

CASTLETHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council General Meeting held on 10 January 2011 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors Ayles (Chair), Haynes, Hinds, Keane, Markham & Russo. The Clerk, and 7 members of the public were in attendance. At the open forum preceding the meeting, Mrs Chapman asked for news on delivery of a grit box to serve Prospect Place. Chair indicated that the matter was in hand as CPC had applied for one under the Ward Councillor's budget. Mr Reeves asked that it be noted that he was not in favour of moving the speed restrictions (agenda item 6.6) as the money to be used could better be used for other critical work. Mr Reeves also asked why the PC would want to support the knocking down of the stone wall around the 'village green' when it would only encourage more parking. Chair replied that no decision to knock the wall down had been discussed. The PC had asked MKC for a proposal for a safe crossing from the Carrington Arms to the village hall (as requested by the school) and MKC had offered to do a design for that entire area to enhance and improve the use and safety of the area for the community. The Chair added that any designs would go out to consultation to the entire village before any decisions were made. Mrs King asked whether the PC could assist with funding for the church wall as it was falling into disrepair. Chair answered that the PC had not been asked for funds and had in the past offered funds that had not been taken up by the church. Chair also mentioned that both he and the Clerk had given the church possible funding routes and that it was really the church's responsibility to maintain and repair the wall as it was church property. When asked if there was any implications should stone from the wall fall into the road or on a public footpath, Chair answered that from memory of a similar situation in a village, this circumstance would not constitute a liable state of affairs. There being no further business the open forum closed at 7.43pm

		ACTION
1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: 2011/001 Cllr Stacey – family bereavement. Accepted. Chair offered the PC's condolences on the loss of Cllr Stacey's father. Ward Cllr Geary late arrival. Accepted	
2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST by Councillors in any of the agenda items below None	
3	APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: 2011/002	
3.1	The minutes of the general meeting of the 6 December 2010 were accepted as a true record & signed by the Chair.	
3.2	Brief progress reports on other matters arising (not included elsewhere on the agenda) [Addendum to agenda] noted.	
4	REPORTS from Councillors or Clerk [Addendum to minutes] : 2011/003	
4.1	File Note: Clerks report	
4.2	File note: Parishes	
4.3	File note: Budget discussion	
4.4	File note: Transport Partnership group	
5	PLANNING APPLICATIONS: 2011/004 10/02633/4/FUL: Barn Pindon End: Mr & Mrs Pittam. Cllrs noted that the building of a stable block could mean a commercial use and increase in traffic but felt that as vehicular access would be through Hanslope, there was no impact on Castlethorpe. No comments to be lodged with planning case officer. Cllrs asked that Clerk pass on CPC's comments to Hanslope PC for noting.	
5.4	REPORT BACK ON PREVIOUS PLANNING APPLICATIONS: 10/02230/FUL: Ritchie, New Farm bungalow replacement. Permitted	
6	RESOLUTIONS : 2011/005	
6.1	It was unanimously agreed to ask the NAG for provision on 1 x dog bin to be sited in Fox Covert Lane. Chair to speak at next NAG meeting (13/01/11) on this.	CLERK
6.2	The Parishes Protocol was unanimously adopted.	CLERK
6.3	It was unanimously agreed to comment on MKC's 2011.2012 budget consultation as per recommendation note 1. [Addendum to minutes]	
6.4	It was unanimously agreed to accept the 2 x Article 4 directive on HiMO's and offer the PC's support to MKC on this matter against the Government's legislation.	
6.5	It was unanimously agreed to comment on MKC consultation on Corporate plan 2011.2012 as per recommendation note 2. [Addendum to minutes]	
6.6	It was unanimously agreed that Cllrs Keane & Markham (responsibility for	CLERK

CASTLETHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council General Meeting held on 10 January 2011 at 7.30pm

roads/transport) would meet with A Carden to discuss the site of the 30mph signs and the allied work involved. Clerk to request meeting.

6.7 Deferred until February meeting.

7 FINANCIAL MATTERS : 2011/006

7.1 A statement of the current financial position was circulated prior to meeting. No queries were raised. Approved unanimously

7.2 The RFO Payments Schedule was circulated in advance. There were no queries. Total payments of £3946.75 from Lloyds Bank PLC were approved. Proposed Cllr Hinds seconded Cllr Keane.

