



Castlethorpe Parish Council

Minutes of a Parish Council General Meeting held remotely by video conference on 3rd August 2020

PRESENT: Councillors Merritt, Ayles, Forgham, Keane, Markham (by phone) Ward Cllrs Geary & Bowyer and the Clerk. Members of the public joined the public session and viewed the meeting via Facebook and Youtube.

Public session:

Josh Richardson introduced himself as the new PCSO for the area. Josh gave an update on the most recent crime figures for the village (**see Appendix A2**). In response to questions:

- Josh will look at whether any progress was made on investigating the spate of burglaries at the turn of the year
- Josh will look at the problem of people parking on the corner of North Street and Bullington End Road

A letter had been sent to the Clerk to be read out in the public session that was critical of the response to the Neighbourhood Plan submitted by Messrs. Kirkby Diamond that was questioning whether there had been sufficient public consultation undertaken, specifically on the need for additional housing. The submission also promoted a local site for inclusion in the Plan. The letter was displayed on the screen and read out by the Chair. The fact that the letter had the name redacted was questioned. The Clerk responded that as a matter of principle if he sees the content of any correspondence as being sensitive, he will redact personal details. Cllr Markham responded and insisted that the submission had nothing to do with him. The Chair made it clear that the submission is a response to the Plan and was not a planning application. A question was asked about right to reply to the letter. The Chair responded that the letter was being read out in the public session so that everyone that saw the letter or heard it read out has the right to reply.

The matter of bin collections not being done at Maltings Field was raised. Cllr Geary reported that some areas did not get their bins collected this week and that they would be done in the next couple of days. Cllr Ayles will pursue with MKC.

There being no further business the meeting proper commenced at 7.55.

- | 1 | APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE | ACTION |
|---------------------------|--|---------------|
| 1.1 | Cllrs Hinds and Sawbridge reason alternative commitments. Accepted. | |
| 2 | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST | |
| 2.1. | The Chair reminded Councillors that because there had been some discussion at previous meetings, the Nolan principles that govern behaviour in public office had been re-circulated to all councillors. Under these, office holders must not take part in decisions that involve themselves, their family or their friends. Cllr Markham pecuniary interest 7.2. and 8.1. Cllr Forgham pecuniary interest 8.1. | |
| 3 | APPROVE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING | |
| 3.1 | Previous minutes from the meeting of 6 th July were proposed by Cllr Keane seconded by Cllr Forgham and agreed unanimously. Notes of meeting of 1 st July 2020 to assess risks in re-opening parish council maintained facilities were noted. | |
| TO RECEIVE REPORTS | | |
| 4.1. | Clerks Report & Review of Actions (See Appendix A1) – matters arising: | |
| 4.1.1. | Item 1 – Cllr Ayles will set up meeting with Luke Stacey about the trees near the war memorial. When he has a date he will invite other cllrs. | Cllr Ayles |
| 4.1.2. | Item 4: the Clerk confirmed that the contractor had performed the re-pointing and moved the clock at the Village Hall. | |
| 4.1.3. | Item 6 – Cllr Ayles corrected the report. MKC are still working on designs for rural street name plates but the activity has a low priority | |
| 4.1.4. | Item 12 The Clerk will go ahead and commission the work to re-tension the zip wire and ask for the operative to demonstrate what is required to appropriate people (handyman etc.) | Clerk |
| 4.1.5. | .Item 15 – Cllr Forgham has marked out the floor and put up the signs re. social distancing at the Village Hall. | |
| 4.1.6. | Item 16 – Cllr Ayles added that, once the decision had been made to close, the Pre-School committee were legally obliged to take the actions that they did in selling off equipment | |

4.1.7. Item 18 - Cllr Keane will further report road damage and cracking in Station Road to MKC. Cllr Keane

4.2. **Neighbourhood Plan update**

4.2.1. The Examiner had made some initial comments following the 'external' reg. 16 consultation and had given the parish council the opportunity to comment. To be considered at item 7.2.

