

MEETING OF CAMPTON AND CHICKSANDS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held in Campton Village Hall on Thursday 6th February 2025.

Present: Cllr Booton as Chairman, Cllr Wooton, Cllr Longson, Cllr Ash. CBC Ward Cllr Tony Brown, CBC Ward Cllr Mark Liddiard.

Apologies: Cllr Sibley, Cllr Turton, Cllr Baker.

12/25MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd January 2025 were signed as a true record of the meeting, proposed by Cllr Booton, seconded by Cllr Ash, all agreed.

Matters arising: None.

13/25 DECLARATION OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION:

Cllr Ash and Cllr Baker in relation to the grant request from the school.

14/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

- A resident attended the meeting to discuss the possibility of having a Christmas tree in the village next December. All Cllrs agreed in principle, the resident would like to explore sponsorship, he will be in contact with Clerk. Electricity hook up, cables, costs etc will need to be discussed,

15/25 UPDATE BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCILLORS:

- The tree on Elm close has still not been felled.
- No further update has been received regarding grass cutting contribution.
- No update on the Greenway application.
- Budget predicted to result in a 5% increase to the precept. CBC are looking to make 300 redundancies out of a staff of 3,000 as part of the cost cutting process to make up for a £7million shortfall. More information will be available at the full council and then at the CBC budget meeting on 19th February.
- CBC are looking to close days at the tidy tip, they plan to keep it open 5 days a week and to start a booking system.
- 228 road drains in the Parish have been cleaned in October 2024 as part of a 3-year cleaning programme.
- Children and Adult social care costs have increased and now form 75% of the budget.
- Roadside glass collections should be provided to residents by 2026, but CBC have requested that this be extended.
- Campton Academy, CBC have decided to not progress with the 3 tiers to 2 tier system in the Stotfold area, other areas will transition. Cllr Booton asked if the Trust will be planning any works to improve the classrooms at Campton school? Cllr Liddiard confirmed that the Trust will follow DFE guidance when looking at the condition of the school, the building and the space available. Warmth and safety are also key priorities. The PC Cllrs will speak to the Head and see if they can support in anyway.

- CBC have not met the 5-year Housing supply requirement'
- The length of the Local plan has been discussed, the Executives were keen for a 17-year plan, but a 25-year plan has been agreed.
- Call for sites has now closed and there has been no subsequent information on the criteria, or which sites have been identified.
- A flood risk analysis is due to be carried out across Central beds in line with the Local plan, the current assessment is out of date and areas unsuitable for development need to be highlighted. The Autumn floods cost CBC £1.4million.

16/25 FINANCES:

Payments agreed: February 2025

C Bain payroll £62

D Granger £175.20

Talk Talk Wi-Fi £31.14

Shefford T Council £3,900 (JBB precept contribution)

N Power £281.73

Community account £31,733.45

Business account £23,631.68

As on 03/02/25

Payments agreed proposed by Cllr Wooton, seconded by Cllr Ash all agreed. Clerk will set up payments.

Talk Talk are increasing prices by 6%.

17/25 PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

None.

18/25 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

JOINT BURIAL BOARD:

JBB last met on 23rd January 2025.

Due to both Clerks recovering from surgery, there has been no further progress on the inputting of cemetery data. However, SE's hours have been increased from 8 to 16 hours per week from 1st January 2025, and work is due to recommence on the inputting very soon. The Clerks have only carried out one joint working day since the last committee meeting on 27th November 2024 (Full day)

Following a resolution at the last meeting (which was agreed by both Councils) for increasing the cemetery fee structure on an annual basis in line with the current RPI, approval was sought to increase the fees at the new reporting of the RPI @ 15th January 2025 (RPI is currently at 3.91% and was 3.6% @ November 2024) rounded up to the nearest full pound.

The bank balance on 4th January 2025 is £36,402.88 in credit.

The ICCM is offering the discounted price of £46.00 to purchase the publication – Essential Law for Cemetery and Crematorium Managers. Approval was sought from the Committee to purchase a copy of the publication for reference purposes.

A local Memorial Mason, M Stafford, is willing to assist the Clerks/Admin Assistant to carry out topping testing of memorials at a fee of £100 per day (to be carried out at a weekend). This would include making safe of any memorials in situ (lying flat). Approval was sought from the Committee to engage M Stafford for 2 days work, which is hoped to cover the topple testing at the Campton Burial Ground + the Cemetery. This would not include the production of a formal written report. Cllr Mackin requested that the clerks be updated with information regarding individual memorials that need repairing so that the details can be sent to grave owners. Cllr Mackin also requested that the clerks seek to fill the sunken graves and if necessary, notify the grave owners that items will be removed from the grave and stored in the Chapel whilst topping up takes place. He is concerned that the graves could be a health and safety issue and the JBB could be liable if someone trips or falls.

Approval was sought from the Committee to continue to contract the grass cutting/grounds maintenance tasks for the Burial Ground + Cemetery to DJ Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd and 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services respectively at the rates as per budgeted for the 2025/26 year.

A quotation has been received for review by the Committee from 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services for the annual cutting of the hedges totalling £2,350.

A quotation has been received for review by the Committee from 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services of £600 to carry out the edging of the grass around each ashes memorial plaque (using an edging iron).

The water for the standpipe has been turned off at the mains to protect the standpipe tap from the frosts. Complaints have been received from the public about this action.

The order has been raised to English Building and Restoration to carry out additional remedial works to the front perimeter wall (adjacent to Greenway) totalling £7,260. This work is scheduled to be carried out in April 2025.

