

# THRIPLow & HEATHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall Committee Room on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.30 pm

Present – Jane Gough, David Easthope, Carly Richman, Rowan Pashley, Sonya Cooper

District Councillor – Richard Williams  
County Councillor – Peter McDonald – part-time  
Parish Clerk – Martyn Corbet  
RFO – Austin Flynn

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from David Schneider.

## **2. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

The minutes, having been previously circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chairman. .

## **3. Matters arising from the above-mentioned minutes not otherwise covered by this agenda**

There were no matters arising.

## **4. Health & Safety , Health & Safety and Environmental Issues**

### **a) Completion of Parish Councillor's Reports**

In the absence of Cllr Schneider it was agreed that outstanding reports will be forwarded to him as a matter of priority.. It was also agreed that Cllr Ramsay will be asked to assist Cllr Schneider; **FR**

### **b) Electricity Supplies.**

The parish clerk has been in contact with Utility Aid who act as brokers in obtaining the best electricity supply deals available. There were 3 deals on offer. These were considered by the council and a 3 year deal was agreed. This will run until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2027. The amount payable per annum is £1,241.70. It covers electricity supplies to all streetlights except those on the original Heathfield Estate. Acceptance of this deal was proposed by Cllr Easthope and seconded by Cllr Gough and agreed; **MC**

### **c) Parking in Church Street**

Cllr Gough has spoken to the PCSO. He has advised not to proceed with the notices for vehicles parked in Church Street. Cllr Gough has looked into other forms of dealing with the situation principally by way of "Pavement Buddies". Cllr Pashley said that the PTA are also looking into this. It was that the PTA is better equipped to provide and operate "Pavement Buddies";

### **d) White Line at the Junction of The Green and Fowlmere Road**

This matter has been the subject of correspondence with Cambridgeshire CC. Derek Pinner wishes to pursue the installation of white lines. The parish council supports Mr Pinner in his attempts to have the white lines installed.

## **5. Parish Recreation Grounds and Maintenance**

### **a) Goalposts at Ringstone**

Cllr Richman has contacted the contact she has received via the parish clerk but received no response. It was agreed the parish clerk will write to Croudace and ask if some of the existing S106 monies can be used to acquire goal posts **MC**

### **b) Repair/Replacement of Pepperslade Notice Board**

It was agreed that Cllr Pashley will modify the notice board he has repaired to include another lock so that both parts can be used for parish council notices. Chris Gough will then be asked to erect the notice board as previously agreed; **RP**

### **c) Quotes re Roundabout at The Rec**

A full set of quotes is still awaited

### **d) Replacement of Middle Street sign**

The street sign at the Gravel Pit Hill end of Middle Street has disappeared. The parish clerk will investigate obtaining a replacement. It was agreed that the new sign will have to be cheaper than the one installed at Fowlmere Road; **MC**

**e) Clearing of vegetation obstructing the Church Street sign**

Cllr Gough has done this;

**f) Cutting the hedge on the Heathfield Open Space**

Hardy Landscapes have provided a quote of £1,940 plus VAT. Acceptance of this estimate was proposed by Cllr Richman and seconded by Cllr Gough and agreed. **MC**

**6. Updates and progress reports on**

**a) Wooded area at Hurdles Way**

No one has got back to Cllr Pashley about this. Cllr Gough stressed the need for this matter to be progressed; **RP**

**b) Work on the Village Green to prevent damage during Daffodil Weekend**

Cllr Pashley said it is not the right time of year to do the work. He will obtain a quote from someone to lay the matting. Cllr Easthope said that The Green has recovered well from last Daffodil Weekend; **RP**

**c) Suggested Dog Litter Bin on Church Street**

The parish clerk read an email from SCDC providing details of 2 different locations for the bin and costs. He will contact KWS to find out whether they have any cables etc in the proposed site which is owned by them and whether they are happy for a bin to be placed there. The bin would be a "Topsy Bin". The cost will be £417.75 plus VAT and £4.00 each time the bin is emptied. The amount for this bin will need to be included in the precept; **MC**

**d) Application re 20 mph Speed Limited**

The parish clerk had circulated an email from CCC confirming that the application has been unsuccessful but that it still remains on the list for consideration in the next tranche of applications. It was agreed that he would contact Josh Reynolds of CCC to seek his advice whether the application should be enhanced; **MC**