5 TO CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS (previously viewed on line by Cllrs)

5.1. **20/01298/FUL** Proposed siting of 40 static holiday caravans in lieu of 70 touring caravans Cosgrove Park Main Street Cosgrove – Cllr Geary said that this application also affects Haversham with regard to the delivery of the units. He had talked to Jeremy Lee at MKC and had agreed that the best way forward is to have a meeting with the applicants to discuss the situation. It was agreed unanimously that Cllr Ayles represent the parish council in any such meeting. Clerk will write and ask that the Park personally oversee all deliveries in light of previous damage done to the verge at Fox Covert Lane and that in view of major traffic disruption, units are delivered out of peak hours.

5.2. **20/01672/TCA** Notification of intention to cut back the Ash Tree in back garden. Carried out by a qualified tree surgeon who has advised we trim the tree back cutting off overhanging branches which crown at around 4/5 metres. 5 School Lane Castlethorpe – no objections

6 TO RECEIVE REPORT BACK ON PREVIOUS PLANNING APPLICATION – no further comments made – no further comment

6.1. **19/02444/REM** - Reserved matters application for the erection of 31 dwellings, to include matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for which approval is being sought. Land To The East of Maltings Field. **Appealed on grounds of non-determination. Awaiting allocation of a Planning Inspector – no update this month**

6.2. **20/01075/FULMMA** Variation of condition 1 (Approved Drawings) attached to planning permission 18/01294/FUL to amend the western elevations, and provide details of the parking layout and cycle store Lodge Farm Business Centre Wolverton Road Castlethorpe **status 'registered'**

6.3. **20/01168/TPO** Horse Chestnut tree in our garden requires 20% reduction to retain integrity Castlethorpe Lodge Hanslope Road Castlethorpe **status Withdrawn**

6.4. **20/01182/FUL** Single storey orangery to the rear of the property Castle House 5 North Street Castlethorpe **status Withdrawn**

6.5. **20/01183/LBC** Listed Building Consent for single storey orangery to the rear of the property Castle House 5 North Street Castlethorpe **status 'registered'**

6.6. **South Northants Council S/2020/0836/FUL** Proposed change of use of land to create a 4 Pitch Gypsy/Traveller site comprising siting of 1 Mobile Home, 1 Touring Caravan, and the erection of 1 dayroom per pitch Land East Of Northampton Road Yardley Gobion – still to be determined – Castlethorpe PC's comments have been attached to file

7 TO CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS

7.1. A public excluded part 2 of the meeting to discuss matters in accordance with Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as defined in paragraphs 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act was proposed by Cllr Ayles and agreed unanimously.

7.2. Cllr Markham withdrew from meeting
The Examiner had moved very quickly on assessing the Neighbourhood Plan and had made some initial comments and asked for clarifications following the regulation 16 'external' consultation (**see Appendix A3**). The Steering Group had drafted a response that had been circulated to the Cllrs for consideration (**see Appendix A4**). During the subsequent discussion only one change was suggested: to add to the Kirkby Diamond response the words 'or presumptive' to follow 'that there is existing ...'. Cllr Ayles proposed that the PC approve sending the response to David Blandamer at MKC as representative of the parish council and to authorise the Steering Group to respond to any further comments David might make. Agreed unanimously.
Cllr Markham re-joined the meeting.

7.3. Cllr Forgham said that all significant content on the old village site had been transferred to the new web site and to now keep both in step would be a significant overhead. He proposed that the old site now be closed down. Agreed unanimously.

7.4. The village newsletter had not been produced in June. On the matter of whether there should be a **paper** edition in September Cllr Ayles thought that there should.

be something. Cllr Markham said that the opportunity to advertise in the newsletter is valuable. After some discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Ayles will prepare a parish council update and Cllr Forgham will determine whether any other village groups would want to provide any content. Also to find out who would want to advertise. There would then be a simple document produced to be downloadable from the web site and advertised on Facebook with hardcopies left at the village shop.

