



Castlethorpe Parish Council

Minutes of a Parish Council General Meeting held remotely by video conference 9th September 2020

PRESENT: Councillors Ayles, Forgham, Keane, Hinds, Sawbridge, Ward Cllr Bowyer and the Clerk. Members of the public joined the public session and viewed the meeting via Facebook and Youtube.

Public session:

A resident of Paddock Close expressed concern on behalf of other occupants that the planned development at Maltings 2 should not be completely consisting of social housing and that the plans submitted do not provide a consistency of architecture with the rest of the village. Cllr Ayles responded that this is also the view of the Parish Council and that the matter was being further discussed at item 6.1.

There were no other comments

- | | | |
|----------|--|-------------------|
| 1 | APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE | ACTION |
| 1.1 | Cllrs Merritt reason family business and Markham reason illness. Accepted. | |
| 2 | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST | |
| 2.1. | Cllr Forgham pecuniary interest 8.1. | |
| 3 | APPROVE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING | |
| 3.1 | Previous minutes from the meeting of 3 rd August were proposed by Cllr Keane seconded by Cllr Forgham and agreed unanimously. | |
| | TO RECEIVE REPORTS | |
| 4.1. | Clerks Report & Review of Actions (See Appendix A1) – matters arising: | |
| 4.1.1. | Item 1 – Cllr Ayles had talked to Luke Stacey about looking at the trees overhanging the war memorial but Mr. Stacey is very busy at this time of year. When he has time available he will meet with Cllr Ayles and any other Cllrs who may be available. | Cllr Ayles |
| 4.1.2. | Item 18: Cllr Forgham expressed thanks to Sarah Montague, current VH Booking Clerk for her good work and asked any viewers whether they were aware of anyone who might like to take over. | |
| 4.1.3. | Item 19 – Cllr Forgham advised that the Pilates group had postponed their commencement of classes but that the yoga group may be back in the VH soon. There has been a booking for 12 th September. | |
| | Outstanding items: | |
| 4.1.4. | Item 3 Cllr Keane had no success in contacting anyone about the SUSTRANS track | |
| 4.1.5. | .Item 7 – MKC had taken responsibility for the fallen tree at Fishponds so it was agreed that the area is being maintained and supported that the action to register the Fishponds play area with Land Registry be dropped | |
| 4.2 | Chairman's Report (see Appendix A2) – matters arising: | |
| 4.2.1. | The situation re. waste collection in Maltings Field is difficult in view of the paucity of parking in the area. The situation will be kept under review. | |
| 4.2.2. | It had been agreed to add South Street to the list of areas to have speed checks. | |
| 4.2.3.. | The flooding problems at the Chestnuts seem to have been resolved. Cllr Bowyer added that there is an obvious need to keep gullies swept but that there is only one machine available in the whole of the MK area. MKC have planned a gully sweeping programme and are hoping to buy a second machine when funds become available. | |
| 4.3 | File Note: MKC Planning Session 26th August 2020 (see Appendix A3) to be considered at item 7.5. | |
| 4.4. | Update on procurement of defibrillators for Village Hall and Sports Ground – Cllr Merritt had not been able to attend the meeting but the Clerk had recorded latest position in his report. | |
| 5 | TO CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS (previously viewed on line by Cllrs) | |
| 5.1. | No new applications. | |

