

MEETING OF CAMPTON AND CHICKSANDS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held in Campton Village Hall on Thursday 7th March 2024.

Present: Cllr Baker as Chairman, Cllr Longson, Cllr Ash, Cllr Wootton, Cllr Turton, Central Bedfordshire Councillor Mark Liddiard, Central Bedfordshire Councillor Tony Brown.

Apologies: Cllr Booton, Cllr Sibley.

149/24 MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2024 were signed as a true record of the meeting.

Matters arising:

150/24 DECLARATION OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION:

Declaration of interest from Cllr Turton regarding the Chicksands Private CB/24/00242/FULL Planning application, she is a resident there and therefore the application is applicable.

151/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Two residents attended to discuss the Chicksands Private CB/24/00242/FULL application.

The residents questioned if any Cllrs had submitted a Pecuniary interest? Yes, Cllr Turton has declared an interest.

The residents questioned if the PC had entered into discussion with residents? The PC have responded to residents that have contacted the PC.

The residents questioned the Neighbourhood plan and if there had been a U turn or if it was still enforceable? The PC confirmed that the NP is still valid, the areas of greenspace at Chicksands Private was identified as potential Local Green Space in an early draft of the NP, in consultation there was significant pushback from residents and as a result it was removed from the Plan and the Green Infrastructure plan.

The residents asked if the PC had attempted to approach Annington Housing for more information regarding the application, the PC confirmed that they have not contacted Annington housing, it is normal practice for the PC not to contact the applicant.

Attending residents informed the PC that Annington Housing held a meeting for residents in late 2023 and there was a lot of support from residents. The residents handed a letter to the PC with related information.

Attending residents indicated that the plans in the planning application appear to broadbrush rather than show exactly the areas. Their discussion with Annington was to discuss residents doubling the size of their gardens, increasing the gardens by 2-3m. The plans however indicate a much larger area, in some places up to 18m. The discussion did not involve removal of mature trees, hedges or pathways as maybe could be interpreted from the plans. If all residents took up the offer of additional land it would still leave 11 acres of available greenspace. It appears that the plans may not be a true reflection of the discussion with residents.

Cllr Liddiard will contact the planning officer and ask them to speak to Annington housing, it could be if the plans are not a true reflection the applicant might need to withdraw the application and resubmit when amended. Cllr Liddiard has called the application into the DMC.

152/24 UPDATE BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCILLORS:

- The Budget review was held on 22nd February and there have been no changes to the original proposal. There will be a 5% increase in Council tax, green waste will incur a £55 per annum charge (no concessions) and food bags will no longer be available free of charge.
- Some parking areas in Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard are now no longer free and some street parking incurs a charge,
- Ward Cllr grants and Community Infrastructure grants will still be available for another year.
- There has been no update for the Greenway development.
- Schools for the future still have issues regarding the new school in Shefford, the earliest date for opening will be 2026, but realistically more likely to be 2027.
- The Highways team have responded to Cllr Liddiard regarding some advice for Campton, Cllr Liddiard will forward the information to Cllrs.
- The JBB have submitted an application for Ward Cllr funding for repairs to cemetery paths, Cllr Liddiard will approve it.
- Central Beds, Luton and MK health group are running a 7-day consultation for better health and health facilities in the area.
- Cllr Wooton asked if there was any further information regarding parking on pathways? The information will be in the Highways email that Cllr Liddiard will forward.
- 26 Greenway, a resident has submitted a report to Fix my street, but it came back as not requiring attention. Clerk will gain further information.
- The dead tree on Elm close is still in need of attention. Chris Dorow was going to pass it to the Tree officers, clerk will follow this up with the tree officer, Scott Terry, Chris Dorow and the Ward Cllrs.
- Cllr Wooton asked if there was any action for the increasing number of drivers jumping the traffic lights on the A507? In order to have a camera fitted there would need to be evidence that there is a need. Cllr Wooton will look to run a consultation with residents looking at the drivers jumping the lights but also the timings of the lights.
- The piece of steel is still in the plantation, Cllr Liddiard will contact the Countryside team.

