

CLAPHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting: CLAPHAM PARISH COUNCIL
20th February 2024 at 7.00pm

Council Members in attendance:

Cllr. Phillipa Simms, Chair (PS)
Cllr. Ian Gaskin (IG)
Cllr. John Keech (JK) (part)
Cllr. Adrian Langley (AL)
Cllr. Michael Walmsley (MW)
Cllr. Nigel Sparrow (NS)
Cllr. Sarah Walker (SW)
Cllr. James Petrides (JP)

Apologies received:

Cllr. John Reid (JR) (delayed)
Cllr Eric Cooper (EC)
Cllr. Tamsin Bromley-Rahike (TBR)
Cllr. Ali Dove (AD)
Cllr. Jacky Fraser (JF)
Cllr. Jon Abbot (JA)

Non-attendance: Cllr. Allan Prudham (AP), Cllr Charlie Tompkins (CT)

Borough Council Members Present:
Cllr. Jane Walker

Clerk to the Council: On leave

Secretariat for meeting: Cllr Sarah Walker

Public Attendance: Mayor Tom Wootton

MINUTES

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr. John Reid (JR) (delayed)
Cllr Eric Cooper (EC)
Cllr. Tamsin Bromley-Rahike (TBR)
Cllr. Ali Dove (AD)
Cllr. Jacky Fraser (JF)
Cllr. Jon Abbot (JA)

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Phillipa Simms is Chair of the Village Hall Committee.

3. Open Forum

The council welcomed Mayor Tom Wootton.

- He was prioritising his visits to parish councils and expressed his gratitude for the work on the council.
- Flagged problems in other villages of finalising S106 agreements, and supported the idea discussed in the Playing Fields meeting, for an all-weather pitch, advising the establishment of a fund for ongoing maintenance and eventual replacement.

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- Expressed satisfaction with Working with GLL, new leisure provider.
- Trials of glass waste were due to get underway, one in the town, and one in a rural location. This was widely welcomed.
- He had met with the Flood Group, and with Anglian Water, raising the problem of flooding and sewage problems in a number of villages, including Clapham. Asked for the Council to continue to flag problems with him so he can liaise with Anglian Water.
- Update on former Debenhams – asbestos survey due, NHS and other bodies looking at short term opportunities, part of bigger town centre development and improvements. Footfall and bus travel was reported to be up.
- Council developing a programme of town centre events in summer holidays and run-up to Christmas.
- Invited letter of recognition for long-serving councilors – there was widespread acknowledgement of Cllr Nigel Sparrow's 60 years on the council which was approaching.
- There was a discussion about the improvement in response times from BBC, and the Mayor noted staff were being encouraged to return to work in Borough Hall.
- Gulley clearers had both been out of operation – BBC to buy new vehicle which it could hire to parishes to improve gulley clearance.
- Cllr Phillipa Simms raised EWR for an update: the Mayor said they were eager for the forthcoming public consultation to get underway in June, before any General Election, and stressed the BBC and local people needed the detail which should emerge with that consultation. There was widespread agreement of the impact on Clapham of the scheme.
- Cllr Nigel Sparrow asked if the town and parish liaison meetings would be restored? Cllr Jane Walker confirmed they were underway and had met twice. The Mayor stressed those meetings were important in devolving power down to parishes.
- Cllr James Petrides asked who was the point of contact to find out about businesses who would invest in community. Cllr Jane Walker agreed to follow up with contacts for organisations including Bedford Giving.
- Plans for the Bedford River Festival were in hand, with a greater focus on being more family focused.

4. 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. Adrian Langley

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes (for information only)

None

6. Clerk's Report (for information only)

None

7. Police Matters

Speeding figures had been circulated.