Parish Council	S137	£ 137.12
	Grants	£2549.63
	Administration	£ 518.64
Village Hall	Utilities	£ 411.81
	Admin/wages	£ 216.00
Sports Ground	Utilities	£ 13.00
	Petrol	£ 100.54

7.3 The 2011/12 budget was approved. Precept lodgement £24236.00 with MKC will reflect a 1.99% increase.

CLERK

8 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED: 2011/007

DATE	DETAILS	SUBJECT	ACTION
13/12	Letter	R Sawbridge Access via Fox Covert to Maltings	Cannot consider until 6 months has passed. Agenda for February meeting. Clerk to inform R Sawbridge
Dec 2010	Consultation	LTP3, Budget, Corporate Plan	Considered. Comments back to MKC
30/12	Appeal	TVP – appeal 29-12-10	Witness to a murder
5/1	Training	Rural Master planning seminar	Passed to cllrs for noting
6/1	Letter	C Rice – Royal wedding street party/SG usage	Concrete details required for discussion.
7/1	Notice	IPC on Stewartby planning app	Passed to cllrs for noting
10/1	Poster	Employment advice road-show	For noticeboards

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (for noting, or for inclusion on a future agenda) : 2011/008

9.1 Set of keys for Football club house to Cllrs Stacey & Markham

CLERK

9.2 CFC – will not be using SG facilities until fines paid by individuals.

9.3 NCC – safety barrier at bridge nr Navigation damaged. Clerk to inform Cosgrove PC

CLERK

9.4 Marina – plans for holiday lets. Clerk to check and report back

CLERK

10 DATE OF FUTURE MEETING : 2011/009

Monday 7 February. Agenda items by 24 January 2011.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 9.45pm

3.2 MATTERS ARISING - REPORTBACK

			ACTION
1	RABBIT DAMAGE TO FISHPONDS	Network Rail gassed burrows/repared fence 21/12.	
2	PARKING PROBLEMS NEW STREET	PSCO's – no site visits for over 5 weeks. Parking still problematic. Cllr Ayles to bring up at NAG	P Ayles NAG
3	H&S OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTION	WIP. Ready for February PC/VH meeting	CLERK
4	SUSTRANS ROUTE	Ceri Griffin – site visit with contractors on 11/01/11. Clerk to obtain feedback from meeting	C GRIFFEN
5	BER / CHEQUERS GARAGES PARKING AREAS FLODDED	Chequers scheduled for re-surfacing end Jan. BE Rd flooding - study to be completed before 03/11.	I McG
6	DOORSTEP COLD CALLING LEAFLET	Handed to councillors for consideration on content. Back to Cllr Ayles with comments by 14/01.	ORDER 450
7	LTP3 CONSULTATION	CPC's response [Note 3 addendum]. Cllr Ayles commended for thorough report on large document. Accepted unanimously as PC's official comment.	CLERK TO SUBMIT

CASTLETHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council General Meeting held on 10 January 2011 at 7.30pm

8	ROADS/HIGHWAYS ISSUES	WIP: Extra parking bay at school, bus shelter markings North Street, sports ground signage.	FOLLOW UP MCG
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4.SCHEDULE OF REPORTS & FILE NOTES