**d) Village Sign**

Cllr Easthope has been informed that the work needed on the Village Sign could cost between £1,500 and £1,800. It would be advisable to budget for £2,000 just in case extra work is needed. Cllr Easthope has contacted the parish clerk in Fowlmere. They have an enamelled sign. The process for this is very expensive. Cllr Easthope said he would discuss this with the Daffodil Weekend Trust. **DE**

**Drayton Estates Group**

The parish clerk received an email from this Company today offering Ground Maintenance Services. It was agreed he will investigate further and report back at the next meeting. **MC**

**7. Footpaths**

**a) Replacement of the Finger Post at Crow's Parlour**

The parish clerk has investigated obtaining a replacement finger sign via a website details of which he had received from Cllr McDonald. The company concerned does not manufacture finger signs. There are alternatives Cllrs Gough and Pashley will provide addresses for these to the parish clerk. **MC**

**8. Suggested Parking at Ringstone**

**a) Report from Working Party**

Cllr Richman said that people in Ringstone are parking on the POS. Cllr Pashley said that there are 6 parking spaces along the road. If parking were provided on the grass then a further 10 would become available. The approximate cost of each parking space would be £1,600. The total cost would be £25,500 for the provision of 16 parking spaces. This cost was felt to be prohibitive. Additionally there are problems with an existing footpath and the need for an application for change of use. These would involve extra costs.

It was agreed that there would never be enough parking spaces in the area and that pursuing extra parking spaces would not be an appropriate use of public money. It was also agreed that using part of a public open space to provide parking is not appropriate. It was agreed that the area should be protected to prevent parking on the grass. Cllr Pashley will investigate arranging protection for the area. **RP**

**b) Availability of Section 106 monies**

No request will be made for use of these monies for parking spaces.

**c) Consideration of the desirability of the project in general**

Please see above at a)

**9. Tree Works & Tree Protection Orders**

**a) Tree Works**

23/0713/TTCA – Tree works Manor Farm, 50 Church Street - no objections

23/1268/TTCA – 11 Lower Street – no objection

**b) Free Tree Scheme**

The parish council will not be applying for any free trees this year.

**c) Quotes for:**

**i) Tree work on The Green at The Smithy**

A quote from Shelford tree Service Limited of £was accepted. This was proposed by Cllr Easthope and seconded by Cllr Gough;

**ii) Tree work at The Rec**

A quote from Gardening Pixies of £150.00 was accepted. This was proposed by Cllr Easthope and seconded by Cllr Gough.

**Additional Tree Matters**

Cllr Easthope reported that a branch of a tree in The Spinney opposite the pub is resting on a cable. He has contacted Npower who have not got back to him to confirm whether it is their cable. The alternative might be that the cable belongs to BT.

The school have drawn attention to the fact that an ash tree outside its premises has a branch overhanging the road which is potentially dangerous and needs reducing by 3 metres. This branch is touching an electricity cable. Hopefully Npower will cut the branch back. The parish clerk will contact them. MC

**10. Planning Matters**

**a) Planning applications received:**

23/03194 /HFUL - single storey rear extension 91 Kingsway – no objections

**b) Planning Decisions Received**

No planning decisions have been received;

**c) Planning Appeals**

No planning appeals have been received

**d) Neighbourhood Plan**

The next meeting will be on the 15<sup>th</sup> November.

**e) Miscellaneous Matters**

There were no other matters raised.

**11. Financial Matters**

**a) Authority was granted to pay the following:**

|                                                                                                                       | Amount   | VAT    | Total    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------|----------|
| Hardy Landscapes - Grass Cutting 6 - Village Green - £169.14 Cutting 7 Rec – £ 96.49 – Cutting 7 Heathfield - £464.04 | 729.87   | 145.94 | 875.61   |
| CG Carpentry – moving notice board                                                                                    | 50.00    |        | 50.00    |
| Payroll - November                                                                                                    | 1,178.66 |        | 1,178.66 |
| Parish Clerk's expenses                                                                                               | 14.00    |        | 14.00    |

**b) The following payments made between meetings were ratified:**

|                                         | Amount   | VAT  | Total    |
|-----------------------------------------|----------|------|----------|
| Payroll – October                       | 1,176.66 |      | 1,176.66 |
| Npower – Heathfield Electricity- August | 83.35    | 4.17 | 87'52    |
| Npower – Heathfield Electricity - Sept  | 123.46   | 6.17 | 129.63   |
| SSE                                     | 150.17   | 7.47 | 157.64   |

**c) Permission to make the following payment was granted. It having been received too late for inclusion in the agenda:**

|                                                                 | Amount | VAT   | Total  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------|
| Hardy Landscapes – Yearly cut of hedges and removal of cuttings | 464.10 | 92.82 | 556.82 |

**d) Credits received**

The RFO confirmed that a credit had been received from CCC of £1,283.74 in respect of grass cutting. The Interest Rate on the monies held at Lloyds Bank PLC has risen as had the interest received.