Cllr Ayles/
Forgham

8

FINANCIAL MATTERS

- 8.1. Cllrs Forgham & Markham withdrew from the meeting. The payment schedule was proposed by Cllr Ayles seconded Cllr Keane and was approved unanimously. Cllrs Forgham & Markham Ayles returned to the meeting.

Payee	Description	Invoice	Amount
S Bradbury	Salary July 2020	per pay slip	£624.62
S Bradbury	Social distancing material for VH	per attached receipts	£71.18
Stacey Blease	VH Cleaning March	per attached invoice	£0.00
RTM	Landscaping July	invoice 2325	£391.67
Mark Harrod Ltd	Portable goalposts	Sales Order 44254	£2,000.00
Glenmore Farm	Supply of diesel	Invoice 0608	£120.00
Richard Wontner	Fit kitchen football pavillion	attached invoice 92	£260.00
Richard Wontner	Empty bins	attached invoice 92	£40.00
R. Forgham	Refund purchase steam cleaner for VH	attached invoice	£79.15
BP Shayler	replace broken radiator valve VH	invoice 208 - omitted from July payment	£134.00
BP Shayler	fix lights Village Hall	attached invoice 31	£92.20
Terry Fricker	attend to wasp nest sports ground	awaiting invoice	£60.00
MK garden Machinery	service strimmer	awaiting invoice	£39.95
TOTAL			£3,912.77
Direct Debits			
Google Ireland	26107096G05ASYDKH7	Bank statement not received	
XLN	4976199 16674975		
EON	089208742670A		
EDF	671070653836.00		
Everflow	B220925A		

- 8.2. The annual accounts for 2017/18 had been circulated prior to meeting and were proposed by Cllr Ayles, seconded by Cllr Forgham and approved unanimously. They are to be signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

- 8.3. The matter of the drawdown of s.106 monies had been covered previously in the Clerk's Report. Cllr Ayles added that he had been in a conference call where he brought up the matter of our claim as an aside and was told that the matter would be investigated. *(It was on the following Wednesday that Sarah wrote and said that it would go to the Infrastructure SubBoard on 26th Aug for approval)* Cllr Ayles added that the improvements that we had made to the village centre had previously been approved by MKC as relevant for s.106 funding and that if any decision were now made to the contrary he would be asking for Ward Cllr support.

9

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED (email circulated prior to meeting)

- 9.1. No further correspondence received.

10

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (for noting, or for inclusion on a future agenda)

- 10.1. It had been reported that there was a significant amount of rubbish being left around the village. The handyman and shop owners had seen several bags left throughout the village. It was agreed that there was little more that the parish council could do at this point.

- 10.2. A request had been made by a resident made to put up posters on the grass triangle at the top of Station Rd advertising an event. It was agreed to give permission. The Clerk cautioned that decisions were not permitted at this part of the meeting but in this case it was agreed to go ahead but to take the sign down if anyone complained.

- 10.3. It was commented that there was little information on the closure of the village Pre-School and that people were dismayed that the equipment was being sold off. Cllr Ayles repeated that Pre-School had taken legal advice and had no option but to sell off the equipment.
- 10.4. Cllr Markham again raised the matter of the letter read out in the public session having been redacted. The Clerk repeated that he had redacted the name and that in his opinion this is proper conduct.
- 10.5. Cllr Geary gave an update on 'Entry Level Housing'. He was still of the strong opinion that a Neighbourhood Plan would over-ride any planning application on that basis.

11 TO AGREE DATE AND ATTENDANCE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS/EVENTS

- 11.1. The next General Parish Council meeting will be on Monday 7th September 2020 and will be conducted by video-conference.