- 6 TO RECEIVE REPORT BACK ON PREVIOUS PLANNING APPLICATION – no further comments**
- 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. A hearing date has been agreed and the Inspector appointed had asked for comments by 10th September. Hearing to be held on 27th October via Microsoft Teams. Cllr Ayles had drafted and circulated to parish cllrs a submission to go to the Inspector based on previous objections agreed by the parish council (see Appendix A5). All agreed in full with the draft.
- 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 – **application permitted**
- 6.3. **20/01298/FUL** Proposed siting of 40 static holiday caravans in lieu of 70 touring caravans Cosgrove Park Main Street Cosgrove **status Registered – no further comment**
- 6.4. **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 **permitted**
- 6.5. **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 – **application refused at South Northants Development Control meeting 3rd September**
- 7 TO CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS**
- 7.1. The Inspector had completed his report on the revised Neighbourhood Plan and apart from one major issue has been supportive. That being that he has advised MKC to remove the designation of Gobbey's Field as a Local Green Space (LGS) as it did not meet two of the three criteria laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). He was happy for the Plan to be made unless MKC were minded to disregard his advice in which case the Plan should go to referendum when circumstances allow. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group disagreed with the Inspector's interpretation of the NPPF criteria and therefore Cllr Ayles proposed that the parish council inform MKC that they would want the LGS designation to remain in the Plan and to go to referendum if necessary. This was agreed unanimously. Cllr Ayles asked for support from Ward Cllrs and will try to arrange a meeting with them and MKC to pursue the matter. **Cllr Ayles**
- 7.2. It was unanimously agreed to approve installation of branded windbreak banners at the tennis courts as per images circulated from Castlethorpe Sports Association.
- 7.3. It was unanimously agreed that the landscaping contractors cut and clear the wildlife area at the sports ground and the Clerk purchase wild flower seed at an overall cost of no more than £400.
- 7.4. Quotes had been received for regular maintenance of equipment at the Thrupp Close and Fishponds play areas. It was agreed that the quotes seemed quite expensive and it was not clear what MKC do in this respect. Also that the maintenance did not include the gym equipment. Clerk to contact MKC and look for alternative quotes if required. **Clerk**
- 7.5. Cllr Ayles had drafted and circulated proposed responses to the Government White Paper on Planning Policy and to the separate document 'Changes to the Current Planning System' and asked for parish council approval for the documents to be submitted on their behalf. Agreed unanimously. **Clerk**
- 7.6. MKC had provided quotes to repaint heritage and modern lamp columns in the village (see item 4 under Highways Update in Chairman's Report at Appendix A2). It was unanimously agreed to go ahead and commission the work on the lamp posts identified. Clerk to contact MKC to make final arrangements. **Clerk**
- 7.7. The annual report from the Internal Auditor had been circulated and was noted with no further comment (see Appendix A6)

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

Payee	Description	Invoice	Amount
S Bradbury	Salary July 2020	per pay slip	£624.62
S Bradbury	Court fees payment reclaim	receipt awaiting	£80.00
S Bradbury	Petrol strimmer	per attached receipts	£74.99
Stacey Blease	VH Cleaning March	per attached invoice	£0.00
RTM	Landscaping July	invoice 2325	£391.67
GA Flack Ltd	Erect fence between Castle Field & Castle House - previous cheque declined	invoice awaited	£640.00
Simon Bates	Weedspray village #3 of 3	invoive 178	£400.00
Richard Wontner	VH maintenance	attached invoice 93	£35.00
Richard Wontner	Empty bins	attached invoice 93	£40.00
Richard Wontner	Village maintenance	attached invoice 93	£50.00
R. Forgham	5 Additional keys for VH store room	attached invoice	£29.17
Rentakeeper	VAT not provided last month	attached invoice 4494	
WEL Medical Ltd	2 x defibrillators	attached invoice #1236474	£2,500.00
Reids Playgrounds Maintenance Ltd	Re-tension cableway and demonstrate re-tensioning	attached invoice 3897	£250.00
MK Loft Boarding	Re-boarding VH lofts and install ladders	attached invoice 038	£2,000.00
BP Shayler	Install lighting VH lofts	attached invoice 51	£120.00
TOTAL			£7,235.45

Direct Debits			
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- 8.2. CCLA had briefed the parish council on 27th August about the current status of their Property Fund in which the parish council had earlier resolved to deposit the £50,000 sum formerly held in a Bond account that was made over to the parish council for interest to pay towards upkeep of the sports ground. All parish cllrs had been invited to attend but only Cllrs Ayles, Forgham and the Clerk were able to. A summary of the briefing was prepared and circulated by Cllr Ayles (see Appendix A4). Cllr Ayles proposed that on its re-opening that the full amount be transferred to the Fund as previously resolved and that the parish cllrs confirm that the parish council as a whole understands the risks and potential variation in performance of the Fund going forward. Agreed unanimously.

