

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7:00 pm.

**Present**

Cllr Adam Quinney	Chairman
Cllr Peter Taaffe	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Nick Moon	
Cllr Rob Clarke	
Cllr Rammy Arafa	
Cllr Justin Kerridge	WCC
Teresa Murphy	Clerk

There were 10 parishioners present.

1. **Apologies:** Received and accepted from Cllr Neil Edden, Cllr Peter Hencher-Serafin. The chairman expressed his thanks to Cllr Hencher-Serafin for contacting Highways to clear the brambles from around the bus stop on the Slough and, as a safety measure, to install slabs.

2. **Disclosures of interest:** Cllr Quinney declared a conflict of interest and will abstain from voting on planning applications 23/03290/AGNOT (Reins Farm) and 23/03363/AGNOT (Robert Green).

**3. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

**4. Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

***Parishes working together: Ongoing.***

***Dark Skies Policy:*** Cllr Clarke has maps showing light pollution levels in the surrounding area. He has also been in touch with the Redditch and Stratford on Avon Astronomical Societies, who both support us. A reply is awaited from Bromsgrove Astronomical Society. The chairman reported that the aim was to gather information in order to formulate a Dark Skies Policy, which would go forward as part of the Parish Plan

**Ongoing**

***Speed limit on the Slough:*** The chairman has written a letter of support to Cllr Hencher-Serafin relating to the proposal to reduce the speed limit from 50 mph to 40 mph along the length of The Slough.

***Update on Accss to Footpaths Project:*** Taken under Agenda Item 5.

**Purchase of sandbags:** The chairman confirmed that sandbags had been purchased from the parishioner concerned and would now be stored for future use by the parish.

**Quotes from local contractors for tree clearing:** The chairman is in the process of obtaining quotes for work to clear small trees in the recreation ground. Cllr Taaffe confirmed that the Tree Survey Report has been uploaded to the website.

**Grass cutting contract:** The clerk confirmed that the grass cutting contract has been confirmed and J R Gibbs will carry out the work for the period 2024-2025.

**Review of the Social Media Policy:** The clerk confirmed that the Policy has been updated and a copy uploaded to the website.

**Draft Budget, Precept Request:** The clerk confirmed these documents have been uploaded to the website and relevant paperwork returned to SDC.

**Roadside Hedges Poster:** It was confirmed that the posters detailing guidelines for the scale and size of hedges and trees along the roadside have been posted on the notice boards and on the website.

**Research into Smart Water:** Cllr Clarke had contacted Alcester Police concerning the possibility of holding another property marking event in Sambourne. He was informed that there has been a further spike in burglaries in other areas and the police are focusing on those areas before returning to Sambourne. The police do, however, have a limited supply of UV pens that can be used to mark valuable items. They would be happy for residents to go along to Alcester Police Station, talk to an officer and get a pen. The Police Station is open every Wednesday evening from 6 pm – 9 pm.

## 5. Improved Access to Footpaths Project

For the past two years Cllr Nick Moon has been working on this project to improve access for everybody to footpaths in and around Sambourne.

He has made contact with the Ramblers Association and Warwickshire County Council and through these organisations he has secured funding to help with the cost of the purchase and installation of gates.

Five routes have been agreed for improvement of access. The plan has been to start locally, with the five routes around Sambourne, work will then be expanded out to those paths further afield - to Coughton, Studley and Astwold Bank.

Volunteers from the Ramblers Association in Solihull and Redditch have met in Sambourne and helped with clearing some of the footpaths. Particular progress has been made on the footpath by the side Sambourne Hall Farm, where the volunteers have cleared the path of undergrowth.

Dialogue with local land owners, seeking their permission and agreement to our proposals for improvement, is continuing.

Cllr Moon has some handouts of the various routes that are being looked at. The aim is to get the routes up and running ready for this summer.

The chairman thanked Cllr Moon for his hard work and dedication in taking this Project forward.

#### 5. Flooding in Middletown and by Spinney Cottage

Cllr Clarke has again reported the blocked drain and collapsed verge to WCC, which have caused the flooding outside Spinney Cottage.

