

Meeting	Environment Committee, Clapham Parish Council 10 th October 2023 at 7:00pm
Parish Council Members in attendance:	Cllr. Nigel Sparrow (NS) - Chair Cllr. Ian Gaskin (IG) Cllr. John Keech (JK) Cllr. Eric Cooper (EC) Cllr. Michael Walmsley (ML) Cllr. Jacky Fraser (JF) - late arrival
Apologies Received:	Cllr. Adrian Langley (AL) Cllr. Charlie Tompkins (CT) Cllr. John Reid (JR)
Not in attendance:	
Clerk to the Council:	Rosemary Plum (RP)
Members of the Public:	None.

MINUTES OF MEETING

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

- Cllr. Adrian Langley (AL)
- Cllr. Charlie Tompkins (CT)
- Cllr. John Reid (JR)

2. Declarations of Interest

Declarations were received from:

Cllr. Eric Cooper for any matter regarding allotments
Cllr. Ian Gaskin for any matter regarding allotments

3. Open Forum (*Open to the public for 10 minutes*)

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting held 12th September 2023

The minutes were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Ian Gaskin

SECONDED: Cllr. John Keech

5. Matters Arising (*for information only*)

6. Clerk's Report (*for information only - any matters not covered by Agenda items*)

All matters from the Clerk will be reported under each Item on this Agenda.

7. Allotment

a) Progress report on works approved by Parish Council 19/9/23

- I. The works approved will commence 23rd October 2023 and will include:
 - Clearing overgrown vegetation on the north-east side of the site to create new allotment plots.
 - Removal of strip of self-set cherries £250
 - Clerk has received information on how to deal with any muntjac that may be present. The information has been provided to the contractor.
 - Dog walking area – flail hedges bordering with allotments
 - Trim re-growth of Millennium Park hedge
 - Reduction of 3 maples on various plots
 - Cut back overhanging trees on Footpath 14. Work will be undertaken in winter when tree growth is dormant.
- II. Approx. 20 names on waiting list for allotment plots. Association will contact and allocate as required when the clearance work is completed.
- III. Allotment Association have highlighted certain plots in poor condition of maintenance. Letters have been issued and IG has spoken with plot holders.
- IV. Allotment Association managing allocation and tenants very well.

8. Anti-social Behaviour

a) Update

- I. RP has received email from Richard Fuller MP who informed the Parish Council that he is still awaiting a response himself from the Police.
- II. Parish Council intends to set-up a Stakeholder roundtable to discuss what can be done to minimize vandalism in future.
- III. No further acts of vandalism recorded this month.

9. Riverside Gardens

a) Update

- I. Recognition was given for the hard work being done by the volunteers.
- II. Issue of trapping mink – NS called for Councillors' opinion on whether to pursue any potential issues. Mink aren't often seen but they are a nuisance. There have been sightings along the River. Consideration may be given to whether a home could be created for them around the island on the River. NS will pass contacts to RP to request further information.

NS/RP

10. Millennium Community Gardens

a) Update

- I. BRCC have provided suggestions – attached at the end of the minutes. They are happy to support us going forward with project management, consultants and applications for available funding.
- II. The path and its retaining wooden framework have disintegrated. It was suggested the paths should be removed and/or grassed over in the interests of low cost maintenance.
- III. The schools no longer makes use of Millennium Park.
- IV. Charity Commissions compliance is required for any future actions.
- V. Agreed to raise the matter at the next Parish Council meeting and invite BRCC and Be Active representatives to a future meeting. NS

11. Grass Cutting Contract

- I. The current contract runs to March 2025.
- II. Meetings with external contractors will be arrange in due course with a review to putting the grass cutting contract out to tender for year commencing 1st April 2025.
- III. Grass by churchyard wall has not been cut for some time by the Borough operatives. RP to investigate with Bedford Borough Council. RP
- IV. RP has requested detailed maps of areas to be cut by the Borough under the current contract. RP

12. Highways & Footpaths

a) Report on water leak in Green Lane

- I. Parish Council Chair has been in contact with AWA and received phone call on 9/10/23 informing her that *“everything was sorted with the leak and AWA is due to arrange for the potholes to be filled.”* The Chair advised the representative this isn’t the case and it was agreed an engineer will come out again.
- II. RP to check with Borough Cllr. Jim Weir, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Highways & Transport for any further updates. RP

b) State of gullies

- I. RP has reported the hump in road when you approach from the alley beside the shopping parade. RP
- II. Alley between Close and Slade relatively clean but residents on either side of path have shrubs overgrowing. RP to write to residents asking them to clear the overhanging growth.
- III. Disappointing response from councillors checking and reporting block gullies was noted. Pressure needs to be put on the Borough to ensure gullies are properly cleared.