There being no more business part 1 of the meeting closed at 21.30

PART 2

12 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST by Councillors in any of the agenda items below

- 12.1. None

13 TO CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS

- 13.1. Three quotes had been received to provide lighting to the new Village Hall loft conversion. Cllr Forgham recommended the quote from B.P. Shayler as it was the least cost and the tradesman had done a significant amount of work for the parish council before. This was proposed by Cllr Forgham, seconded by Cllr Ayles and agreed unanimously.

There being no more business the meeting closed at 21.40

Appendix A - Schedule of Reports & File Notes

APPENDIX A1 – CLERK’S REPORT 3/8/2020

1. Cllr Ayles to talk to Luke Stacey about cutting back trees around war memorial.
2. Handyman has fitted kitchen at football pavilion. Portable goalposts will be ordered – need to send payment with order (on tonight’s payment schedule). No update on repair of basketball back board and change of lock on toilet door at back of cricket pavilion. Brian Shayler has been asked to recommend a security light for the football pavilion.
3. Trees for sports ground have been delivered to the Clerk. Spoke to contractor and he advised that if he plants them now then they will have to be regularly watered. Better to plant in September. Clerk will keep trees in meantime. Carried forward to September. Other work at sports ground to secure doors at football pavilion, replace pavestone at cricket pavilion will be done when trees planted.
4. Pointing beneath the bell tower at the Village Hall and movement of clock was to be done last month – unable to contact handyman to confirm progress
5. Milton Keynes Partnership Foundation have paid a grant of £3,500 into our bank account. Cllr Merritt and Clerk now to commission purchase of agreed units plus arrange installation and training with First Responder.
6. Paul Van Geet at MKC had told the Clerk that the s.106 drawdown request for village centre work would be resolved last month. This has not happened and the Clerk has tried to contact him by email with no success. Council telephone number continuously engaged.
7. MKC have said that they will consider replacing the fading public footpath signs. Clerk to send them images of the signs.
8. MKC have insisted that it must be Ringway that re-paint the heritage streetlamp posts and have asked them for a quote. Chris Hales at MKC is getting a quote to upgrade further lights to heritage style whilst work is being done to convert lights to LED.
9. MKC have reported that they are not currently working on the exercise to identify new designs for rural street name plates.
10. The Clerk has spoken to Kelly Watson at CCLA and she has provided the following dates for a video conference this month to consider the £50,000 former Bond investment. Woughton PC had earlier expressed an interest in joining:
 - Wednesday 5th – anytime after 10.30am
 - Thursday 6th – anytime after 9am
 - Tuesday 11th – between 9am and 10.30am
 - Tuesday 11th – between 11am and 12.30pm
 - Thursday 13th – anytime after 11.30am
11. Carole at BALC has still not responded to our question about ‘contracting out’ financial services. The Clerk had contacted the Town Clerk at Wolverton to discuss whether they would take on our invoicing work but she has been on annual leave.

12. Unsure whether refund of £1,000 from Proludic has been paid as the Clerk has yet to receive a bank statement from Lloyds. Zip-wire needs re-tensioning. Clerk has received quotes from Proludic's preferred maintainers ReidsPlayground for that work and also for regular checks of all equipment – options to be considered at next meeting.
13. Court date has been set of 15 October at 10.00 a.m. at the Milton Keynes County Court for our claim of damage to the village hall floor.
14. The Clerk had contacted MK Community Energy about the community solar scheme and they had asked for copies of the past year's electricity bills for the sports buildings. The Clerk has asked the CSA to let him have copies but they have not done so yet.
15. Cllr Forgham has purchased a steam mop for the Village Hall and also has the materials to mark the Hall out to ensure social distancing.
16. Despite the efforts of Cllr Ayles, Forgham and the Clerk the Pre-School committee have sold off all of the equipment and have refused to hold the bank balance in Trust to be used in the event of the facility re-opening. They have offered to pay back the VH hiring concessions made by the Parish Council.
17. Cllr Geary was to escalate at MKC the matter of flooding at Bullington End Road
18. Sagging road in village centre has been reported to MKC
19. MKC Highways are still pursuing the following matters:
 - NS18 bracket still waits removal (non-urgent)
 - Removal of 'No HGV' sign by Maltings Field
 - Removal of 30 mph sign at Maltings Field and inclusion of Maltings Field in the 20 mph designated area

