

Meeting:	Stevington Parish Council Meeting 24 th July 2024 at 7.30pm
Council Members in attendance:	Cllr. Janet Day (JD), Chair Cllr. John Strutt (JS) Cllr. Gareth King (GK) Cllr. James Surtees (JSu)
Apologies received:	Cllr. Mouritz Botha (MB) Cllr Robert Rigby
Non-attendance:	
Borough Council Member:	Cllr Dylan Simmons
Clerk to the Council:	Rosemary Plum (RP)
Public Attendance	None

MINUTES OF MEETING

1. Welcome

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

- Cllr Robert Rigby
- Cllr. Mouritz Botha (MB) who also sent his resignation from the Parish Council with immediate effect. Councillors called for members to give due notice of their intended resignation in future.

3. Declarations of Interest

- Cllr. James Surtees as a Village Hall Trustee and also personally affected by matters at Item 13.
- Cllr. Janet Day who represents the Parish Council on the Barringer Trust

4. Open Forum

It was agreed to Invite to a representative of Grand Union Housing Group to attend a Parish Council meeting. RP

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

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

PROPOSED: Cllr. James Surtees

SECONDED: Cllr. John Strutt

6. Matters Arising from the minutes – *information only*

Nothing reported that isn't already covered on this Agenda.

7. Clerk's Report – *information only*

- Bulb planting offer from Borough. Councillors agreed to approx.. 15 sqm of bulb planting to take place around the large tree at the entrance to the village hall car park. The cost will be covered by Ward Funds. RP
- Equipment in playground – a member of HAGS maintenance team will contact RP asap to discuss maintenance required. RP
- Bedford Borough Council is encouraging applications for two new grant schemes funded by the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) to empower rural communities by supporting impactful volunteering projects and creating or improving local green spaces. Funding is for capital investment only (e.g., equipment, materials, renovations). Individual grants range from £1,000 to a maximum of £10,000. All projects must be completed by 5th January 2025. RP to forward details to JS. RP
- DS advised that Dragons teeth are on order with the Borough and will be delivered in next 2-4wks. Borough is having difficulties locating money for the gates and struggling to find a suitable location for where to position them. JS and JD will meet with Borough Councillor Manager to discuss options and raise concerns about the condition of the footpath by the Cross. RP
JD/JS
- AGAR signed off by internal auditor and will be sent to Forvis Mazars Accountants this week with accompany statement. RP

8. Borough Council Matters

a) Borough Councillors Report

- I. See report attached.
- II. From 1st August, Grant Palmer will be operating the 25A bus service only. The Stevington bus route which is subsidised by the Borough, will be operated by Stagecoach. Any timetable changes will be communicated ahead of time.
- III. DS has reported the path between Burridges Close and Red Lion to the Borough for maintenance. RP

- IV. The Borough is receptive to additional signage at the A428 to prevent HGV's accessing the village. However, the Borough Manager has also stated he feels there is sufficient signage already in place so any additional signs will have to be paid for by the Parish Council and/or Ward Funds. The Borough Manager is putting together a proposal. **RP**

- V. Oakley Bridge unexpectedly closed until 29th July due to AWA works

- VI. Mayor's Climate Change fund has agreed to fund the addition of solar panels on the Village Hall roof.

9. Planning

- a) Update
Reports circulated to members as received.

10. Highways & Traffic Management Update

- a) Update
Covered under Items 7 & 8 above.

11. Environment & Footpaths

- a) Update – Cllr Strutt
- I. See attached report
 - II. JS gave thanks to Parish Council for supporting the screening of the 6 Inches of Soil film recently.
 - III. Borough Maintenance is getting around footpaths to clear them – can't do hedges at the moment due to conservation.
 - IV. Water safety - RP to update website with information received from Bedfordshire Fire Service and send to JD for distribution **RP**

12. Police Matters

- a) Update – Cllr Botha
- I. Due to the resignation of MB, no reports were available. **RP**
 - II. RP will review and report on police data going forward.

- b) Priority Settings Meeting 26/7 **JD**
JD will try to attend in place of MB.

13. Community Matters

- a) Update – Cllr Day
See attached report.

b) Anti-social dog situation

- I. New residents in Longacre have a very large security dog kept outside. Dog barks most of the night every night.
- II. The homeowner has been approached on behalf of a number of residents, to no avail.
- III. Residents have put in complaints to Borough council who have written to the home owners where the dog is kept.
- IV. Concerns being raised about animal welfare as the dog is obviously distressed if barking incessantly.
- V. Matter is ongoing pending involvement of the Borough Dog Warden.

c) Sunflower Fields – update

- I. Parish Council has no control over situation. JD offered to go to meeting between residents and Pell family where the decision was taken for the seedlings to be sprayed off.

d) Barringer Trust – update

- II. JD impressed by what the group does in the interest of beneficiaries and management of buildings.
- III. Ramp being built and work on sewage tanks and pipework in front of the almshouses is being undertaken.

