

Meeting: Environment Committee, Clapham Parish Council
9th July 2024 at 7:00pm

Council Members in attendance: Cllr. Ian Gaskin (IG), Chair
Cllr. Michael Walmsley (MW), Vice Chair
Cllr. Jacky Fraser (JF)
Cllr. John Keech (JK)
Cllr. Adrian Langley (AL)
Cllr. Nigel Sparrow (NS)
Cllr. Eric Cooper (EC)
Cllr. John Reid (JR)
Cllr. Charlie Tomkins (CT)

Apologies received: None

Non-attendance: None

Clerk to the Council: Rosemary Plum (RP)

MINUTES OF MEETING

1. Apologies for Absence

None received.

2. Declarations of Interest

None received.

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

Nothing to report.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting held 11th June 2024

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

PROPOSED: Cllr. John Keech

SECONDED: Cllr. John Reid

5. Matters Arising (*for information only*)

- I. Riverside Gardens – laying of turf. We have been advised September is the ideal time of year for laying turf.
- II. Picnic in recognition of volunteers efforts – It will be attended by 7/9 volunteers and NS has possible dates.

NS

6. Clerk's Report (*for information only*)

1. Memorial maintenance

- I. Spoken to the team at Foster Hill Road Cemetery - memorials are neglected for many reasons, including those who

previously looked after them who are no longer able to do so.

- II. Foster Hill Road volunteers restore neglected memorials to their former glory including fallen headstones, mending broken gravestones and statues, re-marking the borders around graves, cleaning headstones and generally tidying up.
- III. RP has written to Friends of Bedford Cemetery for further information on how they operate.

RP

2. River safety

- I. RP in contact with the Community Safety Officer for water and the main point of contact within Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- II. BFRS have recently issued letters for parents to all Bedfordshire schools providing information and advice in relation to water safety.
- III. There is also a Beds Drowning Prevention Advisory Group meeting in August, chaired by Rob Hulatt, Group Commander Prevention which is a forum to discuss water safety matters with partner agencies. JR volunteered to attend the meeting.
- IV. Throwline boards at various locations along the River Great Ouse. Throwline training for Parish Council representative can be organised.
- V. Thursday 25 July is World Drowning Prevention Day. Representatives from the fire service will hold two informative water safety sessions at the Embankment at the rear of Bedford college at 10:30-12:30 and 14:30-16:30.

RP

JR

3. The Close

- I. In April 2024, the Highways Manager stated :I think there is a valid point to be had regarding the safety of pedestrians along this stretch although at present not entirely sure what could be done about it, there isn't enough space to separate pedestrians and vehicles through this passage with a physical barrier such as bollards".
- II. The same officer called for thoughts from the Head of Highways Dept on the yellow lines and whether they should they be extended to prevent people parking as this may add some extra visibility?
- III. RP has been chasing response from the Head of Highways since April.

4. Response to EC request for opportunity for Parish Councillors to attend a Borough Highway public meeting:

- I. The only relevant meeting would be Environment & Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The next meeting is on the 18th July, although they're not looking at Highways

which will be later in the year. Agenda will be published later this week.

