

Meeting: CLAPHAM PARISH COUNCIL
18th June 2024

Council Members in attendance: Cllr. Phillipa Simms, Chair (PS)
Cllr. Ian Gaskin (IG)
Cllr. Adrian Langley (AL)
Cllr. Michael Walmsley (MW)
Cllr. Nigel Sparrow (NS)
Cllr. John Reid (JR)
Cllr. James Petrides (JP)
Cllr. John Keech (JK)
Cllr. Ali Dove (AD)

Apologies received: Cllr. Sarah Walker (SW)
Cllr. Tamsin Bromley-Rahike (TBR)
Cllr. Eric Cooper (EC)
Cllr. Jacky Fraser (JF)
Cllr. Charlie Tompkins (CT)

Non-attendance: Cllr. Allan Prudham (AP)

Borough Council Member: Cllr. Jane Walker (JW)
Cllr. Jon Abbott (JA) – late arrival

Clerk to the Council: Rosemary Plum (RP)

Public Attendance

MINUTES OF MEETING

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from

- Cllr. Sarah Walker (SW)
- Cllr. Tamsin Bromley-Rahike (TBR)
- Cllr. Eric Cooper (EC)
- Cllr. Jacky Fraser (JF)
- Cllr. Charlie Tompkins (CT)

2. Declarations of Interest

Declarations were received from:

- Cllr. James Petrides as a member of the Village Hall Committee
- Cllr. Phillipa Simms as Chair of the Village Hall Committee

3. Open Forum

Nothing to report.

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)

Nothing to report.

6. Clerk's Report (for information only)

- Exclusive Internal Defibrillator Scheme Across the UK – Borough Cllr. Jon Abbott offering to provide match funding from Ward Fund. RP to speak with Horse & Groom and Allotment Association to gauge their interest. RP to investigate whether solar panel option available for the Trading Hut. RP
- Bus shelter update – drawings have been approved
- Borough press and social media coverage achieved for Senior Citizens and community allotments site for June Community month.
- RP written to Fire and Police for support on educating residents on the risks and dangers of swimming in the river.
- Kings Ditch – the Borough had said they're looking at installing a trash grill at the culvert across FP14. Nothing further heard. RP to chase update. RP

7. Borough Council Reports

a) Update from Borough Cllrs

Borough Cllr. Jon Abbott reported as follows:

- Only business as usual at Borough Council because of election announcement and period of purdah.
 - Borough now owns the Debenhams site and has put in offers on several other buildings in the area for a regeneration project. Borough is calling for suggestions for use of site.
 - Central Library will eventually move into ground floor of Beales. Mother and baby room with lift access opened on top floor.
 - New sensory garden at Russell Park opening this month.
 - Green Lane – Highways works are in the programme for the 4th quarter 2024.
 - River Festival will be weekend of 21 July 2024.
 - Speeding vehicles - Police unable to intervene. We should request Speedwatch look into the situation.
- I. NS pleased to hear about acquisition of Debenhams. He asked how much money is still left in the regeneration fund created under the previous Mayor? JA advised there is 'quite a lot' in the Government

Regeneration scheme. Planned use of the money includes Greyfriars JA
Area development and Midland Road, Station Quarter.

8. Police Matters

a) Update

- I. New Sergeant at the Community North Rural Policing Team based at Riseley Police Station, Sarah Cluff.
- II. Police are looking at re-introducing in-person Community Priority setting meetings for the thoughts of local Parishes to be passed to the Bedford Borough Councillors.
- III. Welcome to PC26 Peter LAWSON who's joined the Riseley team with a background in investigation within the force. Also waiting on the release of a further 2 Police Constables to join the team.
- IV. Police are looking at ways to increase communication with everyone of events and engagements and will now be using 'Beds Connect' which is a platform already in use by our Watch scheme. Parish Council will support by adding QR code and comms to Village News, Parish FB page and website.
- V. NS called for a visit by a police officer to the July parish council meeting. Concern expressed around the history of vandalism in the parish in summer holidays. RP

9. Environment Committee

a) Report from Committee meeting 11th June 2024

- I. Minutes of Envco Committee meeting distributed prior to this meeting.
- II. Subsidence in burial grounds – Parish Council will purchase soil and parish maintenance person will top up surface of graves affected by severe subsidence posing health and safety risk.
- III. MW is collaborating with BedsGOVET to test river water monthly. If high levels of contamination are identified, the Parish will put up warning signs.
- IV. Agreed to arrange a barbecue or picnic to thank the Riverside Gardens volunteers. NS will arrange dates with the volunteers. NS

b) Litter picking – ratify proposal

- I. We have received a proposal from a local resident to arrange litter picking events with young people and parents from the Parish.
- II. Parish will provide hoops and pickers. JP will provide hi-vis jackets. PS will provide list of Parish streets. The local resident will project manage the events. JP/PS
- III. Get programme running in Summer Holidays and consider liaison with Lincroft School. RP

PROPOSAL: To accept the litter picking event proposal as outlined above.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Nigel Sparrow