Cllr Taaffe reported that, following further flooding in Middletown Lane affecting residents of Southfield and Chata, both he and the resident of Southfield emailed WCC Highways Surveyor. The following response was received:

*'It seems that the problem starts with the blocked gully on the corner of The Green, the water is not going away so it is just flowing down to Middletown Lane. I have raised a job to have this gully and the manhole jetted.*

*The gully and the manhole outside Southfield are working, you can hear the water in the manhole flowing and there aren't any blockages in the gully. I believe the issue was purely down to around 4 days of non-stop heavy rainfall and the system could not cope.*

*I noticed that someone dug out a trench down the verge and into the water course to help get the water away and I have raised a job to have a formalised concrete spillway installed here, so that the water can flow straight off the road and into the water course. This should help during extreme weather.'*

The chairman reported that he had visited Middletown and spoken to residents who had experienced flooding. He also spoke to Mr Kirk, who owns the big field in Middletown, and they looked at the drains on the other side of the road. The drains are not able to cope with the volume of water that comes through the culvert in periods of heavy rain.

Cllr Kerridge said that he believed there were grants available to help with the alleviation of flooding. The chairman proposed that a meeting is arranged with the WCC Localities Officer, to discuss and progress a solution. Cllr Kerridge asked to be copied in to all emails in relation to the flooding.

Cllr Kerridge encouraged any residents who had been affected by flooding to report it on: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/reporhighwayproblem](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/reporhighwayproblem).

One parishioner commented that he would be reluctant to report flooding to his property for data protection reasons. Cllr Kerridge agreed to find out more about how the data is used.

The chairman stated that the parish council does not own any pumps, although every effort is made to co-ordinate the lending of pumps.

**Action:** Chairman, Cllr Kerridge

## 7. Cutting of Grass on Middletown Lane

The parish council has discussed the grass cutting of the Middletown verges. The two areas owned by the parish council are the Recreation Ground and the Village Green.

It had been agreed by previous councillors that the following programme of grass cutting should be implemented:

Description of work	
Recreation Field	Starting 1 <sup>st</sup> March once a fortnight until 1 <sup>st</sup> May. Then weekly until end of October. Back to once a fortnight until 10 <sup>th</sup> December.
Village Green	Starting 1 <sup>st</sup> March once a fortnight until 1 <sup>st</sup> May. Then weekly until end of October. Back to once a fortnight until 10 <sup>th</sup> December.
Grass verges in Sambourne	Sambourne Lane to junction of Oak Tree Lane/Perry Mill Lane, down to Green Dragon on both sides. Middletown Lane from Bus Stop to land opposite wood yard. Three small areas in Middletown, by notice board and opposite both sides. Once a month from 1 <sup>st</sup> March to end April Then once a fortnight from May to October Then once a month November/December
Land opposite wood yard	Twice a year. August and October

The current parish councillors have discussed this and it has been agreed there is no reason to change the existing programme of work.

## 8. Review of the Parish Council's Freedom of Information Policy

**Amendments to the Policy were discussed, as follows:**

**Paragraph 3:** The parish council reserves the right to publish answers to Freedom of Information requests. For data protection purposes any personal data will be redacted.

**Paragraph 5:** Some FOI requests (or multiple FOI requests) are very complex and, as a small organisation, we reserve the right to make a nominal charge for carrying out the request. If such a request is received, the complainant will be made aware of the charge and asked if they wish to continue or withdraw the request.

There was unanimous agreement to these amendments, which will come into force from this date (9<sup>th</sup> January 2024). The chairman and clerk will agree on the final wording of the amendment and the revised document will be formally agreed at the March meeting.

**Action:** Chairman, Clerk

## 9. Accounts

**Budget Update:** A copy of the budget update dated 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024 had been circulated to councillors. All were in agreement that the budget is on track for month nine of the financial year.