No progress/unknown status on outstanding actions:

- Cllr Keane to raise matter of Sustrans track at Transport Forum
- Clerk to purchase Balmoral style bench for south end of North Street.
- Cllr Ayles & Geary to consider MKC decision not to sell land at the side of 6 The Chestnuts
- CCTV at Sports Ground – clerk to contact suppliers to understand the management overheads. No progress this month
- Clerk to register The Fishponds Play Area with Land Registry
- Clerk to make 'rights of way' application for the strip of land between Station Road and Fishponds
- Cllr Ayles has had no response on PSPO Dogs but was not expecting one yet as MKC have not made Order. Previous decision was just to consult

Steve Bradbury 3/8/2020

Appendix A2 - Castlethorpe Crime – Statistics

	01/02/2019 – 01/08/2019	01/02/2020 – 01/08/2020
Fraud	2	0
Theft From Vehicle	1	1
Theft of vehicle	0	0
Anti-Social Behaviour	1	0
Theft of pedal cycle	0	0
Theft	1	0
Burglary Residential	0	0
Burglary Business	0	0
Criminal Damage	3	0
Assault with injury	0	1
Assault without injury	1	1
Public Order	1	0
Total	9	3

Since this time last year, statistically the rates of everything has dropped. This is due to Covid-19 However. People still need to call in even if they think it might be nothing. If people don't want to ask me questions then they can email me : Joshua.Richardson@Thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk.

Appendix A3 Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Development Plan Review Examiner's Clarification Note

This Note sets out my initial comments on the submitted Plan. It also sets out areas where it would be helpful to have some further clarification.

For the avoidance of any doubt matters of clarification are entirely normal at this early stage of the examination process.

Initial Comments

The Parish Council's ambition to review the Plan reflects national guidance and associated best practice. The Plan provides a clear vision for the neighbourhood area. The review addresses a balanced range of issues. It is underpinned by an appropriate evidence base.

The presentation of the Plan is good. The maps are generally effective.

The package of submission documents is proportionate to the neighbourhood area in general, and to the review of the Plan in particular.

Points for Clarification

I have read the submitted documents and the representations made to the Plan. I have also visited the neighbourhood area. I am now in a position to raise issues for clarification with the Parish Council. There are also two questions for Milton Keynes Council.

The comments made on the points in this Note will be used to assist in the preparation of my report and in recommending any modifications that may be necessary to the review of the Plan to ensure that it meets the basic conditions. I set out specific clarification points below in the order in which the policies concerned appear in the submitted Plan.

Clarification matters for the Parish Council

Policy CAS2/paragraph 4.2.3

The modified text draws attention to the adjacent Paddock Close scheme. I saw on the visit that it would provide an appropriate design inspiration for the allocated site.

However, is the language used in the modified text too prescriptive? In particular might it serve to prevent the development of an equally-attractive scheme?

Policy CAS8

Based on the representation received from Keynes Investments Limited would I be correct to assume that the organisation of the CCTV survey was not discussed and agreed with the landowner?

To what extent does the Parish Council consider that the level of recorded activity is materially different to that which would take place in relation to other similar parcels of land on the edge the village or of a similarly-sized rural settlement which include a public footpath?

What are the respective sizes of the Castle Field and the Recreation Ground local green spaces in the 'made' Plan?

Clarification matters for Milton Keynes Council

Is there any planning history on the proposed Malting Field housing site as proposed in Policy CAS3 of the Plan?

Please can I be provided with a copy of the interim position briefing note as highlighted in paragraph 4.3.1 of the Plan.