SECONDED: Cllr. Phillipa Simms

c) Grass cutting contract rebate

- I. Standard of Borough grass cutting efforts in recent years was described as 'atrocious' although consideration was given to the weather challenges.
- II. Leaving grass over highways is against our contract with the Borough.
- III. Other parishes have requested money back, setting a precedent.
- IV. Agreed that the village is finally looking a lot better in recent weeks following the appointment of the Borough senior grass cutting team in place of agency workers.
- V. Parish Council will be exercising due diligence when calling for tenders for the grass cutting contract from Spring 2025. RP
- VI. Highway verges are cut twice a year but the Parish would like to exercise influence on the Borough to cut more frequently. Currently the 40mph sign on way out of the village cannot be seen due to long grass. RP

d) Other matters

- I. IG met with Borough Tree Officer today and walked around the village to consider areas for tree planting.
- II. Officer explained Urban Tree Challenge scheme where Borough will support Parish with up to 80% funding for the supply, planting and watering of trees for 3yrs. Borough would manage entire programme for the Parish.
- III. Trees will be sourced from healthy stock nurseries.
- IV. The Glebe is on the back burner. Currently not covered under Highways as not fully adopted.
- V. In consideration of future Milton Road development, the High Street isn't suitable for consideration at the moment.
- VI. Tree planting at the entrances into village shouldn't be a major issue but there could be changes subject to Milton Road development plans.
- VII. The following roads/areas are likely to be suitable for tree planting: Highbury Grove, The Close, The Slade, Milton Road, Fetlock Close, Mountpleasant Road.
- VIII. Borough Tree Officer will create a planting map and report back to IG/RP in due course by end of June to qualify for funding.
- IX. Article will be added to autumn Village News to outline the tree planting plans.

- e) Last years' success with Borough cleaning of drains and gullies was pointed out. RP to push for similar service again this year as it seems to have alleviated worst of flooding in the Parish.

10. Allotment Committeea) Update from Committee meeting 5th June 2024

- I. Fencing started along FP14 – first gates are in on allotment south side.
- II. EC is managing the project.
- III. Health & Wellbeing plot will be developed with materials and human resources given free of charge by Pinnacle. Thanks give to Sandra Fuller, Chair of the Allotments Committee for negotiating this.
- IV. Allotment Association needs to raise £1,200 for purchase of materials to build raised beds.
- V. Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity would like to support the Clapham Allotment HWB plot project. RP
- VI. JW Ward fund paid contribution to the HWB plot.

b) Health & Safety issues

- I. Chair of Allotments Association has raised issue about asbestos roof on the green shed nearest main gate. IG to inspect. IG
- II. Look at options to put clean water supply inside trading hut for first aid.

11. East West Raila) Update

- I. EWR consultation delayed due to General Election.
- II. Originally a 2-part consultation, it could now be held at the end of the year and possibly as a single consultation.
- III. Labour Party have committed to EWR in its manifesto.
- IV. BeFare quiet as consultation no longer happening in June.

12. Highwaysa) Update

- I. Green Lane – highways maintenance has been scheduled for 4th quarter 2024. NS raised concerns this will be during winter months when work is unlikely to be carried out within the financial as promised. RP to remind Borough not to fail on their promise to do the work. RP
- II. Environment Committee raised the dangers of overgrown cow parsley on banks of Green Lane blocking view of oncoming traffic. RP
- III. Request for speed monitor wires in Green Lane as suggested by Cllr. Jim Weir – nothing happened to date. RP
- IV. NS raised concerns about speed of traffic up and down the Green Lane. RP
- V. Need to clean speed signs as they cannot be read. MW
- VI. RP to request police attendance in Highbury Grove and Green Lane. RP
RP to ask if police can go to golf club and warn about speeding.

13. Planning Committee

a) Applications Decided

As circulated prior to the meeting.

- I. JW called for Councillors comments on the Green Lane redevelopment.

All/JW

b) Current Applications

As circulated prior to the meeting.

c) Milton Road Development update 17th June 2024

- I. Discussion regarding all weather football pitch held at Borough Planning meeting 17/6/24.
- II. Plans submitted in Dec 2022/Jan 2023 and Parish Council commented/objected on highways issues.
- III. Outline planning permission was granted 17/6/24 including provision of £845k funding to build all weather sports pitch on King George V playing field. Deputy Mayor, Cllr Weir commented on the positive outcome saying "it's nice to see the Parish Councils have finally been given a voice".
- IV. If the funding contribution is not enough to complete the project or if planning permission isn't granted for the proposed all weather pitch, the funding contribution will be ring fenced for sports projects in Clapham. There will be no cost to the Parish in respect of the proposed all weather pitch.
- V. PS updated the Mayor of Bedford on the outcome of the planning meeting.
- VI. It was noted that the Milton Road developers are providing land for a new school. However, the Parish feels another lower school is not needed as we have places available at Ursula Taylor, Lincroft and Milton Ernest schools. Borough Cllr. JW confirmed "there is a desperate need for secondary places in Bedfordshire, with no spare spaces at the moment. We don't want to build any more primary provision with falling birth rate".
- VII. Developers are making available funds for refurbishment of Lincroft School, Oakley to help meet the need for secondary school places.
- VIII. Bedford Borough Chief Education Officer maintains no additional school is required in Clapham but Borough Planners refused to remove the school from the plans stating that a development of 500 houses must have a school.
- IX. The Parish acknowledged planning rules that call for nursery provision with the new development but the Parish Council is not prepared to accept a Borough funded school on the site when it is not needed.
- X. The Parish Council is calling for the building of a new village hall in the space allocated for a school. The Parish urgently needs a new Village Hall as current site is not fit for purpose.

