Hockliffe Parish Council
"Serving the local community"

Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Monday 9th October 2023

Councillors Present: Cllrs R Scott (Chair), R Wuczke, R Alexander & P Edwards

Clerk: C Underhay

Guest: Cllr M Versallion (CBC Ward Councillor); Representatives from Bedfordshire Police

69: To receive apologies for absence:

All Councillors were present at the meeting.

70: Declarations of Interest:

No Declarations of Interest were received.

71: Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2023:

It was proposed by Cllr Scott & seconded by Cllr Edwards that the Minutes of the Meeting's held on 11th September 2023 were approved as a correct record. This was then resolved by all Councillors present.

72: CBC Cllr Mark Versallion Report:

Cllr Versallion reported as follows:
Speed limit outside the school – Cllr Versallion is still "pushing" CBC to resolve this.
Detrunking the A5 – Cllr Versallion is still chasing this.
Change to School system – if implemented, Hockliffe Lower School would require 2 more classrooms.
Development site next to the school – Cllr Versallion advised that no planning application has been made to CBC.

Local bus service – Cllr Versallion said that he would ask CBC to review formally.

73: Public Forum (including representation by Central Bedfordshire Police):

The police attended the meeting without prior notification. The police representative reported that there were no major issues from Hockliffe. Cllr Alexander noted that drug sales were happening in the streets at night time – as well as instances of petty theft. The police representative asked that all instances should be reported on line at www.Beds.police.uk. The Clerk said he would check to ensure this email address is noted on our website. The Chair asked if it would be possible for a visible police presence to be available – the police representative said that they patrol as much as possible.

A resident asked if we had been given any information about the effectiveness of the average speed cameras – the Chair advised that we had not been given any information yet.

A resident asked whether an advert on the white gate entering the village from Leighton Buzzard could be removed – Cllr Alexander said he would do this.

74: Matters arising from the Minutes not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda:

The Chair noted the following updates:

Goldleaf will clear the path in the Church before winter sets in – cost will be less than £250. The Muga clean is still pending.

75: Meeting dates for November & December 2023:

The Chair noted that due to Councillor's not be being available, the November meeting would need to be cancelled (a quorum could not be met). The Chair proposed that the Scheme of Delegation policy be implemented until the December meeting to allow the Parish Council

to still function – this was seconded by Cllr Alexander, and then resolved by all Councillors.

76: Planning – Applications received:

The Chair advised no planning applications had been received.

77: Request for a grant from Hockliffe Lower School:

An application has been received from Hockliffe Lower School for a grant towards a school Christmas tree. A £100 grant was proposed by Cllr Edwards, seconded by the Chair, and then resolved by all Councillors.

78: A5 Petition Update:

Cllr Edwards updated the Meeting with progress:
Almost 80% of voting age residents had so far signed. A number of homes would be revisited by Cllr Scott in the coming week and it is anticipated the completed petition will then be passed to Andrew Selous MP in early November so that he can arrange to present it in Parliament. Cllr Edwards had already updated and thanked those volunteers who helped collect signatures.

79: Finance:

The Chair asked the Clerk to speak.

1. To authorise accounts for payment:

It was resolved that the following amounts could be paid:

Cheque	Amount	to	For
2069	£96	CBC	School hire (June, July & August meetings)
2070			Not used (spoiled)
2071	£266.90	C Underhay	Sep Salary
2072	£177.60	HMRC	Clerk tax
2073			Not used (spoiled)

2074	£26340	KAE	Tarmac (VAT to be reclaimed)
2075	£252	Mazars	External audit
2076	£636.06	Goldleaf	September maintenance
2077	£100	Hockliffe Lower School – Grant towards Christmas Tree	

Payment of the above was proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Alexander. This was then resolved by all Councillors.

A £26 standing order was paid to C Underhay for working at home allowance on 1st August 2023.

A credit of £41.88 was received on 31st August 2023 in respect of interest.

2. Account Balances & Budget. To review summary of spend against budget:

September bank statements have not arrived yet, so it is not possible to provide a reconciliation as at the end of September. As at 31st August 2023, current account balance was £24,109.06 and savings account £35219.45. We have spent 32% of expected budget, with 42% of the year gone.

3. Completion of Accounts for 2022/23:

The external auditor has agreed the AGAR, and the regulatory notice has been posted. This concludes the 2022/23 accounts.

4. Review of internal audit control practices (internal audit requirement):

The internal auditor proposed a review of internal audit control practices. This review was presented by the Clerk, based on this year's accounts. It was proposed that this review document be accepted by Cllr Edwards, and seconded by the Chair. It was then resolved by all Councillors.