Representations

Does the Parish Council wish to comment on any of the representations made to the Plan?

Does the Parish Council wish to comment on the representation about the proposed designation of Gobbey's Field as a local green space by Keynes Investments Limited in particular?

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 14 August 2020. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve.

In the event that certain responses are available before others I am happy to receive the information on a piecemeal basis.

Irrespective of how the information is assembled please could it all come to me directly from the Milton Keynes Council. In addition, please can all responses make direct reference to the policy or the matter concerned.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Development Plan Review
28 July 2020

Appendix A4 Draft Response to Clarification Document issued by Examiner of Modified Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Examiners Questions in Blue, suggested Parish Council Response in black and suggested amended wording in red.

Clarification matters for the Parish Council

Policy CAS2/paragraph 4.2.3

The modified text draws attention to the adjacent Paddock Close scheme. I saw on the visit that it would provide an appropriate design inspiration for the allocated site.

However, is the language used in the modified text too prescriptive? In particular might it serve to prevent the development of an equally-attractive scheme?

The parish council would be happy with alternative wording such as 'The recent housing scheme at Paddock Close is regarded as a successfully designed scheme and this should act as a clear cue for the design of this scheme. Paddock Close, which has an Edwardian style reflecting the growth of Castlethorpe following the advent of the railway, includes bay windows, sash windows, stone window lintels and recessed front porches.'

Policy CAS8

Based on the representation received from Keynes Investments Limited would I be correct to assume that the organisation of the CCTV survey was not discussed and agreed with the landowner?

That is correct. Actually, the CCTV survey wasn't organised by the parish council but it was given access to the data by an interested resident. A member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group reviewed the video footage and accuracy of the Excel descriptions of events recorded.

To what extent does the Parish Council consider that the level of recorded activity is materially different to that which would take place in relation to other similar parcels of land on the edge the village or of a similarly-sized rural settlement which include a public footpath?

Activity in Gobbey is considerably higher than in other 'parcels of land' on the edge of the village mainly because (1) it goes somewhere (eg down to the river) and also is the only connection to the other footpaths if one wants walk a circular route around that side of the village (2) because it is a wide flat piece of land (unlike, say, Castle Field) and well suited to playing ball, flying kites and the other activities beyond simply using the footpath to transit the field. As a field, it is left to grazing and is reasonably flat. We can't comment on comparisons to other settlements.

What are the respective sizes of the Castle Field and the Recreation Ground local green spaces in the 'made' Plan?

Castle Field is approximately 4 hectares and the recreation ground is approximately 3 hectares.

Representations

Does the Parish Council wish to comment on any of the representations made to the Plan?

We note that responses were received from Natural England, National Grid, the Canal & River Trust and Network Rail, all of whom had no comment.

Anglian Water made a suggested addition: 'For the purposes of policy CAS8, the very special circumstances would include development required by a utility company to fulfil their statutory obligations to their customers.' The parish council has no objection to this addition.

Three residents took the trouble to comment, all in support, for which the parish council thanks them given that they had previously been able to comment in the Reg 14 consultation and at the Open Day run during Reg 14.

The Kirkby Diamond Response.

The premise seems to be "There has been no consultation or consideration of the need for additional housing and we consider that the scope of public consultation has been deficient."

On the need for additional housing, the Parish Council noted that there is existing planning permission for 41 houses in the village, being 9 low cost dwellings in Station Yard, 31 dwellings with a mix agreed by the Parish Council in 'Maltings 2' plus one further dwelling. The current number of houses in Castlethorpe is 470. MKC further advised that the Indicative Housing Requirement for the parish is one dwelling and that therefore no further allocation of land was necessary in this Modification.

It is probably also worth noting that no respondent, other than two landowners who put forward land, at either Reg 14 or Reg 16 suggested that further provision for housing above that already permitted was necessary.