- 8.3. Cllr Ayles proposed that following CPC's previous decision to move the deposit account away from Bank of Ireland, it transfers the full amount held in the Bank of Ireland account into the CCLA Deposit Fund. Agreed unanimously.

- 8.4. MKC approval on our request to draw down funds from the s.106 agreement to meet the cost of improvements made to the village had been given on 28th August.

- 8.5. The Clerk is in conversation with Stony Stratford TC with regard to potential outsource of financial services. Carry forward to next meeting.

Clerk

9 **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED (email circulated prior to meeting)**

- 9.1. A resident had thanked the parish council for having the zip wire re-tensioned.

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

- 10.1. Cllr Hinds will contact MKC to get the logs removed where they had cut down the fallen tree in the Fishponds area. There had been a tree lounge around the base of the tree. It was agreed that there should be a resolution at the next meeting to replace the tree and the tree lounge.

Cllr Hinds

- Cllr Hinds and Keane to put together the specifics of the resolution.

Clerk Cllrs Hinds/Keane

- 10.2. The VH Booking Clerk has had to resign and an appeal was sent out for someone to take her place.

- 10.3. Cllr Sawbridge suggested that a shared drive be set up to hold documents for each meeting. Agreed.

Cllr Ayles

- 10.4. Parking problems in South Street and New Road was brought up. Cllr Ayles invited anyone with any ideas to make suggestion but didn't see what can be done.

- 10.5.

The matter of the MKC conservation area review was raised by Cllr Bowyer. Will be up for consultation in November.

11

TO AGREE DATE AND ATTENDANCE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS/EVENTS

11.1. The next General Parish Council meeting will be on Monday 5th October 2020 and will be conducted by video-conference.

There being no more business the meeting closed at 21.30

Appendix A - Schedule of Reports & File Notes

Appendix A1 – Clerk’s Report 7/9/2020

1. Phil to talk to Luke Stacey about cutting back trees around war memorial.
 2. Portable goalposts have been paid for and are to be delivered to sports ground. Awaiting update from CSA on repairs to basketball back board and changing of lock on cricket pavilion toilet which they are arranging.
 3. (Annual) meeting CSA/SGC needed to consider grant for next year
 4. Trees for sports ground have been delivered to the Clerk. Spoke to the contractor and he advised that if he plants them now then they will have to be regularly watered. Better to plant later on in September. Clerk will keep trees in meantime. Carried forward. Other work at sports ground to secure doors at football pavilion, replace pavestone at cricket pavilion will be done when trees planted.
 5. Pointing beneath the bell tower at the Village Hall and movement of clock has been done.
 6. Defibrillators have been delivered to Clerk. Awaiting meeting Clerk/Cllr Merritt to plan installation and training.
 7. MKC Infrastructure Sub Board has agreed payment of s.106 monies. Payment now to be processed. With Paul Van Geet.
 8. MKC have said that they will consider replacing the fading public footpath signs. Clerk will send them images of the signs and locations after attending Geo-mapping course on 9th September.
 9. Re-painting of heritage lamp posts to be considered tonight. Still awaiting Chris Hales at MKC getting a quote to upgrade further lights to heritage style whilst work is being done to convert lights to LED.
 10. Videoconference held with CCLA about re-affirmation of investments. To be considered this evening.
 11. Outsourcing of Financial Services – Clerk had contacted Wolverton TC and they did not have the capacity to take on VH invoicing. He has since spoken to Stony Stratford and their Finance Committee will consider the request.
 12. Proludic have refunded the £1,000 owed. Engineers attended to re-tension the cableway and demonstrated how to do it with the handyman and Cllrs Keane and Hinds. Equipment maintenance quotes have been provided and will be considered tonight.
 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. Court fee paid by phone to be reclaimed by Clerk today.
 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 still not done so.
 15. Pre School had said that they would pay back the VH hiring concessions made by the Parish Council but nothing has been heard since.
 16. All work on the Village Hall loft conversion to provide additional storage space is now complete.
 17. A grant application for £10,000 has been (verbally) accepted to cover loss of income due to Covid-19. Confirmation still awaited & money not in bank account as at end of last month (last statements).
 18. Village Hall Booking Clerk has resigned the position.
 19. Pilates is returning to the Village Hall on 25 September.
- No progress/unknown status on outstanding actions:
- Cllr Geary was to escalate at MKC the matter of flooding at Bullington End Road
 - MKC have reported that they are not currently working on the exercise to identify new designs for rural street name plates.
 - 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 7/9/2020