153/24 NEW LOCAL PLAN LAUNCH:

It is National policy to review the Local Plan every 5 years, it was recommended in the last Local plan that a review be started after only 6 months as significant changes would be required.

Timetable:

- Informal information exercise June-September 2024
- Call for sites End of 2024
- Outcomes and draft plan January-December 2025
- Regulation 18 and 19, Consultation February 2026
- Submission early 2028

The initial engagement with the PC is requesting information, the information will be submitted via a portal. The Portal will also be used for the public 'Have your say'. The PC have 2 weeks to submit their response. Cllr Baker proposed that anything in the NP can be submitted, seconded by Cllr Ash, all agreed. There will be other opportunities later to submit further comments. Cllr Liddiard suggested the PC may wish to comment on The Chicksands Base regarding the forthcoming closure.

The PC NP needs to be reviewed every 3-5 years; it was passed 2.5yrs ago so the PC do need to consider the review.

154/24 FINANCES:

Payments agreed: March 2024

C Bain payroll £58

D Granger £148.50

SLCC £91.50 (Deferred to April)

Community account £12,941.78

Business account £23,368.52

As on 6/3/24

Payments agreed, proposed by Cllr, seconded by Cllr.

Clerk will set up payments for Cllr Booton to authorise.

Barclays have once again put a warning on the account that the account details require verification, Clerk will contact them again.

The insurance company have contacted Clerk to request any updated information prior to a quote being issued, the address of the church needs changing.

155/23 PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

CB/24/00242/FULL 1-29 Eisenhower Place, 1-6 Jackson Place, 1-37 Truman Place, 1-4 Taft Place Chicksands. Change of use of amenity land to garden land.

Comments submitted at the end of the Minutes.

156/23 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

JOINT BURIAL BOARD:

The last meeting was 15th February 2024. The key items to agree:

- Mrs Booton will meet with the Clerks to discuss the inputting of data.
- The new fees will be effective from 1/4/24.
- A successful application has been made to Central Bedfordshire Council for a tree planting grant for a 10-12cm girth standard oak tree.
- The water has been turned off to the standpipe as the tap has split and was gushing out water. A replacement tap is on order.
- A Tree Safety re-inspection was carried out in December 2023. Approval was sought from the Committee for 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services to carry out the recommendation made for T1 (cut overhanging branches to 2.5m high) during the summer months and to monitor T2 over the summer season under the guidance of Cllr Jez Perkins.
- Approval was sought for 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services to top up the levels of grave spaces (and reinstate to grass) identified in certain sections (Q section + W/T/Y/X/V) where the ground is very uneven, with graves noticeably sunken.
- Following the wet weather spell, CQ + 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services carried out a topple test of the old section of the cemetery + Q section – 3 memorials were laid flat due to safety concerns. No ownership details are held on file for these grave spaces. Further topple testing will be carried out for the remaining sections in the new part of the Cemetery + a re-test will be carried out in Campton Burial Ground.

- A quotation for £3658.66 has been obtained from DJT Surfacing (Central Bedfordshire Council's approved contractor) to carry out resurfacing/repairs to the tarmac footpaths around the cemetery, as they are deteriorating to the point that the Council could be held liable if anyone should trip or fall as a result of the damaged/uneven footpath surfacing. Clerk has submitted a Ward Cllr application for £500, Cllr Liddiard has agreed in principle.
- A quotation has been received from Maydencroft to remove bricks beneath the Chapel gates, cut out the tarmac strip and replace the granite set. The quote is for £800.
- Works to the wall in the Campton churchyard will commence end of March/beginning April 2024. Clerk has written to the neighbouring property and will update Roni at the Church.
- Cllr Ford (Shefford) has expressed an interest in taking on a project to restore/refurbish the Chapel and to investigate funding.
- Clerks will attend a networking and training event in London on 10th April. Cost of the session is £15 + travel.

CAMPTON UNITED CHARITIES:

Last meeting was held on 15th February. Registration of the land is progressing; documents have been submitted to the solicitors. A Disbursement has been agreed by the trustees for Central Beds Needs project.