**Bank reconciliations for November/December 2023:** The bank reconciliations were approved and signed by Cllr Moon.

**Bank balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023:**

Current account:	21,956.87
Deposit account:	18,866.53

### List of financial transactions from 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024

PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
British Gas	Electricity on the Green	25.63
WALC	AGM – 3 participants	36.00
Studley 1 <sup>st</sup> Responders	Defibrillator Awareness – Donation	75.00
Mr T Richardson	Purchase of sand bags	60.00
Zoom	Payment – November 2023	15.59
Clerk	Salary/Expenses/HMRC (inc pay increase/arrears)	801.95
Hugo Fox	Website – November	23.99
Clerk	Norton Anti Virus subscription	49.99
SDC	Uncontested Election 0 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	200.00
WCC Forestry	Tree maintenance	600.00
PCC	Room Hire	170.00
British Gas	Electricity on the Green	29.58
J R Gibbs	Mowing – 2023-2024	3,687.00
British Gas	Electricity on the Green	9.71
Unity Bank	Service Charge	18.00
Clerk	Salary/Expenses/HMRC	574.50
Zoom	Payment – December 2023	15.59

The clerk requested that the previously agreed payment for the purchase of a new printer could be authorised. There was unanimous agreement.

## 10. Planning

Five planning applications have been considered since the last meeting:

Ref No	Property	Details	SPC Comments	Decision
23/02944/LBC	Crossroads, Sambourne Lane	Replacement of 5 windows and roof repairs	Support	

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23/03159/FUL	Tudor House Middletown Lane	Two storey rear and side extension	Support	
23/0314/REM	65 Green Lane, Studley	Reserved matters		
23/03290/AGNOT	Reins Farm, Oak Tree Lane	Proposed barn at grid SP 055623	<b>Abstention - Adam Quinney</b> No objection.	
23/03363/AGNOT	Robert Green. Land off Whitemoor Lane	Purpose built agricultural storage faciliity	<b>Abstention – Adam Quinney</b> Support, with proviso concerning tree screening	

The chairman invited comments on any planning issues.

**Luke Egan** raised comments on planning application 23/03363/AGNOT. As the chairman had abstained from commenting on this application he asked Cllr Taaffe to take the question.

- Mr Egan was concerned about the short time scale between the submission of the application and the determination date. He had raised this with SDC. He also raised objections to the proposed size of the storage facility, the visual impact and the increase of hgv traffic. The full transcript of Mr Egan’s comments has been copied to all councillors and will be used as reference in the consideration of future applications.
- Cllr Taaffe noted Mr Egan’s opinion but stated that all councillors had considered the application and site visits had been made. The councillors agreed that the application is for essential agricultural use and, with the proviso that there is tree screening to shield the properties on Sambourne Warren Farm from the new structure, they had no objection and gave their positive support to this application. He also stated that planning alerts are available on the parish council website and links to the comments are available for everyone to view.

## 11. Correspondence

Due to the Christmas period, the correspondence was slightly lighter than previous periods.

Correspondence – 14 <sup>th</sup> November 2023 – 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2024			
FOI or GDPR Request	WCC/SDC/WALC/SNT Information or requests	General correspondence, accounts/admin	Planning
0	85	36	15
Total: 136			

**12. Public Participation**

- i. Items for Public Participation had been received from Tom Richardson and Peter Joynes concerning flooding. These were discussed under Item 6 of the Agenda.
- ii. An item concerning a planning application had been received from Luke Egan. This was discussed under Item 10 of the Agenda.
- iii. An email had been received from Gail Smith, thanking the Chairman and Cllr Taaffe for their help and support during the flooding of the roads in Middletown. The clerk read out the email.

**13. Chairman's Business:** There was no Chairman's Business

**14. Dates of next meetings**

- **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7:00 pm**
  
- **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024:**

<b>Annual Parish Assembly</b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>
<b>Annual Parish Meeting</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>
<b>Parish Council Meeting</b>	<b>7:30 pm</b>

The meeting closed at 8:10 pm

**Review of Actions from the meeting:**

Minute	Name(s)	Action
4	Chairman, Clerk	Parishes working together – ongoing
4	Cllr Clarke	Dark Skies Policy – ongoing
4	Chairman	Quotes for tree clearing – ongoing
5	Chairman, Cllr Kerridge	Meeting with WCC Localities Officer re flooding
8	Chairman, Clerk	Agree wording for amendment to FOI Policy

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