

Meeting:	Stevington Parish Council – Parish Council Meeting 22 nd November 2023 at 7.30pm
Council	Cllr. Janet Day (JD), Chair
Members in attendance:	Cllr. Richard Taylor (RT) Cllr. Mouritz Botha (MB) - left the meeting at 20:05hrs Cllr. John Strutt (JS) Cllr. James Surtees (JSu) Cllr. Gareth King (GK)
Apologies received:	
Non-attendance:	
Borough Council Member:	Cllr Robert Rigby (late arrival) Cllr Dylan Simmons (late arrival)
Clerk to the Council:	Rosemary Plum (RP)
Public Attendance	

MINUTES OF MEETING

1. Welcome

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Borough Cllrs. Simmons and Rigby for late arrival due to conflicting Borough Executive meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

Reminder that annual declarations of interest need to be return to RP as soon as possible. RP

4. Open Forum (15 mins)

Nothing to report.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting 27/9/23

- I. RP to send minutes of Parish Council meetings to Ward Councillors. RP
- II. Status of Parish minutes i.e. draft or ratified should be clarified on website.

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

PROPOSED: Cllr Richard Taylor

SECONDED: Cllr John Strutt

6. Matters Arising from Minutes of previous meeting *(for information only)*

Nothing to report.

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

- I. Paperwork is being prepared for transfer of Ward funding as agreed with Borough Councillors.
- II. Defib training arrange in conjunction with Oakley Parish Council.
- III. Complaint from resident about condition and leaves Park Road reported to Borough
- IV. HMRC / Government Gateway access – RP is having challenges updating the authorized user for the Parish Council. HMRC continue to send correspondence to private address of former Clerk but insist that person is not an authorized user. RP
- V. Ongoing engagement with Borough Council to complete installation of new litter bin outside Red Lion. Latest Borough agreement dates back to 21/9/23. RP
- VI. Acceptance of Park Road speed limit extension confirmed. Borough will have to advertise the restriction for potential objections. Borough hopes to implement new restriction by end of 2023/24 financial year.
- VII. 3 x sets of village entry gates and dragons teeth were agreed with the Borough at the Parish EGM in February 2023. RP following up with Ward Cllrs. RP
- VIII. Borough Cllr Rigby raised questions with Borough Portfolio holder Jim Weir regarding maintenance of gullies in Stevington. Further updates are awaited.
- IX. Chief Officer for Legal, Performance and Democratic Services will be leaving the Council as the Monitoring Officer on the 22nd December. An interim replacement is expected to be put in place. RP
- X. RP to invite Chief Executive of Bedford Borough Council to a Parish Council meeting to discuss work of the Monitoring Officer and how Bedford Borough can better work with our Parish Council. RP
- XI. Consider option to invite Mayor to a joint Parish meeting with Stagsden and Bromham. RP
- XII. Clerks hours confirmed as 1hr per day Monday to Friday for reviewing emails + 3hrs on Wednesday to deal with more substantial matters. RP
- XIII. New Councillor training confirmed for JSu. RP to send new councillor training dates to MB. RP
- XIV. New dates awaited in Spring for Chair training. RP

8. Borough Council Report

a) Cllrs. Robert Rigby and Dylan Simmons – Update

See attached report.

Bus service issues are being escalated by our Ward Councillors.

9. Planning Update

a) Process update

- I. No current applications to be considered.

- II. No. 7 Silver street planning application rejected by Borough planners.
- III. Still no decision on application for (house number?) Farley Way. JD/RP
- IV. When RP forwards planning applications to all councillors, all will review documents online send comments to JD who will then collate and forward to RP for completion of response template and delivery to Borough Planning via email. Parish Council must respond using standard Borough Council template with which Parish Councils only have the option to 'SUPPORT' or 'OBJECT' and add comments. All present agreed to this process.

10. Highways & Traffic Management Update

a) Update from Cllr Richard Taylor

See attached report.

In response to an enquiry about consideration of average speed cameras for Stevington, RT advised there are still negative behaviours evident e.g. when a driver is briefly delayed in a road section with average speed cameras present.

b) Speed signs – update

We have received Borough Highways schematic for a new 40mph speed limit extent at Park Road. There are similar plans for West End and Bedford Borough have indicated an intention to follow up in future..

c) Other Highways

- I. Bottle Bank, Park Road countryside walk layby – Borough Highways have decided the facility will remain, despite their apparent initial opinion to the contrary.
- II. Farley Way street sign, detached from posts, is on Borough to do list if not already ordered.
- III. During discussion about practicality of installing bollards at the Silver Street/Cross location to protect buildings from commercial vehicles, it was noted that this solution is considered likely not to comply with equalities legislation.
- IV. Top of Court Lane – expired life of illuminated traffic sign. Should RP Borough be responsible for replacement? The sign does still have some possible value in warning drivers. RP to engage with Borough.

a) Road safety funding grants

- I. Stevington does not appear suitably aligned with the eligibility criteria for the PCC grant, the apparent hierarchy being county or RP borough/town for return on investment.

b) Dropped kerb on Church Road – (JSu)

