.
The Clerk advised that now a significant piece of work would need to be undertaken to identify this rather than just looking at one quarter. The Clerk has not completed the January 2025 reconciliation until this error can be identified and resolved.
The Clerk urged the Council to adhere to the procedures which had been put in place to ensure effective financial control and integrity.

11: Quotations for authorisation

11.1 Mobile Phones

11.2 Remedial works at the Village Hall following inspection by ACE Fire & Security

11.3 Replacement D-Shackles for Play Equipment (Sports Pavilion)

11.4 Replacement Glazing Unit for the Sports Pavilion

11.5 Replacement Fire Extinguishers
The Council considered the quote from ACE Fire & Security. It was RESOLVED that the Council would seek a further quote from them to replace with P60s.

12: 12.1 Planning Applications & Decisions

12.1 Ref: 24/02197/MOF Major Outline and Full Application for proposed Plot 2 (Class E(g)iii light industrial/B2 general industrial/B8 storage and distribution), access, parking, drainage, landscaping and associated works; and outline planning application with all matters reserved for Plot 3 (Class E(g)i office/E(g)ii research and development/E(g)iii light industrial and ancillary B8 storage and distribution), access, parking, drainage, landscaping and associated works @

Plots 2 And 3 Bedford Commercial Park Swallow Way Wootton MK43 9ST
12.2 Planning Applications & Planning Decisions received after the despatch of the Agenda
Ref: 25/00295/FUL Full Planning Application for proposed erection of 1no. bat kiln @ Former Stewartby Brickworks Broadmead Road Stewartby Bedfordshire
12.3 Update on Universal Studios
Cllr Spice earlier in the meeting that there was no update on Universal Studios.

13: Amenities:

13.1 Highways/Lighting
Cllr Banks advised that the Stewartby signs and the bus stop at the top of the village needed cleaning.
13.2 Recreation Area
Cllr Banks raised concerns about the look of the trimmings from the Willow Trees on The Green. The Council RESOLVED that this needed to be spread under the bushes and some taken to the Memorial Gardens.
13.3 Newsletter
13.5 Village Hall
None
13.6 Policing
None
13.7 Encyclis
None

14: Community Events 2025

Cllr Law has arranged for some to look at the fountain. A hole needs to be dug around the fountain to see how deep it goes into the ground.
The events for 2025 will be the East Feast in June, the Remembrance Service and the Christmas Fair.
The Clerk advised that the Christmas Fair organisation has almost been completed.

15: Grants

A grant application for £75,000 has been submitted to Veolia for the play area. An application has also been made to Bedford Borough Council for the remaining funds. If successful, then an April 2025 installation has been pencilled in.
An updated is needed on the grant applications for the floor and memorial.
Cllr Haley is waiting for some information from the Clerk and the policies to be approved by the Council before the grant applications for the roundabout can be progressed.

16: Council Surgery / Community Engagement

A date for the next Council Surgery will be set in the Spring 2025. Cllr Spice requested a date after the 12th April 2025.

17: Safeguarding

Cllr Fraser to action.

18: Community Governance

19: Name of the Parish Council

The Clerk explained that the bank accounts and AGAR used Stewartby Parish Council and other documents refer to Stewartby & Kempston Hardwick Parish Council.
Cllr Law had raised this as a concern, although this has been the case for many years, as it was flagged up during a recent grant application.

20: Review of Health & Safety and Fire Risk Assessments for Sports Pavilion and the Village Hall (including Legionella)

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

None

22: Close of Meeting and items for the next Agenda

Items for the next Agenda:
? Caretaker's Overtime/Recharge to the Village Hall
? Replacement Goalpost
? Policies (including conditions of issue of laptops, mobile phones etc to staff)
? Request from Cllr Law to agree a grant contribution of £1,800
Meeting closed at 8.34 pm.

23: Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday 20th March 2025 @ 6.30 pm.