**e) Section 106 monies**

The S106 monies remain invested in accounts with Cambridge Building Society and Saffron Building Society. These monies are utilised for maintenance purposes and appropriate amounts to cover such expenditure are withdrawn on an annual basis. In line with present economic conditions the rate of interest payable on the monies is minimal;

**f) External Audit**

The parish clerk reported that the External Audit has been completed;

**g) Setting a date of Pre- Precept Meeting**

There will be meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November regarding the precept and also a review of the parish clerk's performance.

**12. Reports (if any):**

**a) Neighbourhood Forum**

Nothing has been heard from the IWM it is believed that meetings are not taking place;

**b) Village Hall Management Committee**

Cllr Gough said the remote control system for the heating has been installed. There have been problems with rubbish left by hall users. Brian Cutter will be asked to clear the weeds and debris around the outside of the building. Cllr Gough explained that The Barbara Pointon Room will be inaugurated on the 21<sup>st</sup> December;

**c) Police & Neighbourhood Watch**

Cllr Gough had nothing to report.

**d) District Council Report**

Cllr Williams had prepared a report a copy of which is attached;

**e) County Council Report**

Cllr McDonald had prepared a report a copy of which is attached.

A discussion took place between parish councillors and Cllr McDonald. This centred upon the 4 day week being trialled by SCDC. Cllr Gough suggested that the trial had been started without proper consultation. This was refuted by Cllr McDonald who gave various facts and figures which were intended to justify the experiment. These were greeted with some scepticism by parish councillors.

**13. Remembrance Sunday**

Cllr Gough represented to parish council at the Remembrance Day Parade;

**14. Donations to Duxford Chatterbox and Royston & District Transport**

It was agreed that a donation of £150.00 should be made to the Duxford Chatterbox and one of £120 to Royston & District Transport;

**15. Parish Clerks Working Party**

The parish clerk explained the purpose of this. It was agreed that it is a good idea for parish clerks to pool information etc when needed;

**16. Area on Village Green outside The Green Man**

A letter approved by the parish council has been sent to the owner of the pub. A response is awaited.

**17. Support for the "Hedgehog Project"**

The parish clerk read out an email he has received from the organiser of the project. It was agreed the parish council should subscribe to it. The purpose is to protect hedgehogs. MC

**18. Correspondence and information received**

The parish clerk had circulated a list of correspondence received.

**19. Meetings for the forthcoming year:**

The next parish council meeting will be on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 10.10 pm

Chairman .....

Dated .....

## **District Report**

### **Best Value Notice – Four Day Week**

The Department for Communities and Local Government has issued South Cambs Council with a “Best Value Notice” because of the department's concern surrounding the four-day week that South Cambs Council has implemented for its staff (officially as a trial up to May 2024). A Best Value Notice means that the Department believes the Council may not be fulfilling its duty to achieve best value and continuous improvement for local tax payers. As a result of the notice the Council has been asked to provide the Department with weekly data so that the council's performance across a range of services can be monitored. These special measures will be in place until May 2024, when the trial of the four-day week is due to end. The Council, for its part continues to claim that the trial is a success and cites a number of measures to this effect. This includes a claim that staff absence due to sickness has fallen by 1/3 since the trial started. However, the Council was unable to say when asked whether this figure took into account that fact that staff are working fewer days, so will, by definition, be taking fewer sickness days than before the trial period.

### **A505**

There was a meeting of the councillor contact group for the A505 study in October. No specific proposals were put forward but the options under consideration, but the project team are considering options around a series of ‘mobility hubs’ and increased active travel paths along the A505 route. The South Cambs Councillors at the meeting pressed the need for opening up junction 9 of the M11 to southbound traffic as the most effective way to address congestion on the route.