On the statement that the consultation has been deficient, this appears to be an assertion without evidence and the Parish Council would refer to the Consultation Statement which shows that consultation met or exceeded the statutory requirement.

The question of putting this land forward was first raised at the Parish Council Meeting of 2nd March 2020 by Mrs Markham's son, Martin, in the Open Forum. Martin was advised that, in line with MKC advice, the Parish Council had previously decided not to allocate further land but this would be discussed again later that evening in the Council Meeting. However, the Chair advised Martin that, if a decision was made to allocate land, the process was to undertake a 'call for sites' and then undertake a site comparison exercise as was done in the original NP. The Markhams' land could not be placed directly into the Modified NP.

It should also be noted that Martin's brother, Ian, sits as a parish councillor and was therefore party to all the decisions made on the Neighbourhood Plan including the previous decision not to allocate further land and the arrangements for public consultation. On 2nd March, the Clerk advised Ian that he would need to declare a pecuniary interest and Ian did not therefore take part in any NP agenda items at this or subsequent meetings. Given that Ian farms the land proposed by his mother, their complaint of deficient consultation does not seem credible.

Allocation of further land was considered along with other proposals from landowners at Agenda Item 7.4 on 2nd March and the Parish Council confirmed its previous decision not to allocate further land. The Reg 14 consultation ended on 11th March and the Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to MKC. Ian didn't raise that his proposal should have been put to the village until the meeting of 4th May by which time the Plan belonged to MKC. Minutes are available on the Parish Council website www.castlethorpe-pc.gov.uk

[Does the Parish Council wish to comment on the representation about the proposed designation of Gobbey's Field as a local green space by Keynes Investments Limited in particular?](#)

The Phillips Planning Services response takes selected elements of previous reports out of context to refute the case for designation as an LGS.

The essential point is that Gobbey's has been used for recreational activities for decades and this goes far beyond the use of the Public Footpath to transit the field. Activities include drone flying, ball games and exercising dogs.

Gobbey's is the only field in or near to the village suitable for this and especially for residents in the southern part of the village. Other fields are less accessible or are used for arable farming. Gobbey's is reasonably flat and accessible from the Fishponds play area, the pedestrian footbridge and from the Maltings Fields footpath. Less formally, residents hop over the fence from Prospect Place and the two Shepperton Close gates and, although the owners have removed an informal stile access from Shepperton, there certainly exists a right of access by prescription for many villagers who have used the informal accesses for over twenty years. Before 2016, the owners never made any attempt to deter access via Prospect Place and the two Shepperton Close gates, and then only by placing a notice on one gate. The grazing tenants have never made any attempt to deter recreational use of the full field.

Other fields, such as to the west of Station Rd or to the east of Prospect Place, which also have footpath access, simply aren't used recreationally beyond walking the footpath.

Castle Field was gifted to the village some years ago but is a Norman castle, a SAM, and is used for dog exercising when sheep are not present but its uneven terrain makes it unsuitable for most recreational activities except sledging in snow.

The recreation ground is leased to the Sports Association. It can be used by the public but only when games are not in progress which excludes many week-ends. Dogs are not permitted in the recreation ground.

Turning to the previous examinations, the NP was examined by Mr Peter Biggers and we are very grateful for the huge amount of work that he did to make the NP a complete document.

Mr Biggers did make the comment that, because the village is not identified for development, designating it as an LGS was not justified. Mr Ashcroft may be aware that MKC has had a torrid time demonstrating a Five Year Housing Land Supply and has had a number of planning applications consequently permitted on appeal so, while Mr Biggers comment may be generally true, MKC is an exception. The Parish Council comment, referenced by Phillips on page 2, was just to draw attention to this point rather than to seek to make protection from development as the main reason for designation as an LGS. Incidentally, the owners of Gobbey's have indeed made several failed planning applications for the site and would no doubt do so again if there was a weakness in MKC's Planning Policy. In their submissions on the previous NP, the owners made a proposal that using the bottom field for housing would improve its public access and facilities, which was taken as a rather bizarre rationale by the Parish Council.