8. Borough Council Reports

a) Update from Borough Cllr Jane Walker

i. BBC's Corporate Plan is under development, with several consultation events in which the public and community groups can be involved, some online and in person, to ensure widespread input into the plan. Dates and times to be circulated.

ii. House-buying searches have simplified and put online. It's no longer necessary for a solicitor to do the search. Potential house-buyers can self-serve.

iii. BBC had increased the minimum salary required for qualification for the home upgrade grant for heating and insulation. Details on BBC website.

iv. The council was also able to extend the voucher scheme for households qualifying for free school meals, to enable food voucher provision during Easter and Summer holidays.

v. The problem of dog-fouling had been raised to Cllr Jane Walker and there was a request for extra signage. Agreement that Cllr John Keech may have signs and these could be

9. Environment Committee

a) Update from meeting held 12/03/24

- i. Cllr Nigel Sparrow updated that the Riverside Gardens volunteers were back at work.
- ii. Highways and footways – he reported a highly positive meeting and village tour with the Deputy Mayor, and Highways officer Ricky Dawkes, covering Kings Ditch, The Close, Green Lane.
It had been suggested a grill be installed in Kings Ditch to keep debris back, discussions underway about BBC contribution.
- iii. Blocked gulleys in the area near The Close were cleared by the visiting party, who advised there would be a programme of gulley cleaning during summer.
- iv. We now have a list of orders for repairs placed by the council.
- v. Green Lane – repeated assurance that it is in the plan for this financial year.
- vi. Meetings with Anglian Water remain under discussion.
- vii. Gt Ouse Environment Trust – Clapham is only village not represented. It was proposed at Environment Cttee that we had a representative. Cllr Michael Walmsley had agreed. NS and PS agreed
- viii. Litter picking – need for scout and school involvement.
Cllr Jane Walker reminded she had given Ursula Taylor school ward fund money for litter pickers last year and they were keen to support .

Thanks went from the Chair and the Council to Cllr Nigel Sparrow who had chaired his final Environment Committee.

10. Allotment Committee

a) Update

- i. Cllr Ian Gaskin updated that the grant application for security fencing had been accepted in principle.
- ii. Pinnacle, landscapers, has visited and agree to support the development of the wellbeing plot.
- iii. Ongoing issues with security and vandalism.
- iv. Allotment Assc doing very well, nearly completing trading hut refurbishment and was grateful for donated heaters. There was currently the greatest number of allotments holders.
- v. An article about the Allotments and events would be promoted online and the craft fair would be promoted in the summer edition of the Village News.
- vi. The AGM was scheduled 19 April - all need to support.
- vii. Query about subscriptions outstanding – it was confirmed a small handful were outstanding.

11. East West Rail

a) Update

- i. Cllr Eric Cooper was attending the rescheduled BFARE meeting and has flagged the potential need to consider making funding available for next phase.
- ii. Cllr Sarah Walker agreed to follow-up on whether EWR would hold a consultation event in the Village Hall.

12. Planning Committee

- a) Applications Decided - None
- b) Current Applications – Folly Park, revised application
- c) Milton Road Development – see update in Playing Fields meeting.

13. Communication

- a) Clapham Show – update

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- i. Categories had been published in Village News, and all old trophies returned.
- ii. Invitation to Mayor to attend, full details would be out in June Village newsletter.
- iii. NS highlighted out of date info on website.
- iv. 80th anniversary of VE Day on 6 June – Cllr Phillipa Simms had been asked if we want to do a beacon lighting. Cllr Nigel Sparrow expressed concern about newly planted trees. Cllr Simms to check with Cllr Tompkins about options to move beacon or accommodate.
- v. Cllr Ian Gaskin raised suggestion for council whatsapp group on behalf of absent Cllr Eric Cooper. There was a mixed reaction, but agreement to postpone until Cllr Cooper could make the case.

14. Highways

This was covered earlier under Environment Committee.

15. Village Hall

- a) Update
 - i. Cllr Phillipa Simms said they were looking at a new maintenance funding opportunity.
 - ii. Village hall income had increased and bookings were buoyant.

16. Finance

- a) Financial Report

Circulated to members prior to the meeting.

- b) Payment of Accounts

Accounts to be ratified were circulated to members prior to the meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Adrian Langley

SECONDED: Cllr. Ian Gaskin

17. Correspondence

None

18. Date of Next Meeting

16th April 2024 – Methodist Church Hall