Appendix A2 Chairman's Report 1st September 2020

Waste Collection in Maltings Field

After the last meeting, I spent a week liaising between Kevin Wilson (Waste Management) and Josh Richardson (PCSO). The result is:

- Josh feels that it is difficult to prevent residents parking at the entrance as there is literally nowhere else for them to go. When he went to speak to them, he couldn't find anywhere to park himself. Technically, they are not committing an offence of obstruction so he is unable to enforce no parking anyway. He has spoken to the residents and asked them to move their cars on Friday mornings when hopefully there will be some spaces elsewhere.
- Josh did suggest that we might create more parking spaces by converting the green verge. I am not personally minded to favour this because (a) I like green verge and I suspect the houses fronting on it would object (b) it would be expensive, I guess £10k plus - the parking opposite the shop cost £15k 13 years ago. (c) there is no guarantee residents would use it.
- Note that, even if we put down yellow lines, enforcement is done by MKC's contractor not TVP which would, in my opinion, cause bad feeling even if the contractor was prepared to come out for small pickings.
- Kevin says there is a contractual commitment for SERCO to revisit any areas they have not been able to collect from within 48 hours excluding weekends. This means rubbish may not be collected until the Tuesday as happened after our last meeting. I have discussed using a small collection vehicle but Kevin says this is expensive and reserved for narrow roads not for where the road is restricted by parked vehicles.

I did put a Facebook request for residents to move their vehicles on Friday mornings until after the collection. I think the following Friday was OK and suggest that we just have to monitor this and, if the problem keeps occurring, we will have to consider other measures.

Speeding

A number of North St residents have made unconnected complaints about speeding and especially of green waste lorries. Cllr Hinds has moved the SID to North St. Average speeds are low (21mph) but there is a wide spread. I have been passing information to the local special constabulary who operate speed guns and asked if they can spend some time on North St next time they are operating in the village. I have also written to the head of waste operations at MKC to ask him to remind the SERCO drivers of the new 20mph zone and he has confirmed he will do so.

Anti-Social Behaviour

I have received several complaints of ASB on Fox Covert / Paddock Close by youths congregating. This causes noise late at night, litter including nitrous oxide canisters and of course violating Covid safety rules. Cases have been reported to the police and our PCSO is also 'on the case'. I have invited Josh to the next Open Forum and, if confirmed, will also invite residents to join the Open Forum. One possible solution is to purchase a camera.

Highways Update

1. MKC have agreed to include Maltings Field in the 20mph zone to allow the superfluous 20mph sign to be removed. New Road and School Lane will also be included as they were also omitted from the original Order but fortunately signage wasn't erected.
2. The 'No HGV' sign by Maltings Field (and indicating Maltings Field instead of New Road) will be removed. The 'Rumble Strips' sign on Wolverton Rd will be removed as the rumble strips were removed some years ago after noise complaints.
3. The old light bracket on NS18 still awaits removal by Western Power. MKC have been reminded and have said that Western Power have committed to removal by end-August.
4. MKC have provided costs for repainting the badly faded heritage lamp posts which will be considered on the Agenda. The Clerk has surveyed the lamp posts and 43 need repainting. MKC have quoted:

Painting of ornamental 5m column	= £58.88 per unit
Re-numbering of columns	= £2.57 per unit
Total	= £61.45 per unit

Potential Extras

Strip existing paint by hand if required	= £29.44 per unit
Trimming vegetation	= £19.28 per unit
Remove / replace any signs	= £10.92 per unit

5. Rural street name plates remain under consideration but are low priority though I have now received an A0 map of the village for marking up. SNPs are not currently being repaired or replaced due to Covid impact on staff availability and finance.