However, Mr Biggers felt that the Parish Council had made a number of statements about use without evidence and he gave them 'no weight' and, in the event, determined that Gobbey's did not meet the requirements of the NPPF.

The Parish Council felt chastised by this and quickly organised a survey of use of the field by residents and received 136 responses (from 470 households) showing widespread use and therefore the Parish Council asked MKC to have this aspect only of the NP re-examined.

The re-examination was done by Mrs Rosemary Kidd. Unfortunately, she dismissed the survey as 'anecdotal' and felt that the field was 'an extensive tract of land'. We subsequently found she is an outlier on field size designation for LGS, having in a previous examination designated a two hectare field as 'an extensive tract of land'. However, the Parish Council felt it had to accept this decision and moved on to a successful referendum.

When the Parish Council decided to modify the NP, residents again asked for Gobbey's to be considered for LGS designation. During the preparation of the Modified NP, a resident came forward with video evidence showing use of the lower part of the field. Given previous experience of lack of evidence by Mr Biggers and the 'anecdotal' nature ascribed by Mrs Kidd, the Parish Council felt that this would be objective, empirical evidence for the Modified NP.

Data Protection law was examined and the ICO were contacted to ensure no breach was being made. The ICO's decision was that the data was incidental to the primary purpose of the camera, was therefore private to the camera owner, not subject to GDPR, and that descriptive matter of the data could be used provided that individuals were not identified. The video evidence from the owner was examined and verified by a member of the NP Steering Group as were the descriptive tables of use he produced. These were incorporated into the NP Annex B with the raw descriptive data included in the LGS Evidence Report. The original video evidence is extremely lengthy but is available if the Examiner wishes to check its source validity.

Phillips comment that there are significant flaws in the process of collection of the video data and its analysis and that it is vague and ambiguous. The data was collected randomly in an unbiased way on 19 days over 6 months. It therefore satisfies the accepted definition of random sampling. The security camera was high definition and facing the width of the field, the videos are clear and, as the width of that section of Gobbey's field surveyed is only about 200 metres, so it is very easy to see what activities happened and whether people were using the right of way path. The Observations Summary shows many detailed comments e.g. girl practising on bike, playing with a ball, drone flyer, family playing football. It is also silly to say that, because faces can't be identified, one cannot see what the person is doing which is nonsense for anyone who watches football on television.

There is a reasonable point that the LGS Evidence Base was accidentally omitted initially. However, the summary is in the Annex which was published. The Evidence Base is just a long list of usage to validate the summary. One either accepts it or not and any doubts can be removed by the Examiner having access to the source video recordings. In any case, the Annex was available 10 days before the end of the consultation period and MKC would almost certainly have granted an extension if requested. It would appear that Phillips are attacking the video evidence admissibility because it clearly contradicts their argument.

There are a number of miscellaneous comments with which the Parish Council would disagree.

- Negative comments about the SAM. The SAM is about 10% of the area of Gobbey's. It is a small part but should not be dismissed. The important Norman heritage of the village has strong local sentiment.
- Negative comments about ecological significance. The copse bordering Gobbey's to the east is the only substantial woodland in the village and is home to a wide variety of birds and bats which, for practical reasons, are active and are seen mostly in Gobbey's and its immediately surrounding area.
- Comments are made referring to previous Examiners views on validity of the Parish Councils evidence of recreational value of the field. These are out of context as those Examiners did not have access to the video evidence now available.
- The comment that the two previous Examiners found that it failed the criteria of not being an extensive piece of land. This isn't correct. Mrs Kidd found this but Mr Biggers merely said that 'it is a large field'.

The Parish Council has presented evidence for each of the three requirements of NPPF paragraph 100 (on NP page 30) for designation as an LGS and the Phillips response does not alter that evidence.