4.1	CLERKS REPORT	<p>WREN GRANT APPLICATION: Awarded full request of £42800.00. Many thanks to Cllr Haynes and P Snell for assistance. Full specification given by P Snell to be installed as grant award covers all expenses. £2700.00 (in 2011/2012 budget) from CPC required to match fund £2700 of PlayAreas PG from MKC (award criteria changed from those on submission date of January 2010) £2700 now to be funded from PlayBuilder to reconcile cost of project. Grant application was again praised as being solid and well researched. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the collection of information. My suggestion is that Clerk and Cllrs with responsibility for play areas to meet with P Snell in 2011 to firm up arrangements and time lines for project Fish Ponds refurbishment to ensure CPC's control of project scope, work timescales and all deliverable factors. Contrary to Clerks understanding, P Snell mentioned that English Heritage and archaeology still needed to be consulted on acceptance of some equipment installation. Project team to negotiate to ensure widest range of equipment able to be installed. P Snell and Clerk already activating paperwork requested by WREN. 11 week timescale to complete all obligations to WREN and complete installation. P Snell and Clerk to have presented requisite paperwork to WREN by 14 January 2011 leaving 9 weeks to complete and re-open play-area. Cllrs Hinds & Keane (Cllrs responsible for play-areas) will form a project board for duration of the project to assist Clerk/P Snell. Chair/V Chair to be able to deputise for either Cllr.</p> <p>PLAY AREAS/PLAY BUILDER: 3rd party funding to activate WREN grant of 11% (£4708) to be funded from PlayBuilder. Balance of allocation made to Castlethorpe to be distributed amongst other parishes.</p> <p>WWYC: All six modules (186 hours of work) have now been submitted. 3 moderated and approved (passed) 1 re-submitted for final pass and 2 in pipeline. Hopeful that all course work will be returned in January 2011 in preparation for CiLCA course registration in April. A big thank you to everyone who has offered support to me in this endeavour.</p> <p>VILLAGE GREEN DESIGN MEETING: Successful meeting with MKC officers, CPC and S Hill. Design/s to be put together for perusal in Jan 2011 with approximate costing. Funding to be discussed. Design to incorporate extra parking, blocking of metal palisade fencing, re-alignment/creation of pavement on VH side to allow pedestrians to be sited by vehicles, safe crossing from Carrington Arms to VH. Clerk/MKC to liaise in 01/11</p> <p>PARISH ON LINE: Licence due to be activated January 2011. Governance will inform all Clerks as soon as it comes on line. Each parish will be given a password that can be used to log on and extract information.</p> <p>PARISH NEWSLETTERS (Localism bill): It is understood that PC's will now be encouraged to only publish a newsletter/magazine quarterly, that PC's must take full ownership of all content and be clearly marked as coming from the PC as full sponsors of the publication/information. Information must only be of relevance to the parish area and must be PC business. This is to be challenged by some PC/TC's that publish less frequently and encourage outside info supplied by groups not in direct governance of the PC/TC.</p> <p>POWER OF WELL BEING: Criteria for eligibility are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - qualified clerk - minimum of two-thirds of vacancies on the council filled at the last ordinary election - eighty per cent of Councillors trained in the use of the Power of Well-being - published statement of intent for community engagement
4.2	PARISHES ASSEMBLY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request for final responses on Housing Strategy - Monday 13th December. 2. 'No Cold Calling Zones' - invited participation in a small working group with

CASTLETHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council General Meeting held on 10 January 2011 at 7.30pm

