

Meeting:	Clapham Parish Council 21 st March 2023 at 7.30pm
Council Members:	Cllr. Phillipa Simms, Chair (PS) Cllr. Sarah Walker, Vice Chair (SW) Cllr. Eric Cooper (EC) Cllr. Jacky Fraser (JF) Cllr. Paula Hurley (PH) (late arrival) Cllr. John Keech (JK) Cllr. John Reid (JR) Cllr. Nigel Sparrow (NS)
Borough Council Member:	Cllr. Jane Walker (JW)
Clerk to the Council:	Rosemary Plum (RP)
Public Attendance	1 x Clapham Resident Borough Cllr Jon Abbott

MINUTES OF MEETING

1. Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from: • Cllr Ian Gaskin • Cllr. John Keech • Cllr. Charlie Tomkins • Cllr. Dora Ornithari • Cllr. Adrian Langley • Cllr. Cicely Palmer	
1. Declarations of Interest • Cllr Eric Cooper – Allotment Holder • Cllr Jacky Fraser – Allotment Holder	
2. Open Forum a) Dog Walking Park – people going in and out through the large gate. We need to provide new lock and advise the Borough of the keyholders for grass cutting access. b) The hedge between FP14 along the dog park has been cut back. The work hasn't been carried out in a very good manner. We believe the Borough Council will have done this work.	RP
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting The minutes were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting and signed by the Chair. PROPOSED: Cllr. Nigel Sparrow SECONDED: Cllr. John Reid	

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes (for information only) Nothing reported.	
5. Clerk's Report (for information only) a) <u>Grass cutting contract</u> renewed with Borough. Price for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2025 at a cost of £12,811.40 PER ANNUM. This is a 9% increase on the full term of contract. Above price to be held for year 2 of this contract. b) <u>Bus shelter repair (Fox & Hounds)</u> • Awaiting quotes for repair/supply from: I. Macemain + Amstad – requested quote for repair works _ updated price for new bus shelter. II. Externiture who pride themselves on refurbishing and updating bus shelters. III. Shelter Solutions c) <u>Road Closure Signs</u> • Requested our own road closed and diversion signs from Iain Booth at Borough Highways Department for use in emergency. Request rejected saying if roads are to be closed, either Highways Authority or the police will intervene. Closures need to be permitted / agreed and notified to communications etc. and need to be erected in compliance with the highways Act and Streetworks act to ensure they are safe and legal. This ensures signage is placed in appropriate locations and causes minimal disruption. • Iain Boot also pointed out during the recent burst main, traffic management was erected by Anglian Water but was largely ignored by users, which is why highways also attended and placed further manned closures. However, users again tried to bypass staff and continued to drive on areas that were closed. Users even moved signage, ignored traffic controls and drove along the footway at times. d) <u>Coffee with a cop</u> was notified to RP a few hours before the event last Friday. (EC suggests inviting police to a Parish Council meeting for update maybe quarterly). e) <u>Highbury Grove bus stop</u> – RP has reminded Andy Prigmore at the Borough that we're still waiting on whites to be replaced. f) <u>Milton Road Development</u> – We received confirmation today that the planned meeting with Andy Prigmore, Borough Highways Manager and Kim Healy, Highways Development control Lead is going ahead tomorrow evening at Borough Hall.	RP
6. Police Matters a) Crime Figures • NS has seen various figures and some crimes don't make pleasant reading. We've been pressing for years for figures from the police of cases that have been brought to Court but never had anything sent	RP/PS