- IV. The drains outside the Post Office/Bellini Restaurant cannot be properly cleared due to constant parking on the area.
- V. Issues in The Close for several months were reported. Two cars are regularly parked on the grass on the corner by the shops and bollard has been knocked over. Cllr Jane Walker has been made aware of this and is following up with Borough.
- VI. Unacceptable level of weeds growing along the side of the shops in the alleyway.

c) Ditch clearing

- I. **Kings Ditch:** RP met with Footpaths Office and Highways manager from Bedford Borough Council. The Borough will try to do an initial clearance of the ditch to help us get the situation under control. The ditch has been neglected by the Parish Council for several decades. RP to ensure Borough is made aware of its risk and liability in respect of Riparian Rights.

RP

- II. **The Ford:** RP has advised the grass maintenance manager of the need to cut the grass along the verges in this location. Awaiting response.

RP

- III. **Milton Road ditches near Miller Close:** Hedges and grass badly overgrown including beyond the roundabout. RP to report.

RP

d) Other matters

- I. **Miller Close:** RP has reported to Borough Pest Control sighting of rats by the ditch Milton Road/Glebe.

RP

- II. **Street sign cleaning signs:** RP has asked Borough to undertake this work asap but they have asked for photos of the individual signs that need cleaning.

RP

- III. **Litter picking:** This is recognised as a Duke of Edinburgh volunteering activity as part of '*working with the environment*'. RP has emailed Michelle at Clapham Scouts for further engagement in this regard.

13. Burial Ground & Churchyard

a) Update

IG/NS/RP planning to meet onsite to review trees.

14. Flood Group

a) Update

All emergency supplies have been moved to JK house. We have plenty of sand and bags

15. Maintenance Programme

a) Plans for October/November

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| I. | Allotments maintenance booked from 23 rd October 2023. | |
| II. | Work on water butts to be undertaken by David Bishop. EC to discuss further with him | EC |
| III. | Work on replacing bus shelter in Oakley Road due to start beginning of November 2023. | RP |
| IV. | Youth oriented project being developed by EC. No further details available at present time. | EC |
| V. | Approach local shops for participation in Xmas lights, decorations and events and propose competition for 'Best dressed shop window for Xmas' | RP |

16. Pre-Precept Discussion

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| I. | Area in front of shopping parade need to become more attractive. We should work with Borough on this and bring it to the attention of the Mayor when he attends a Parish Council meeting. | NS |
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17. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 14th November 2023

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 8:15pm

Signed as a true reflection of the meeting:

Signed	
Dated	14 th November 2023

Chair

SUGGESTIONS FOR MILLENNIUM PARK

From BRCC

1. Speak to local residents about how they would like to use the Millennium Garden, to ensure it is a welcoming natural space of benefit to the community going forward.
2. Consulting groups and residents will also give you an opportunity to identify those who may be interested in developing a 'Friends of' group – to help maintain the space and possibly run some of the activities – similar to that you have at the Riverside Gardens.
3. Different groups may want to use the space in different ways, so you could try to reach different parts of the community, through existing groups and societies, as well as through communications such as social media and newsletters if you have these.
4. Some suggestions for use of the space:
 - a) Setting up a programme of activities for the community in the Garden, to encourage residents back into the space
 - b) Wellbeing activities such as Yoga or mindfulness, using local practitioners
 - c) Family activities such as storytelling, art or nature activities – possibly involving local groups to run the activities if there is interest
 - d) Community events such as a fete, harvest festival, picnic in the park, etc – perhaps with local groups and societies offering stalls
 - e) A 'bioblitz' – to engage the community in the wildlife you have in the space – perhaps by engaging a local wildlife group. There's info about this here - <https://www.bnhc.org.uk/bioblitz/national-bioblitz-network>
 - f) Offering the space as a venue to meet for village groups and societies, such as an art group, schools, theatre group or scouts. Key here would be to get feedback from local groups about how they think they could use the space and what type of additional structures they may find helpful eg a circular seating area, a wooden gazebo, picnic benches, amount of mowed areas needed etc.
 - g) Creating a nature trail to encourage people to get to know and connect to nature in the space – downloadable from your website. This could feature some structures with invitations for people to notice natural features eg "take a moment to listen, how many different sounds can you hear?" Perhaps one you the local groups would be interested in helping to develop this.