14. Stevington Windmill

a) Update – Cllr King

- I. GK and a resident met with Borough Manager for Culture and Heritage.
- II. Maintenance plan in place.
- III. Self-set trees showing signs of growth at base of windmill and Borough will send out maintenance team.
- IV. Safety concerns raised about the condition of the interior of the windmill and its very steep stairs.
- V. HSE, won't allow opening to the public without further assessment.
- VI. Should be scope to open on certain days of the year and Borough has details of a company who will demo the windmill in action.
- VII. Windmill is put into action by the Borough from time to time to stop buildup of water and mould on sails and prevent rotting.
- VIII. Windmill is rumoured to be a Pokemon fight site with vehicles accessing the area at all hours of day and night.
- IX. Further damage to roof tiles to be repaired.
- X. RP will engage with Borough Manager about plans moving forward.

RP

- XI. Leisure & Tourism officer for Bedford Borough keen to tie in windmill with established walking routes.

15. Village Hall

a) Update – Cllr Surtees

- I. New Management Committee formed.
- II. New Committee raised possibility of purchasing the Village Hall and field from the Parish Council.
- III. JSu to new Committee to clarify why they would want to purchase the site. **JSu**
- IV. Original documentation to be reviewed for terms and conditions.
- V. JSu will be responsible together with another resident for organisation of fireworks display this year.
- VI. JSu to provide RP with copy of Risk Assessment for insurance. **JSu**

16. Playing Field

- a) Maintenance of play equipment
 - I. Discussed under Item 7.

17. Financial Matters

a) AGAR – Ratify

AGAR to be ratified was circulated to members prior to the meeting. **RP**
 PROPOSED: Cllr. John Strutt
 SECONDED: Cllr. Gareth King

b) Bank Mandate – update

PROPOSAL: To remove former Clerk, Kevin Papworth from any aspect of the Stevington Parish Council bank accounts and to confirm the only two remaining signatories on all the accounts should be Clerk & RFO, Rosemary Plum and Councillor Janet Day. **RP**
 PROPOSED: Cllr. Janet Day
 SECONDED: Cllr. John Strutt

c) Court Lane Landscapes Contract – propose change

The contractor has confirmed they are unable to continue with this contract due to force majeure.
 PROPOSAL: To terminate the hedge and grass maintenance contract with Court Lane Landscapes.
 PROPOSED: Cllr. Janet Day
 SECONDED: Cllr. James Surtees

RP to write to Court Land Landscapes and thank them for their outstanding service. **RP**

Interim arrangements for immediate and new contract longer term.

PROPOSAL: Current playing field contractors, AJ Contracting & Sons Ltd to take over the maintenance of the enclosed play area, car park and patio behind the Village Hall for the remainder of the 2024/25 season.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Janet Day

SECONDED: Cllr. Gareth King

GK

JSu to update the Village Hall Management Committee on the above situation.

JSu

d) Financial Report

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

PROPOSED: Cllr. John Strutt

SECONDED: Cllr. Gareth King

e) Borough independent review of special expenses

RP outlined independent review of Special Expenses to be used by the Council

RP

f) DSC Directory

PROPOSAL: To fund 33.3% of the cost of the purchase of the Directory of Social Change together with Clapham and Pavenham Parish Councils.

Anticipated cost of £110 + VAT

PROPOSED: Cllr. Janet Day

SECONDED: Cllr. James Surtees

RP

g) Request for donation of £200 for the Village Picnic in September.

PROPOSED: Cllr. James Surtees

SECONDED: Cllr. John Strutt

VOTE: Unanimous

RP/JSu

18. Councillor Vacancies

a) Discuss strategy

- I. Table at village picnic to explain/promote role
- II. Promote on Parish website and social media
- III. Notice on Parish notice board

RP

19. Correspondence

Nothing to report



20. Date of Next Meeting

25th September 2024 in the VILLAGE HALL

2024-25 Meetings Calendar

- 27th November 2024 - PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (VILLAGE HALL)
- 22nd January 2025 - PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (VILLAGE HALL)
- 26th March 2025 - PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (VILLAGE HALL)

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 9.07 pm

Signed as a true reflection of the meeting:

Signed	
Dated	25 th September 2024

Chair