through. RP to get further information and PS will raise with Commissioner again	
7. Borough Council Report a) <u>Update from Cllr Jane Walker</u> • Town Centre exhibition events planned to show the £22m to develop the Town Centre. • Budget confirmed to fund 200 place special school purpose built on the Robert Bruce site. • ID required for voting in May. • Fetlock Close (upper section of land) has gone up for sale again. The Borough has never done a Village Green application since 2012 but Planning Department have been informed so planning applications will not be allowed. • All our evidence is being assessed but Legal Dept says we do fulfil the criteria based on the evidence. • 6 weeks from the public announcement to give the new owners to object. If they do, they have another 4 weeks to plan their objection after which the General Purposes Committee at the Council will decide. JW has reviewed our evidence and believes it's very strong. • JW will put a call out on Facebook for any more photos or evidence. She has asked if residents want to do some sort of event to underline Village Green. In theory they would have to ask the new owner but if they use it as they always used it, it would uphold the purpose of the land. • The only right of appeal is a judicial review. • EC asked to put Village Green on the Environment Committee Agenda in the future. Residents are keen to work with Parish Council for obtaining equipment and support for greater use of the Village Green.	RP
8. Environment Committee a) <u>Report from Environment Committee meeting 14/3/23</u> I. A new system is planned for the Riverside Gardens plant watering making use of water butts that will be regularly topped up by our maintenance person. PROPOSED: Cllr Phillipa Simms SECONDED: Cllr Sara Walker II. Lowest quote for a new litter bin for the lower level of Riverside Gardens is £450. NS requested funding for a bin if we've got any money left over at the end of the year. III. PH reported the school has 4 heavy concrete bins and she will speak to the head with a view to the Parish Council using these bins. IV. Aqua Sacks have been replenished following recent burst water main emergency. b) <u>War Memorial Handrail</u> I. JK meeting maintenance contractor on-site next week to decide on position of the handrail.	
9. Milton Road Development	

a) <u>Update</u> I. Meeting with Borough Highways confirmed for 22nd March 2023 to discuss our objections to the development.	
10. East West Rail a) <u>Update on latest developments</u> - Engagement meetings have become very technical. Quite a lot of discussion at Ministerial level around road and rail infrastructure projects but we are likely to have an announcement after election in May. - Suspect the route may be announced at that point with a new schedule and new round of statutory consultation. This is where the village needs to understand the action to be taken. - Still has Chancellor backing at the moment but has yet to go through planning. It doesn't mean there will be no further challenges. - Budget of £15m allocated to local authorities along the route for economic development. - New Civil Engineer magazine article 21st March – Westminster Forum, Hannah Staunton Head of Comms EWR, the business case for it will not be published at the same time. This is not unusual. The focus is currently more on the corridor and economic development which still has to go through process. There is still opportunity to keep challenging going forward. - In the Local Plan there are two plots of land through which the BeFare alternative would cut across. CPRE/BeFare walk, this coming weekend on Sunday at 12 noon	
11. Planning Committee a) Applications Decided – see attached report b) Current Applications – see attached report	
12. Communication a) <u>Collaboration with other Parishes</u> I. NS has raised the need for greater collaboration on previous occasions and also at the recent Town and Parish Meeting. It's felt the rural areas - particularly Clapham, Oakley, Milton Ernest, Pavenham, Stevington - need to have more dialogue with each other to know the various problems we're all encountering and have a united front to address the issues with the Borough. II. The Borough issues continuous communications regarding urban areas and our rural areas seem to be forgotten. We have to start making our mark with the Borough. III. PS has had an initial informal conversation with Pavenham and is due to have a meeting with Pavenham about EWR. She has also spoken with Wootton where it's also felt there's a need for greater rural collaboration. IV. PH advised there is a similar collaboration between rural Village Halls. V. It was generally agreed we should be ready and engaged without the need to identify single issues.	