- XI. Should Parish Councillors agree the building of a new Village Hall in place of an additional school is a sensible suggestion, the Mayor of Bedford proposed the Parish Council could borrow funds with no interest charge payable from the Borough Council, to cover the cost of building pending the allocation of CIL monies due on completion of the Milton Road development.
- XII. The Football Club would be retained in the same place and the current Village Hall could be redeveloped into a sports centre incorporating space for the Scout with redeveloped shower facilities to support the installation of the all-weather pitch with solar panels for supply of floodlighting.
- XIII. Parish Councillors with the exception of one Councillor, agreed the proposal to borrow the money from the Borough Council was a good idea and the Chair should proceed with the process.
- XIV. NS abstained from making a decision as he felt the suggestion was "thrown at us overnight".

14. Burial Ground

a) Review of Procedures

- I. Rev. Stephen Liley has brought to attention of the Parish Council that burials processes and procedures are changing.
- II. Requests are being received for the addition of cremated remains to be added to a plot where an interment has already taken place.
- III. It is possible to place up to six ashes containers in one burial plot.
- IV. A charge of £75 is already in place for reopening a plot that has already been purchased and paid for.

PROPOSAL: To introduce a new fee of £100 for the reopening of a plot that has already been purchased and paid for the interment of deceased persons for the interment of a second set of ashes up to a maximum of 6 sets of ashes interred within the same plot.

RP

PROPOSED: Cllr. Adrian Lester

SECONDED: Cllr. Ian Gaskin

b) Subsidence maintenance

PROPOSAL: Purchase of 3 tonnes soil to be deposited at the Green Lane Cemetery for Parish maintenance person to fill subsidence of burial plots.

RP

PROPOSED: Cllr. Ian Gaskin

SECONDED: Cllr. John Keech

c) Review of Regulations

- I. It was agreed to amend cemetery and burial ground regulations advising relatives of the deceased that, in the event of health and safety risk, the Parish Council is automatically allowed to take necessary action to render burial plots safe.

- II. Fallen stones – maintenance of burial plots remains the responsibility of the family of the deceased unless there is a serious health and safety risk and members of the family cannot be contacted.
- III. Request received for purchase of burial plot in Milton Road burial ground, from a person no longer living in the Parish. Councillors agreed unanimously to allow the purchase.

RP

15. Village Hall

a) Update

- I. The Parish Councillors were made aware of serious Issues with the disintegration of the Village Hall roof. On investigation of the condition of the roof, it appears the last roof replacement was not an adequate roof for the building and was simply placed over the pre-existent roof. As a result, timbers have rotted and are trapped between the several rooves now on the Village Hall.
- II. PS learnt this morning that the Village Hall roof causing all the problems at the moment is made of a totally unsuitable material for the job because it creates condensation and therefore a year-round build-up of water. Furthermore, the outputs/run off should have been directed externally and not internally as done, allowing the condensation to flow back under the roof
- III. The Village Hall Management Committee has allocated £10k to carry out interim repairs where possible. Due to the unusual number of rooves, water is trapped between the layers with the only point of egress through the ceiling in the committee room and kitchen.
- IV. Quotes are being gathered for a replacement roof and also a solution for adding solar panels to the roof which could attract a fully funded grant.
- V. Village Hall Management Committee requested permission of the Parish Council to install ANPR cameras in the Village Hall car park. This would be at no cost to the Parish Council or Village Hall. The ANPR system will be run by third party company. Vehicle registration numbers umbers can be white listed for regular authorised users.

PROPOSAL: to install 3rd party ANPR vehicle recognition system for the management of the Village Hall car park.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Ali Dove

SECONDED: Cllr. Adrian Langley

16. Communication

a) 4YP Youth Workers – update

RP advised she, EC and JP attended an introductory meeting with 4YP Management Team. Following extensive discussion, 4YP will provide the Parish Council with a written proposal for a pilot scheme in the Parish.



17. Finance

- a) Financial Report
- b) Payment of Accounts

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

PROPOSED: Cllr. Adrian Langley

SECONDED: Cllr. John Keech

18. Correspondence

- I. Resident correspondence raising concerns about traffic/parking/pedestrians in The Close, was discussed.

19. Date of Next Meeting

16th July 2024 – Annual Parish Meeting in the Methodist Church Hall

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 9.35pm

Signed as a true reflection of the meeting:

Signed	
Dated	16 th July 2024

Chair