5. **Review of contracts (website and grounds maintenance):**
   Quotes were discussed for both website and ground maintenance. The existing contractor's costings (in the budget) were considered against the following:
   Website – a quotation of £499 – a "do it yourself" website with no hosting as used by local Parish Councils - this was discounted as we really want a hosted website for our own security – and a quotation from the Company that looks after Eaton Bray website – the website hosting cost was reasonable – but they do not look after email accounts. A separate quotation was received for this service and this was deemed excessive. It was proposed by Cllr Edwards that we retain the services of our current web host – this was seconded by the Chair and resolved by all Councillors present.
   Ground Maintenance – a quotation from MW Agri Ltd was reviewed – this is for £195 plus VAT to cut and strim the grass on our land. This is cheaper than Goldleaf (£636.06pm inc VAT) – and he comes with recommendations from local Parishes. It was proposed by Cllr Edwards that we appoint him to do one cut, to see what his work is like – and then review after that. This was seconded by the Chair, and resolved by all Councillors. The Clerk was asked to arrange this.

80: Cemetery Matters:

1. **Memorial Test update:**
   The Clerk advised that the annual test had been completed with no issues.

2. **Annual review of Memorial (Headstone) Testing Policy:**
   This policy was reviewed. It was proposed by Cllr Alexander that it was renewed for 12 months in its current form. This was seconded by Cllr Wuczke and then resolved by all Councillors.

3. **Request to reserve a plot:**
   The Clerk advised that he has received a request to reserve a plot in an area that had not been "mapped out" yet (the third row of the ashes area). It was also noted that the plot chart we use is old and out of date. The Chair proposed that we appoint a Company to properly re map our cemetery, and make an online version that is compatible with our website. This was seconded by Cllr Edwards and resolved by all Councillors. The Clerk will arrange for quotes and present at the next meeting for discussion. The Clerk will also correspond with the individual who wanted to purchase a plot to advice of the delay.

81: Village Notice Boards:

The usage of the Notice Boards was discussed – it was noted by the Chair that the Parish Council has a legal responsibility to maintain one Notice Board for Parish business – however, we do own the other Notice Boards in Hockliffe. It was agreed that moving forward Cllr Alexander would take responsibility to maintain the content of all our Notice Boards.

82: Community Newsletter:

The need for some sort of community newsletter to replace the Hockliffe Herald was discussed. If one is thought necessary, it was felt that it should be a much simpler flyer type rather than a printed booklet. The question of how it could be published would first need to be decided e.g. by internet, notice boards, home delivery or a combination of those. Cllr Edwards said he might have the time to help write one but would not get involved in any home delivery arrangements, the internet and noticeboards may have to suffice. As time was short, and there were other more

pressing items on the agenda, this issue was put over to the January meeting for further discussion.

83: Village Hall:

Cllr Wuczk reported that the secretary of the Village Hall Committee had resigned and a new one needed to be found. With input from some residents, a discussion then ensued about the future of the Village Hall Committee. Cllr Edwards pointed out that, whilst the parish council should help and support where it can, the Village Hall Committee is a stand-alone charity and its structure and future activities are not a matter for a Parish Council meeting to resolve.

84: Neighbourhood Plan:

Cllr Alexander advised the meeting of changes to S106 (in that moving forward, we will receive a levy instead, if we have a Neighbourhood Plan). Cllr Alexander proposed that he could "tweak" the Neighbourhood Plan outline that we have – however, the Chair was concerned that we would not have resource to carry this forward and proposed we do not go forward. This was seconded by Cllr Wuczke and resolved by all Councillors

85: Christmas:

The Chair advised that the Christmas Tree had been ordered, and will be delivered on 24th November 2023. A working party will erect the tree on 26th November 2023. Cllr Alexander will ensure the lights are in working order. Mrs Underhay will arrange Christmas presents, and arrange a Santa for 3rd December 2023 (light switch on). It was also proposed by Cllr Alexander, and seconded by the Chair that we pay the Harvester £200 to host the event (see last month's minutes) – as long as a valid receipt can be obtained. This was then resolved by all Councillors.

86: Handyman:

The Handyman reported that he will be installing the new picnic table at the recreation park and will move the older one to an alternative spot. There was then a discussion about the future of the Handyman role and whether it provided a practical solution for the village, especially for larger jobs that are being delayed due to the need to either buy or hire equipment. It was noted the Handyman had taken on the role prior to also becoming a Councillor and it will therefore be necessary to review the arrangement, and the need for insurance funding, at the end of the current contract period. In the meantime, it was agreed that the Handyman will continue carrying out smaller maintenance jobs but that any larger jobs requiring specialist equipment will be put out to a maintenance company.

87: The Park:

1. **Update on tarmac work:**
   The Chair noted that this was been completed and the bill paid. The Clerk advised that the S106 funds were due back from CBC (notification of payment has been received). Formal notification of the net amount paid by us will be included in next month's meeting (in finance section).

2. **Unregistered land by the park:**
   Cllr Edwards provided an update – the matter has been moved to a local operations manager at CBC, who is looking for the deeds to the land. Further update to be provided at the next meeting.

3. **Rospa Report:**
   The Chair advised this had been received – no risk issues noted.

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88: Correspondence Received (for information only):

The Chair advised that there was no correspondence to review

89: Items for inclusion in the next agenda:

None - other than those noted above

The meeting closed at 10pm
Colin Underhay – Clerk – 21st November 2023

Signed as a true copy……. (R Scott - Chair) 11th December 2023

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