<p>09/12/10</p> <p>AUTHOR: CLLR P AYLES</p>	<p>Trading Standards to produce suitable material for older and vulnerable residents. Poor response.</p> <p>3. West Bletchley has attained 'power of well-being'. This may be appropriate for parishes especially if services are discontinued by MKC which a parish desires but does not have under current spending powers (except S137 subject to cap). [Clerks note above for criteria to comply with for POW]</p> <p>4. Parish Protocol – [on agenda to accept]</p> <p>5. Presentation on Localism by Cllr Ken Cleary, Chair of Larger Councils Committee at NALC). Added nothing to current knowledge. Clear that devolution will go beyond District Councils i.e. to parish councils.</p> <p>6. New Transport policy presentation: [on agenda to accept]. Suggest responses include; objection to Star Bus plan for rural villages, importance of rural bus services and importance of rural cycleways in sustainable transport strategy.</p> <p>7. Parish Online mapping service: Can be accessed via any browser. Supplies OS Maps & aerial photographs. Parish can annotate its copy of map with relevant information. Map can be printed/created as a PDF. Alternatives discussed: MK Observatory (this has MK information which is very useful but cannot be annotated by parishes); Pear Technology (latter is relatively expensive & purchased 'per seat' & installed on specific PCs). Parish Online, being browser based, is available to Clerk and all Cllrs. It is relatively cheap - £20 set-up plus £10 per thousand population. MKC will buy an initial year's use for all parishes using ring-fenced external funds so there is no incentive for us NOT to use it on a trial basis. [Clerks note above]</p> <p>Stony Stratford's 'Town Crier' won the best Newsletter cup. Parishes reminded under new legislation, they must not publish newsletters more frequently than quarterly, must be marked as published by the Parish Council and must only relate to the business of the parish. [Clerks note above]</p>
<p>BUDGET DISCUSSION MKC 21/12/10</p> <p>AUTHOR: CLLR P AYLES</p>	<p>Although there was a full agenda, my particular interest was the Budget debate. No decisions made. The Government settlement figures only received previous week & containing some nasty surprises. MKC has produced a consultation document and the 6 week period will start from 23rd December and the final budget decision will be made in full Council on 22nd February. [on agenda to accept] (CPC will have to make precept decision in the absence of knowing any budget or service impacts from MKC. Councillors need to read the full document themselves [circulated by Clerk prior to meeting] as it is large . A few headlines include recommendations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Close Woburn Sands and Stony Stratford public libraries - Switch off the grid roads streetlights - Restrict free bus passes to off-peak <p>I think there are three issues which will affect Castlethorpe directly;</p> <p>Grass-cutting reductions. I think we should discuss at HPCAF to see if there is appetite for the three parishes letting a contract for all our verges as well as consider a Castlethorpe-only contract. We should start the thinking process so we can be ready to go after the budget decision on 22nd February and get something in place from 1st April. Due to implication of grass budget cuts, it was agreed to look at 'cluster contracts' with PC's in ward. Cllrs to bring up at HPAF. Public Transport. We have fought really hard for the current service and my concern is that it could easily fall below a 'tipping point' where the bus service is no longer usable as a core service and becomes just an occasional service. I think we ought to discuss this too at HPCAF to get a consensus across the three parishes on the 33 service.</p> <p>By-election costs. Unlikely to impact us in 2011/12 but will be an issue if Castlethorpe maintains its good practice of contested elections.</p> <p>Several parish council Chairs were present and listening to them and talking to them and Ward Councillors in the breaks, it seems as if most parishes are setting a zero increase budget.</p>
<p>TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP</p>	<p>Topics covered: Station Square (design), B&Q/Granby Junctions roundabout delayed works now to go ahead, MK Coachway opened December, the Taxi</p>

CASTLETHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council General Meeting held on 10 January 2011 at 7.30pm

PARTNERSHIP 13/12/10 AUTHOR: CLLR KEANE	Sharing Project and options for Secklow Gate Bridge. The MK Transport Vision was also discussed. The three sub groups were confirmed as Parking and Sustainable Transport, Highways and Rail Projects. The next meeting is in February, date to be confirmed.
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NOTE 1: 6.3: BUDGET CONSULTATION :

ENV27 - RE-DESIGN OF GRASS CUTTING SERVICES: The Parish Council has had to set its precept before MK Council sets its budget in February 2011 and would have expected prior consultation for any service MK Council is reducing or withdrawing on the basis that parish councils are statutorily able to undertake as the parish council will not be able to make provision in 2011/12.

ENV41 - REDUCTION OF BUS SUBSIDIES WHERE THERE IS LOW TAKE-UP: Volume of use should not be the only criteria in rural areas where population density is lower by definition compared to urban areas. Public transport is the only method of transport by which people in the lower income bracket, the youth and senior citizens can get to work, medical appointments or leisure and sport activities. A reduction contrasts starkly with LTP3 which projects an increase in these services, essential to the maintenance of healthy, self sustaining rural communities. We ask that consideration is given to the above comments and that there will be a commitment to undertake extensive consultation through parish councils and/or local area forums, before any reduction in public service is made.

NOTE 2: 6.5: MKC CORPORATE PLAN

The Parish Council has the following comments on the Corporate plan.