- II. Questions can be asked at the start about any area within the committee's remit (so highways is included)
 - III. Alternatively they can attend the meetings of the executive and ask questions at the start or full council.
5. Report of motorbike in River at RG
6. Green Lane overgrown banks – reported to Borough and they will carry out the work asap or get back to RP.
7. Borough have acknowledged RP request for cutting back of the hedge bordering the ditch along the old A6 Milton Road near the bus stop up to the junction with Highfield Road.
8. Borough have acknowledged RP request for maintenance in the alleyway between Milton Road and Bridle Drive, Clapham is almost completely blocked by laurel bushes. There are also large holes in the path/ground and a dead tree stump at edge of footpath, hidden by overgrowth.
9. Riverside Gardens – Broken tree branch obstructing the footpath - cut down by the Borough and thrown over the fence into RG. RP complained to the Borough and Cllr. Jon Abbott.
10. NS asked for thanks to be noted to JR for clearing the branch from Riverside Gardens and also thanks to MW for cleaning road signs.
11. Tree planting – covered on this Agend.
12. Playing Field - Quote from JDT for playing field – covered on this Agenda
13. RP gave thanks to AL for his sterling efforts in clearing FP14 of brambles and old wire fencing. He's also done an excellent job clearing overgrowth and hedges obstructing the footpath in The Glebe.
14. Litterpicking
- I. Made contact with member of FC who's arranging the events.
 - II. Cllr. James Petrides has spoken with Amazon who are sorting the Hi Vis jackets. In addition they're keen to send people to help as well as part of their community engagement project.
 - III. Parish Council needs to direct which areas to be cleared.
15. Vandalism
- I. Police Priority Setting meeting 26/7/24 – JR may attend with RP
- RP/JR

16. Riverside Gardens

a) Update

- I. A member of the volunteers has expressed disappointment at not having been consulted by CT on the measurements/ requirements for the purchase of turf. NS called for the volunteers to be properly consulted to work as a team. All else working well.

b) Graffiti on picnic benches

- I. Vandals are focusing on one table at farthest point away. AL will look into it.

AL

c) Painting benches

- I. Volunteers commented on seats being repaired but not preserved and feel it is diminishing the value of the volunteers' contribution to the area. IG has bought suitable paint and is now waiting on weather.

IG

a) Gravel under Xmas tree

- I. Volunteers have expressed disappointment that work hasn't been carried out yet, despite their agreement to it.
- II. RP pointed out the weather over the recent months and the need to carry out this work when the ground is reasonably dry to avoid further ground damage. RP assured councillors the work will be done as soon as feasible.

RP

7. Millennium/Community Gardens

a) Update

Steering group still trying to identify a date suitable for the majority of members being invited.

RP

b) Fence repairs

Loose panel of palisade fencing behind Millennium Park was reported to RP for repair.

RP

c) Hedges

Trimming required in autumn. Currently unable to carry out work due to nesting season. RP to ask JDT Consultants to quote.

RP

8. Tree Planting

a) Report from Bedford Borough Council

- I. Bedford |Borough Council have approved proposals for tree planting within Clapham Parish.
- II. We have been granted a selection of 58 trees in designated areas. 11 trees will be planted along roadside around Glebe roundabout (not on the roundabout itself).
- III. The Borough will supply, plant and maintain the trees for 3yrs.
- IV. Planting can only take place on one side of Highbury Grove because services run under ground on the other side.

- V. EC pointed out the need to have annual tree inspections beyond the initial 3yr period and ensure maintenance kept up to date. RP
- VI. Trees cannot be planted in Fetlock Close as it's not Borough land at the moment, other than outside 44-52. Residents have collected trees from the Borough give-away scheme for planting on the new Village Green at a later date. RP
- VII. Borough will now source trees and we will need to add information in the Autumn Village News advising residents of where trees will be planted. Any feedback/comments will be handled by the Borough.
- VIII. There may be a top-up fee of up to £100 max charge for the tree planting.
- IX. RP will distribute the propose planting map to members of the committee.

PROPOSAL: To allocate up to £100 for tree planting in Clapham by Borough Council.

PROPOSED: Cllr. John Keech

RP

SECONDED: Cllr. Eric Cooper

b) Tree maintenance – ratify quote from JDT Consultants

PROPOSAL: Accept quote from JDT Contracts of £600+VAT for maintenance of trees in King George V Playing Field overhanging Footpath 14.

PROPOSED: Cllr. John Keech

RP

SECONDED: Cllr. Adrian Langley

- I. Complaint received from Cody Rd resident about trees from KGV growing over FP14 and over back garden. RP to write to residents reminding of their responsibility to cut their trees back from FP14. RP

9. Flood Group

a) Report

- I. River levels have been variable in recent weeks with no cause for concern.
- II. JR has chaired the Flood Group for 5 years and feels it is time for a fresh face to lead the Flood Group.
- III. MW did first River water test last month – water quality pretty good in Clapham.