P3 GROUP:

John Ayers will attend a P3 workshop run by CBC.

The two bridges in Campton plantation were discussed, would it be possible to put in some pathway as its muddy and gets overgrown.

A resident has asked the PC if there would be any possibility of making the pathway from Mill Lane into Pole hanger woodland disabled access?

157/23 PROJECTS/ONGOING ISSUES:

Campton Church yard:

Cllr Booton has emailed CBC, still no further update. David Granger has reported there is an issue with moles, the Cllrs will monitor them.

Recreation ground:

Cllr Booton continues to inspect the play area. A large branch needs to be removed; Cllr Baker will discuss with Cllr Booton.

Wi-fi at the village hall:

A new full fibre package has been agreed. Clerk will discuss the setting up with Cllr Sibley and notify the village hall committee when an installation date is provided.

Additional Accessible green space Grant/Project

Cllr Booton has received confirmation that the National Lottery grant application has been received.

Village hall land:

Clerk requested an invoice for the payment made to the solicitors. Cllr Longson has chased the solicitors, some of the information has been received. Cllr Longson will contact the Diocese to clarify where the church owned boundary lies.

Good Neighbour Scheme:

There have been a few responses from residents requesting that the scheme be reinstated, Clerk will include the scheme in this month's article to try and seek volunteers for both the admin and the driving roles.

Email addresses:

Clerk recently attended a Data Protection course and advised the Cllrs that separate email addresses, purely for Council business should be used.

Hedge maintenance:

One of the hedges has now been cut back, Clerk will write to the residents and thank them. It was agreed the Cllrs would look for a quote for the hedge in Gravenhurst Road and would discuss the other two hedges of concern with CBC.

158/23 CONSULTATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE:

The following correspondence was received:

- CBC Local plan workshop
- 80th Anniversary D Day flag.
- Portrait of His Majesty the King.
- Letter from the Mayor of Shefford regarding a speed watch scheme.
- A resident has contacted the PC to discuss possible Disabled access to Pole hanger woodland, also reported the dropped curb on Mill Lane is quite often obstructed by cars.
- A resident has contacted the PC concerned for traffic on Greenway.

159/23 AOB:

The PC have been granted £450 towards Wi-fi equipment by the Ward Cllr fund, the Cllrs agreed to a further £450, equipment required will be agreed via email for clerk to order.

A resident has contacted the PC regarding traffic and speeding on Greenway. There will be some traffic calming measures on Greenway as part of the new development. Cllr Baker will look at this.

160/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be:

Thursday 4th April 2024 7pm, to include the Annual Parish Meeting.

We wish to sound a note of caution with regards to the potential loss and fragmentation of the green spaces that currently form part of the spacious character, build and recent history of this private estate.

Whilst the application does denote the use of boundary treatments in keeping with the existing, it maybe that the overall effect of any implementation would be to "close in" the pleasant & open walkways through and around the estate. Enclosing these walkways may also inadvertently provide an environment that is open to antisocial behaviour.

Application supporting documentation appears to imply that the change of use would not conflict with Local Plan Policy EE13 (Outdoor Sport, Leisure and Open Space). The Parish Council consider this assumption to be tenuous, and potentially misleading. It is our view that significant areas of green space, which is currently accessible to all residents of the estate for leisure and socialising, would be lost. Areas subsumed into private gardens will not necessarily fulfil the same leisure and social function, particularly for children. Furthermore, implementation could increase the current deficit of 3.09 ha (2021 Green Infrastructure Plan) of small amenity spaces in the parish as whole.

We wish to encourage careful consideration regarding stipulating retention of any mature trees and established hedges that would be subsumed into extended gardens, in order to best maintain biodiversity and the "green" character of the estate.

Local Plan Policy HQ10 (Small Open Spaces) looks to protect small open spaces for visual and environmental benefits. This application may be contrary to this policy.

Future potential for backfill development applications is a concern as this could further damage the character of the estate as a whole.

Whilst not necessarily a planning consent concern, consistency of resident "buy in" to land acquisition, and its subsequent change of use, may give rise to irregular impacts on remaining amenity green space and the practicality of future maintenance.