- I. A number of people have tripped and/or fallen. The wooden post is a trip hazard that needs to be addressed. RP to speak with Bedford Borough Highways Manager. RP
- c) Gap on Park Road (JSu)
 - I. Vehicle access onto Park Road near The Cross is single vehicle access in reality. People coming down Court Lane feel they have right of way. Should a give way to oncoming traffic sign be positioned Court Lane before we have a serious issue/ RP to speak with Borough Highways (similar signage in place at Harrold High Street). RP
 - II. Similar situation to i) above at Ashmi Farm and Duck End Farm. RP
This matter was progressed through correspondence with resident and Borough Highways.
- d) Incident Log & Reporting Form – update
 - I. RP to start writing to companies whose drivers ignore traffic restrictions through Stevington. We need to push for greater enforcement of traffic regulations.
- e) Traffic review – update
 - I. In May 2022 during a meeting with Cllr Jon Abbott, Andrew Prigmore, Borough Highways Manager committed to a traffic review in Stevington after 12 months after (Aug 2023). This is covered in the attached report from RT, with Borough stating it in effect considers the matter closed.
- f) Morelock signs – risk assessment update.
 - I. This is no longer required – the speed indicator device at Park Road has now been converted to maintenance free solar power.

11. Environment & Footpaths

- a) Report & Update – Cllr Strutt
 - I. Stevington Environmental Group have discussed drought resilience concerns and are developing a strategy.
 - II. SEG constitution may be updated to enforce requirement of Parish Council representation on the SEG committee.
 - III. SEG is looking for Parish Council to support any climate crisis issues SEG may face in future.
- b) Tree Planting event 25/26 November
 - I. Community planting event between will be held 10-12 noon. Entrance opposite West End and directions will be provided from there. No parking onsite and volunteers need to walk there.
- c) Footpaths update

- I. 17, Burridges Close / Borough volunteers also cleared Bridleway 2 near Ashmi Farm 15/11
 - II. Access to FP19 behind Stevington Church – work in progress
 - III. Bedford Borough running behind schedule on a lot of maintenance work.
- d) No dog fouling zone – children’s play park
- I. Following original complaint to Parish Council from a local resident, Borough Council have enforced legislation calling for dog owners to clearing up after their animals.
 - II. Non-compliance is an offence.
 - III. Resident has requested proper signs which are clear and easy to read and placed conspicuously. RP
- e) Other Business
- I. The flood group storage shed is paid for and will be delivered around 15th January 2024. JS

12. Police Matters

- a) Crime Report & Update from Cllr Mouritz Botha
- I. No report of any crimes.
 - II. MB will ask police to attend December coffee & croissants and also consider attending a Wednesday soup event. MB

13. Community Matters

- a) Report from Cllr Janet Day
See report attached.
- b) Playing Field fence – update
See report attached.
- c) Playing field hedges & cherry tree – update
See report attached.

14. Portfolio Holders

- a) Appointment of Portfolio Holders

The Parish Council confirmed the following portfolio appointments:

- **Highways** – RT to carry on in current role.
- **Footpaths** – We have volunteers within parish who liaise with Bedford Borough to keep footpaths clear. Riseley have a group and equipment for people to use. MB happy to collaborate.
- **Socia Media & Liaison with police** – MB to carry on in current role.
- **Environment** – JS to carry on in current role. GK will also support as he’s organizing field mowing.

- **Stevington Windmill** – GK to take up role. RP to forward email. RP
- **Social Centre Exec Cttee** – JSu to take up role. JD will email Linda Penny to confirm appointment. JD
- **Barringer Trust Representation** – JD to take up role.
- **Planning** – All Councillors to review and JD will collate responses.
- **Village Magazine** – JD will collate contributions.
- **EWR Overview** – JS to take up role with support from JSu.
- **Village Welcome Pack** – JD/RP to produce. JD/RP

PROPOSAL to allocate Portfolio responsibilities and other Parish Council duties as outlined above.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Janet Day

SECONDED: Cllr James Surtees

15. Communications

- a) Communications and Social Media Policy – review RP
- I. RP to distribute to all for review at a future meeting.

16. Village Hall

- a) SSCC meeting 29th November 7.30pm
- I. JSu will attend the meeting and update the Parish Council in due course.
- b) Legal representation – update
- I. RP has discussed with NALC and County Officers for advice.
- II. It was suggested Wellers Hedleys are very experienced lawyers in the sector and specialise in parish council and Charitable Trust representation.
- III. NALC guidance on charity law recognizes a number of types of trusteeships. RP will provide guidance document to JSu.

17. Finance

- a) Financial Report & payment of accounts
- The report was presented to the Councillors and is attached at the end of these minutes.

PROPOSAL to ratify expenditure presented on report.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Richard Taylor

SECONDED: Cllr. John Strutt

PROPOSAL to pursue revised quotes for repair of lawnmower up to max of £3,500

PROPOSED: Cllr. Janet Day

SECONDED: Cllr. Mouritz Botha

VOTE: Unanimous

b) Pre-precept discussions

Councillors were reminded January 2024 meeting will be dedicated to setting the annual Parish budget 2024-2025. Proposals for consideration were called for.

18. Correspondence

No additional matters to report.

19. Any other Business (*for information only*)

a) Councillor training opportunities

RP provided dates for BATPC training sessions 2023-24

b) MB raised a need for the Parish Council to consider pest control on the playing fields.

c) A6 bypass works extended to single lane and due to complete on 15th December.

20. Date of Next Meeting

24th January 2024 in the Church Rooms

Schedule of 2023-24 Meetings

20th March 2024 in Stevington Village Hall

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 9.30 pm

Signed as a true reflection of the meeting:

Signed	
Dated	24 th January 2024

Chair