10. Highways & Footpaths

a) Update

- I. Green Lane Hedgerows – see above
- II. Green Lane Speed Limit – see above
- III. RP continues to not receive timely responses from the Head of the Borough Highways Department. NS called for RP to write to Cllr. Weir at the Borough and ask for his intervention to elicit responses. RP

- IV. Concern raised about the rise in the number of vehicles blocking footpaths and transit for mobility scooter users in the village. Additional concerns raised about tree roots tilting path surfaces.
- V. Speeding vehicles in Green Lane and Highbury Grove becoming a huge problem.
- VI. Monitoring cables for volume and speed in Green Lane as promised by Cllr. Weir still haven't been provided.
- VII. EC has spoken with resident in The Close. Cars parked on the green opposite the wooden bollards. Take away delivery vehicle parked there. Inappropriate parking and generally becoming highly dangerous. Major concerns about the opposite side of The Close near the shops, vehicles park on the corner where double yellow cannot be seen clearly.
- VIII. Access to no.2 The Close, passed on appeal with 'no objection by the local highway authority' despite original refusal stating 'No improvements are approved or the access and in the opinion of the highways development officer, no improvements are required'.
- IX. Hard standing area in front is in a state of disrepair and should be tarmacked prior to houses being occupied. This is unfinished. Shared pedestrian/street. The area needs to be resurfaced and repaved and made pedestrian friendly with equal access to both pedestrians and vehicles with formal shared access.
- X. Borough has now acknowledged concern – RP has requested information about the legal status of the area i.e. pedestrian, vehicle, cycle right of way.
- XI. Two trees going into the corner of The Close to prevent further parking and will make good the ground with the Parish tree planting project.
- XII. A resident has called for the installation of a safe crossing from Green Lane to the War Memorial and also Green Lane/Bedford Road. RP pointed out that plans for safe crossing are included in the outline designs for the Milton Road development.
- XIII. NS raised concern that Borough Cllr Jane Walker made a commitment that Green Lane will be dealt with this financial year. Plans being drawn up for work to be complete in the last financial quarter of 2024/25. However, JA has sent out statement suggesting no Clapham roads are included in this years' maintenance programme. RP to put on Agenda to ask JA and JW to clarify further at full council meeting next week.

RP

b) Footpath 14 – see above

- I. IG congratulated EC for project managing new fencing along FP14. It was agreed the fencing looks very good although there are a few snagging issues to be resolved. The efforts of all the team were recognised.

11. Churchyard & Burial Ground

a) Update

Nothing to report.

RP

- b) Grave subsidence RP
See above.
- c) Burial Ground notice board
RP to pursue.

12. Litter picking

See above

13. Dog Park

- I. Issues were highlighted regarding the condition of the fence around the dog walking area, with the fence in need of repair. EC originally asked to include this in the FP14 fencing project but reported that the Parish Council chose not to take this full option. RP to get quotes for work and add for consideration in year's budget. RP

14. Any other business

- I. NS raised concern about the inclusion of AOB in a Parish Council committee Agenda, stating this is not usual procedure.
- II. Concern raised about children on electric scooters riding along paths in the village. This was believed to be illegal but the police are not stopping anyone. RP to invite police representation to September meeting. RP
- III. EC presented a proposal for consideration for fencing around village green.
- IV. RP pointed out this could only be presented as a discussion paper and not as a formal proposal.
- V. In view of the above, EC asked for the matter to be discussed at full council. RP
- VI. There was no response from Councillors during the meeting to the idea put forward by EC.

15. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 10th September 2024

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 20:43pm

Signed as a true reflection of the meeting:

Signed	
Dated	16 th September 2024*

Chair

*Meeting was subsequently postponed to Monday 16th September due to unavailability of several members on the scheduled date.