The winter clearance works have been carried out as agreed at the previous meeting, including removal of green fly tipping for the safety of grass cutting operations and public access.

The fee for the architects drawing in support of the reregistering of the Campton Burial Ground in the ownership of Campton and Chicksands Parish Council and Shefford Town Council (the ownership is currently registered in the name of St Albans Diocese) has been paid. No further updates on the process have been received.

Cllr Wooton proposed the resolutions put forward by the JBB, seconded by Cllr Ash, all agreed.

CAMPTON UNITED CHARITIES:

The Charity land has been put forward for the Cllr for sites, Cllr Booton thanked Cllr baker and a resident who submitted the application for all of their hard work.

Cllrs will need to Declare an interest in future meetings where this is discussed.

P3 GROUP:

Hedge on Priory Rd has been cut back.

19/25 PROJECTS/ONGOING ISSUES:

Christmas tree 2025:

Discussed under P/P

Good Neighbour Scheme:

Clerk had arranged a meeting for the volunteers for 24th January 2025, unfortunately some of the volunteers sent their apologies and the decision was made to cancel the meeting. Clerk suggested advertising the meeting in the next newsletter to see if any more volunteers would come forward and to plan the meeting for a mid-week evening. It was agreed that the next meeting be scheduled for April 2025, in the Campton village hall.

Dignity policy:

Deferred until next meeting.

Area of land to the side of the village hall/Brookside:

Cllrs discussed whether the land should be used for parking, as it currently is or whether it should be a grass area without parking? The Cllr were divided on a decision, so it was agreed to defer the discussion to another meeting. There is an issue with the van that blocks the fire exit, Clerk will include this in her report for the newsletter. Cllr Booton will arrange a meeting to discuss this fully with residents.

Campton Churchyard, including Topple testing.

The CBC officers identified a number of issues which needed attention before they would accept responsibility for the churchyard. These were:

1. The felling of a diseased Birch tree
2. The lifting of the lower branches of Holly Bush so they were more than 3 metres above the footpath along Greenway.
3. The resting flat of two head stones that were leaning against a Yew tree.
4. Crown lifted so that it was not touching the gravel below.
5. A topple test to be carried out.
6. Repair to a tomb that was unsafe.

7. Post to mark the boundary between the burial Board land and the churchyard.
8. To fix the hinge on the gate on Rectory Road.

The Diocese maintain that we need to get the permission to carry out works within the church yard. You need to enter all the details via a portal which only the Vicar has access to.

Situation so far:

1. Birch Tree. The Diocese wanted a specialist company to carry out a tree inspection and provide a report. CBC very kindly gave us their report on the state of the trees in the churchyard this has been forwarded to the Vicar. We await a response from the Diocese. The report does say the tree should be removed within a month of the report.
2. Holly Tree: The height of the lowest limb of the Holly Tree over the footpath is 3 meters and 4cm
3. Head stones on Yew Tree: These are now flat
4. Lifting of crown: CBC have acknowledged that this was not mentioned on the visit so they will deal with this point.
5. Topple Testing: This has been arranged for 5th February, PC are awaiting the report.
6. Repair to Tomb: Will know more about this after visit on 5th but we will need to get the Diocese permission before we can do anything.
7. Posts for boundary: Waiting for CBC agreement
8. Gate: This has been fixed.

The aim is still to hand over responsibility for the churchyard by 1st March before the growing season. Clerk will notify the contractor to not cut the grass.

Land next to the Recreation ground:

Still waiting for probate. If the purchase does not take place before the end of March, we will lose the funding for the trees. There may well be no funding next year.

Village school.

Cllr Ash will contact the school regarding the condition of classrooms and support in anyway when approaching the Trust.

A grant request was received as part of the 150th Anniversary of the school to provide each child with a commemorative coaster and to improve the flowers at the entrance to the school. Cllr Booton proposed a donation of £250, seconded by Cllr Wooton, all agreed.

20/25 CONSULTATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was received:

- Crime statistics

- BATPC planning training
- BLMK ICB Winter Communication and engagement
- Budget consultation invite 19th February, Cllr Booton to attend.
- S106 Parish update topic session notes.
- BATPC Nuts and Bolts planning training, Cllr Booton will attend at a cost of £35
- Buckingham Palace Garden party nominations
- A resident has contacted the PC regarding the consultation with Greenway residents. The PC will confirm that any traffic calming measures will be implemented by the develop and therefore the impact on residents in Greenway were taken into account, the PC were not looking at traffic calming for the village in general.

21/25 AOB:

- Anglian water have not lined the sewer pipe as planned and there is still sewage the other side of the underpass.
- The light on Greenway that was broken by Anglian water was reported on Fix my street by a resident and CBC collect the lamp, the PC contractor is trying to get the lamp back from CBC.
- The hedges reported to CBC have been inspected and the cases closed, no action required.
- The MP was due to visit Campton this week to inspect the paths, one of his local representatives attended. Cllr Booton walked the village with him and the resident who was pushing a wheelchair. They pointed out the issues of kerbs, no where to cross at the crossroads in the centre of the village, difficulties in Rectory Road due to wheels getting stuck in the manhole. A resident with a pushchair and two small children was stopped as a bus came alongside them, the resident didn't feel safe, another resident commented on the lack of path being dangerous.
- The pensions regulator requires confirmation of Clerk's pension, Cllr Booton will complete this.
- Cllr Booton requested that Cllrs please respond to emails that require a response.
- Annual parish meeting 6th March.

22/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be:

Thursday 6th March 7pm.