13. Allotment Committee a) <u>Report for Allotment Committee meeting 8/2/23</u> • EC gave a report on behalf of Allotment Committee Chair, Ian Gaskin who gave apologies for the Parish Council meeting this evening. • Second meeting of the Allotment Committee was not quorate most likely because the Association AGM and appointment of an Association Committee was held 48hrs earlier. • The Chair and Secretary of the Association will be attending Allotment Committee meeting. • Delighted to report we've got a fully committed committee with 10 people to share the workload. EC is conflicted and therefore has stepped back from the Association Committee and is now Parish liaison. HE will not vote but just contribute to discussions. • The Trading hut opens on Saturdays and Sundays for 2 hours and Clapham gardeners have already expressed an interest in joining the Clapham Village Allotment and Gardens Association.	
14. Dog Park & Signage a) <u>Type and position for signs</u> - Cost approx. £25 per 200mm x 300mm aluminium sign - It was agreed to purchase and display a number of signs, including • Keep dogs on a lead - Bents Close & High Street entrance + both directions from and to FP14 • No dogs allowed – Millennium Park • PS has mesh for gate into dog park and will cut to size • Clear your dogs mess (with fine warning) – Dog Park Proposal to purchase a selection of 10 signs PROPOSED: Cllr Philippa Simms SECONDED: Cllr John Reid	RP
15. Burial Ground a) Update – nothing to report	
16. Garages & Parking Spaces a) <u>Update</u> Almost all spaces now allocated and there doesn't seem to be any issues with unauthorized parking. Local residents with spaces seem to be self-regulating. b) <u>Surfacing of additional space</u> c) RP has received three quotes including £11,000 (private contractor); £4,500(private contractor) and £1,340(Bedford Borough Council)_ PROPOSAL TO ACCEPT THE QUOTE FROM BEDFORD BOROUGH AND GO AHEAD WITH THE TARMAC SURFACING WORK PROPOSED: Cllr Nigel Sparrow	

SECONDED: Cllr Allan Prudham	
17. Highways a) <u>Updates</u> I. Environment Committee was staggered at response from Borough that gulley cleaning is undertaken on a 3-year cyclical programme unless it's an emergency. II. We have serious issues with the amount of road damage we are repairing but with no action being taken. III. We are concerned about national reports of Bedfordshire roads being some of the best in the country. IV. Residents in Green Lane and the Baulk complaining about dangers of steering around the holes. 5yrs ago Borough admitted Green Lane needed updating yet it now reports it as adequate. V. No marking of High Street junctions across the village. Councillors feel if this issue was in Brickhill or Putnoe, it would be done tomorrow. Rural areas are being totally ignored. VI. Resident in Milton Road is dumping garden waste in the ditch. This has been reported to the Borough and still no response. VII. Hedge cutting not been done for years. VIII. Gutters in the High Street outside Henmans and Suzuki need a complete overhaul. IX. Work appears to have started today on the corner of Highbury Grove. X. We are having to accept that central government has massively cut budgets to local councils for highways maintenance. XI. What are the criteria used to determine the urgency of repairs? XII. NS/RP still awaiting response to request for a meeting with the Highways Team at Bedford Borough. EC happy to join NS at any meeting.	
18. Finance a) <u>Financial report and Payment of accounts</u> The accounts as presented we approved. PROPOSED: Cllr Sarah Walker SECONDED: Cllr Eric Cooper b) <u>Hampshire Bank</u> PROPOSAL TO REINVEST BOND IN SAME ACCOUNT PROPOSED: Cllr Sarah Walker SECONDED: Cllr Jacky Fraser c) <u>Ratify caretaker wage increase</u> The increase in the minimum wage hourly rate of approx. 90p/hr was approved. PROPOSED: Cllr Jacky Fraser SECONDED: Cllr Sarah Walker	

VOTE: UNANIMOUS DECISION - EC ask to put on record his concern that the Parish Council may not have enough money to spend across the financial year as we haven't increased the precept. - JR however stated the Parish Council deserves a pat on the back as it's the only item on the Council Tax 2023-24 that has not been increased.	
19. Correspondence None recorded	
1. Date of Next Meeting Tuesday, 18 th April 2023 in the Methodist Church Hall, straight after the Playing Field Trust meeting ends.	

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 9.45pm

Signed as a true reflection of the meeting:

Signed	
Dated	

Chair