1. The Corporate Plan reads like a hastily written framework covering subsidiary material, much of which is out of date. For example, 2 of the 4 bullet points describing the 'Council of 2015' relate to MKC only delivering services which cannot be delivered more effectively by other providers (presumably often meaning parish councils) and again that parish councils should use their statutory powers to deliver services previously the responsibility of MKC. Yet, there is no further reference to this in the Corporate Plan despite that this is likely to feature in the current budget review. These are matters hugely important to parish councils and it is a serious omission from the Corporate Plan.
2. The Plan is incomplete in many critical areas. For example,
 - The Medium Term Financial Plan, currently out for consultation, is omitted.
 - Of the 7 Business Strategies, 5 are 'to be included' with only high level statements being made for the other two, Procurement and Property.
 - The Corporate Indicators (which would measure success or not of the Plan) have no targets.
3. The Corporate Plan lists partner strategies that it supports despite that a) these strategies themselves are now not going to be fully sustainable in the current climate of austerity b) some are out of date. For example :
 - The Buckinghamshire and MK Rural Strategy 2008-2012 have a huge number of initiatives. It is simply not credible in current circumstances that MKC (nor probably Bucks CC) will support all of these yet they are listed in the Plan e.g. establishing a rural academy to improve rural educational standards or to create a single body covering all parish councils in Bucks and MK. The Corporate Plan needs to say which of these it will continue to support and which will cease.
 - The NHS MK Strategic Plan 2008-2013 was clearly written before news of its abolishment and its strategy is seriously out of date. Issues such as discharge of public health responsibilities should be stated albeit at the level of saying how these responsibilities will be transferred to MKC.
 - The SaferMK Plan 2009-2012 has been seriously impacted by funding and will not be able to deliver all the initiatives in the Plan.
4. It is surprising that the Corporate Plan only relates to two years when most of the content has a longer timeframe. For example: the financial projections are for four years (to 2014/15). One might expect more statements about, say, a four-year horizon with specific actions focussed on the early years and certainly an action plan with measures of success for 2011/12.

CASTLETHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council General Meeting held on 10 January 2011 at 7.30pm

5. It is not a useful time to write a Corporate Plan published only days after the government settlement but clearly written before both the settlement and the Localism Bill had been published. Additionally, the many government initiatives of the past months have not yet been incorporated into MKC or partner strategies. The Corporate Plan should state what MKC will be doing in 2011/12 as well as giving a medium term vision. This document does neither.

NOTE 3: LTP3 CONSULTATION

Castlethorpe Parish Council's response is in the context of a rural parish and much can be related directly to our Parish Plan and resolutions at the Parish Council.

In our opinion, the social analysis is misleading. While it may be true that, on average, Castlethorpe does not suffer from social deprivation, the analysis ignores significant, above average, populations of older and less well-off residents. The council feels this unfavourably and, in our opinion wrongly, skews the Travel Needs Index against the rural areas.

The employment areas analysis ignores the rural business centres which in fact can make parishes such as Castlethorpe, employment neutral which in our view is a healthy objective, albeit with a high percentage of import and export workers.

On a matter of detail, the new building summary is incorrect. In Castlethorpe, we expect 13 new dwellings at The Maltings (for which planning permission has already been granted) and a further 9 dwellings in the Old Station Yard so Castlethorpe is in the 20+ new dwellings category.

Bus Transport

It is unrealistic to consider half-hourly travel to the City Centre. As nice as that would be, the current situation is that the villages struggle to maintain an hourly service and are grateful for the contracted services which make the No 33 route a viable alternative to car travel.

As the report recognises, punctuality and reliability are the two most important factors and their improvement would greatly help the attractiveness and viability of the service. It has been frequently argued that RTPI is more important to rural services than to urban services. In urban areas, busses follow along in an acceptable timescale but in rural areas, a wait of an hour is neither acceptable nor conducive to the use of the bus as a reliable service. However, the council accept that the bus stop equipment required for RTPI is probably excessive and the council would recommend provision of a text and web based service for passengers to access on time schedules. Specifically, the council would prefer to see funds used to support the maintenance of the existing service with an extension to an evening 33 service for City Centre access and eventual provision for a Saturday service. It is important to recognise that bus services can fall below a 'tipping point' below which the bus cannot be considered as a viable service and usage will fall further to occasional rather than regular. An example would be a commute to the City Centre for work. An hourly service is tolerable but two hourly means commuters have to consider car travel because, if a bus is missed through service fault, it is not acceptable to arrive two hours late for work nor can the commuter be expected to wait two hours to get home.