### **Six Free Trees**

The Council has launched another six free trees offer for Parish Councils. Further details are available here: <https://www.scams.gov.uk/free-trees-for-south-cambridgeshire-towns-and-villages/>

### **Green Grants for Businesses**

South Cambs Council and other local Councils has launched an initiative with business charity Allia to help small to medium businesses across Cambridgeshire work towards Net Zero. Funding for the initiative has come from the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund. Further details are available here: <https://www.scams.gov.uk/green-grants-for-cambridgeshire-businesses/>

### **7A Bus Service (Heathfield – Sawston)**

The Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority has recently reviewed the &A bus service, which runs from Heathfield to Sawston. The CA route is not widely used and has a large cost per passenger in terms of public subsidy (£124 cost per passenger). The CA has recommended retaining the route but merging the service with a home-school service to make the route more cost efficient. The recommendation will be discussed at a meeting of the CA Transport Committee on 15/11/23.

## **Cambridgeshire County Report**

Cambridgeshire County Council's estimated budget gap for 2024/5 has increased from a predicted £16m to more than £23m – largely due to increases in demand for services and inflationary pressure.

In papers published for last week's Strategy, Resources and Performance committee, the Council is also estimating that without action being taken this gap will grow, and is predicted to be more than £20m in the following year, and a further £19m+ the year after that.

In 2023-24, pressures on our budget have arisen principally due to several very high-cost children's social care placements and a delay in receiving income from a newly constructed solar farm (which requires connection to the electricity grid). In addition, we are seeing that demand for bed-based care for older people is also rising, following a period of reduction in demand and then stability stretching back for some time, to the beginning of the pandemic.

It also points to wider national and even international issues which have impact on the council's pressures – such as interest rates which the Bank of England has said are likely to remain above 5% until 2026, which impact on all goods and services the council buys, the cost of borrowing as well as pay award costs for both council workers, and a large externally commissioned workforce which includes residential care for vulnerable adults and children.

Proposals to set the Council's 2024/5 budget will be discussed by Members in December before a period of scrutiny, throughout January, including an opportunity for residents to comment on the plans.

### **Fostering Teenagers**

The Cambridgeshire Fostering Service is asking parents whose own children have flown the nest, either to attend university or gain independence in other ways, to consider fostering vulnerable young people.

In Cambridgeshire, there are currently more than 400 young people in the 12-18 age range who, for reasons beyond their control, are unable to continue living with their birth families. These young people would benefit hugely from the invaluable experience of people who have raised teenagers and supported them on their journey to independence.

### **Quality Of Life Survey**

Most Cambridgeshire residents feel happy and safe in the county, well connected to their local communities, and believe it's a great place to raise children – according to the County Council's first annual Quality of Life survey involving more than 5,500 residents.

But unsurprisingly this is less likely to be the case for people in some specific groups, with a stark finding that loneliness in Cambridgeshire is far higher than the national average. Loneliness was most likely to be reported by those aged 18 to 25, who also reported more struggles with their mental health.

Satisfaction with Council services was mixed. It was highest across library, waste management, street lighting and registration services, and lowest in road and pavement maintenance.

A snapshot of results

- 84% of residents feel safe in, and 75% feel they belong to, their local community - defined as the area within 15-minute walk of their home.
- 72% of residents reported high or very high levels of happiness, with an average score of 7.25, in line with the Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2022 national benchmark of 7.45.

- 29% of residents indicated they often feel lonely - higher than national ONS data, of 8% feeling lonely always or often, and 25% felt lonely always, often or some of the time.
- Younger age groups are more likely to report loneliness – including 52% of 18-24s – compared to only 18% of those aged 55+ years.
- 37% of residents reported struggling with their mental health in the last year. This rose to 61% for 18-24s and 59% for 25-34s reporting struggling with mental health in the last year. A significantly smaller proportion of 65+ years report similar struggles (11%).
- 30% of parents reported their child has faced mental health problems in the last year.
- 52% of residents trust CCC to make decisions about services.
- 44% agree that the council delivers value for money, slightly higher than the Local Government Association (LGA) national benchmark of 42%.
- 45% agree that the council acts on the concerns of residents against 40% who disagree, with a high number of don't knows (16%). This is below the LGA average of 52%, with only 2% unsure - but the two surveys use different answer scales and so are not directly comparable
- 84% of those who use the services say they are satisfied with libraries and registration services, with 83% satisfied with waste management and 78% with street lighting. Park & Ride, the guided busway and trading standards also scored satisfaction levels above 70%
- 76% are dissatisfied with road and pavement maintenance – both a local and national concern. In open questions at the end of the survey, improving road maintenance and fixing pot holes were the most often raised concern.
- 86% of residents are concerned about cost of living increases, as a result 48% have cut back on heating use, 27% have cut back on nutritious food, 8% have used a foodbank and 9% have stopped using prescription medicines.

Peter McDonald

Nov 5<sup>th</sup> 2023