6. Drains

Previously, I knew more than I wanted about our drainage but now I am replete! We have been working with Carl Devereux, Clerk of Works at MKC, for the past year following problems with water ingress at The Chestnuts and also garage flooding on Bullington End Rd.

Carl was able to bring equipment to the village in w/c 3rd August including a drain camera and jetting and cleaning equipment. I met with him on 11th (at rather short notice so apologies that I couldn't invite other councillors though I did grab John Keane as he passed) and he explained the drainage system and its status.

Starting by the shop, there is a 225mm pipe field drain coming into a manhole under the road from Castle Field. This then feeds into a 150mm pipe, then into a clay pipe, then into a stone culvert (very old), back into a clay pipe to reach the bus stop. On route it also takes feeds from the two drains outside Castle House. The run is not straight and has some sharp bends. It then feeds into a 225mm pipe again to run erratically to the footpath to the footbridge where it does a series of S bends from side to side until it stops, full of water, by the footbridge. Carl thinks it then seeps away into Station Yard where they believe there was a pond probably until the station was closed in the 1960s.

All this has been jetted and sucked clean, including the footway drain by the bus stop, though there is a root from the Christmas tree on the green growing into the pipe. It is Carl's opinion that the whole of this length should have been replaced by 225mm pipe when the village centre was constructed - there is even a manhole buried under the block paving outside 2 The Chestnuts.

There is a separate mixed surface water and foul drain running down North St to the manhole in the middle of the road table in the village centre. This does not connect to the surface water drains above but also runs down South Street (where it joins with a main sewer running along South St) and then goes under the railway down to the sewage farm.

The drains on North St by the Carrington were blocked and have been jetted and sucked clean up to the school. The tree opposite 10 North St is growing into the foul drain and needs to be repaired which will probably mean digging up the road. However, hopefully water running down North St will now go into the drains and not run across the table and cause flooding.

The ball now needs to be passed to Asish Patel, the Flood Manager, to repair the root damage to the drains and unblock the pipe by the footbridge. We will have to see how well the cleaning has mitigated the flood risk at The Chestnuts. If not, another potential solution is the floodgate which we have previously discussed.

At the same time, the gully sucker was taken up Bullington End Rd where two residents had complained, one of a flooded garage (on the east side) and one of sewage overflow on the west side.

There was a downpour on 13th August so I went round to see how the drains were coping. The North St / South St junction by the village hall shows some minor pooling but the drains seem to be coping well. The water is flowing nicely down the gutter on the road from the school down to the village hall and into the drain and importantly not across the village centre table.



I also went along Bullington End Rd and the drains there were coping. There is some pooling at the entrance to some of the drives, including No 14 which had complained of flooding in their garage. However, this is because of the road (and the drop kerb) rather than the drains.

I have contacted both the lady in The Chestnuts and the owner of No 14.

It is worth noting the strategic provision of drain cleansing. There is one gully cleaner for all of MK which has about 75,000 gullies which is likely to increase to 86,000 in the next two years. There is a requirement imposed by Cabinet that the grid roads are to be cleaned every three years. This means, on a simple

calculation, that other gullies can only be cleaned about every 5 years! It would make a huge difference if a second gully cleaner with a root cutter could be purchased. Current capacity doesn't seem sufficient and local flooding will result in the Borough.

Furthermore, the rural parishes have typically got an old drainage infrastructure - for example the 150mm pipe in North St - which, apart from root damage simply doesn't have the capacity for the weather variation that is beginning to occur yet there is NO provision in the Capital Plan for any replacement. It is a classic 'stitch in time' because, when flooding does occur, the costs in re-housing are many times the cost of the original repair. Ward Councillors might like to investigate further.