The consultation considers 'Dial-A-Ride' as an off-peak option for rural areas. On a semantic point, the earlier offered definition of 'Dial-A-Ride' is for those who have difficulty with public transport and therefore the earlier definition should be changed to include services where population may not warrant a schedule public transport service. The consultation should recall that a 'Dial-A-Ride' service called the Hanslope Harrier was provided but had to be abandoned on cost grounds. It is doubtful if this would again become viable and suggest that it is dropped from the consultation paper. This places greater emphasis on a good quality, scheduled bus service.

Alternate Mode Transport – cycling and walking.

The distances in rural areas are so great that walking is really only a leisure activity and, with the exception of locale employment, is not a viable commuting mode.

Cycling is a viable alternative and probably more attractive to people who choose to live in a rural setting. However, the cycling network is impoverished as one moves further out of the City. The redway system expires at Haversham. The council note, with disappointment, that the redway expansion in LTP3 does NOT

CASTLETHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council General Meeting held on 10 January 2011 at 7.30pm

cover the rural areas.

The Sustrans track running from Haversham towards Castlethorpe was fairly recently partly re-surfaced properly. We would like to see (a) the Sustrans cycletrack resurfaced the entire length to Castlethorpe and re-routed up Fox Covert Lane and (b) a cycletrack to Hanslope created. The Sustrans route moves onto the road between Castlethorpe and Hanslope but the road is not really safe for cycling being unsighted in many places. With a good cycletrack, it is likely that there would be higher usage especially to Hanslope school – the headmaster had previously advised school children NOT to use the road on safety ground.

Electric Vehicles

This would be broadly welcomed though there are limited locations for charging points within the village.

Rail

Considering re-opening Castlethorpe station is simply not viable. Station Yard has been sold by Network Rail so there is no access or parking capacity and it is highly unlikely that Castlethorpe would be attractive to the train operating companies as the addition to journey times (from the stopping, acceleration and deceleration times) and the resulting reduction in network capacity would not be offset by additional revenues from residents. It is unlikely that non-residents, who would have to use a car to get to the station, would find Castlethorpe and a local timetable attractive. Furthermore, there isn't the space to accommodate parking and this would blight the village centre. If one is getting in a car, one might as well drive to Wolverton or even CMK. Finally, while a station would connect to the CMK station for interchange to fast services to London, the station is not in the city centre and so a further bus connection or a long uphill walk would be necessary to reach the centre to work, shop or for the night-time economy.

There have been several studies on re-opening the station all of which have concluded that it isn't viable. It is therefore surprising that the suggestion is included in LTP3 and presumably a result of Steer, Davies Gleeve incorporating casual rather than thought-through ideas in the document. It would be far more viable and attractive to maintain and improve the bus network.

Road Freight

A recent part implementation was to place lorry restrictions around Castlethorpe, Hanslope and Haversham other than for traffic originating in or delivering to the parish. Signs have been erected, including in conjunction with Northants and this is welcomed. The extension to making the restrictions more extensive and mandatory would be welcomed.

Broadband

The initiatives to provide fast broadband within the urban areas without real impetus for provision in the rural areas are noted with concern. It is important that the villages surrounding the central Milton Keynes area are viable and self-sustaining and do not become dormitories for CMK and other work locations and a sector where old and even young people are trapped without cars in the village.

Fast broadband is critical for our business centres and also for home workers. Given large distances in the rural areas, particular support should be given to ensuring a fast broadband provision. Undoubtedly, this would contribute to a lower use of transport and a lower carbon footprint which, on a per capita basis, would be particularly significant in the rural areas because of the larger distances to be covered.

Streetlighting

We note the suggested elimination of grid road lighting. Others will comment on the safety implications. This is of course in contradiction to a move to more efficient LED lighting. While of lower impact on the villages, a combination of elimination of grid road lighting in the short term together with the conversion to efficient lighting possibly on timer settings would seem a good compromise.

In the village, the same conversion would be attractive. For safety reasons, we would like to retain street lights in the village but these could reasonably be switched off at, say, 1am to save cost and carbon footprint.