Rural Broadband (FTTP)

I was asked to investigate if we qualify for this and was given the link below by our contact at MKC. <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/home/about-the-scheme/> As far as I can see, there are no vouchers available in our area.

Philip Ayles
1st September 2020

Appendix A3. MKC Planning Session 26th August 2020

By William Upton and Mark Davies, barristers of 6 Pump Chambers **White Paper**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907956/Planning_for_the_Future_web_accessible_version.pdf

Consultation until 29th October to respond to the 26 questions.

Three Pillars

- Planning for Development
- Planning for beautiful and sustainable places
- Planning for Infrastructure and connected places (ie Infrastructure Levy replacing S106 and CIL. Note intent is that parish councils will retain same 25% share of levy with great freedom to spend)

All land will be one of three types:

- Growth Areas - substantial development subject to a Master Plan (derived from LocalPlan)
- Renewal Areas - 'suitable for development' with a statutory presumption in favour of development.
- Protected Areas (Green Belt, AONB etc)

Local Plans will be developed within 30 months. Housing requirements and DM policies set at national level.

No duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities.

Public participation is at plan-making stage NOT at public enquiries etc. Planning authorities will be applying the rules. Enormous amount of work required at plan-making stage including design codes.

Changes to the Current Planning System (part of White Paper but separate document) and subject to a consultation ending by *1st October*.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907215/200805_Changes_to_the_current_planning_system_FINAL_version.pdf

- Changing to standard method for assessing housing need
- Delivering 'First Homes' (discounted housing)
- Temporary raising of threshold for developer contributions for Affordable Housing (currently 10 but raise to 40 or 50)
- Extend 'Permission in Principle' to major developments

Watch out this Autumn for

- National Model Design Code
- Review of EIA, SEA, Habitats Law
- Environment Bill (biodiversity net gain)
- Future Homes Standard (net zero)
- Response on new powers for Development Corporations (eg Oxford - Cambridge arc)
- Proptech (use of technology in DM)

Permitted Development Rights have had three amendments which come into force effectively immediately. One allows additional storeys on buildings without planning permission. Limitations for pre-1948 buildings and doesn't apply in Conservation Areas. Loft conversion is not regarded as an additional storey. Limits on overlooking and appearance and subject to building regulations. Planning permission is still required to become an HIMO.

There is a new permitted right to demolish certain types of buildings (commercial, industrial or residential which have been entirely vacant for 6 months) and replace them with new homes limited to the same footprint and to an 18m height. Must be completed within 3 years of permission.

Use Classes are amended from 1st September. No requirement for permission for changes within a use class. If A1, A2, A3 or B1 becomes single Class E. Far less control on changes to use. A4 (pubs etc) and A5 (Fast Food) will be subject to permission not just a use class. Protection of frontages in high streets is greatly weakened.

Philip Ayles

Appendix A4. CCLA Briefing 27th August 2020

Kelly Watson – CCLA gave briefing by video conference present from CPC Cllrs Ayles, Forgham and the Clerk

All funds have outperformed the market.

Property Fund

The yield on the Property Fund has been maintained at 4.2% net of management fees. Capital reduction of 2-3% since the beginning of the year. Income from tenants at 88% with agreements for deferred payments for the remainder. 96% is normal level of tenant income.

Note is that there is a 3 month redemption period. Initial fees 6-7% (stamp duty etc) plus 0.65% management fee. Possible to negotiate with an outgoing participant to save / share initial fees.

- When is Property Fund opened for investment? In next 6-8 weeks (needs to have 80% market confidence in valuation - currently 75%)
- Is our eligibility criteria still valid both council and councillors? Yes, still valid though councillors need to confirm their understanding through a resolution in the risk and performance of CCLA.

Deposit Fund

The Public Sector Deposit Fund is one of the top two performers partly because of lower levels of redemptions compared to the private sector.

- Able to take precept payments? Not directly so into current account and then transfer into Deposit account
- Read access by Clerk, dual signatories for withdrawal all electronically? Yes.
- Change of Councillor done remotely? Electronic form to do this and CCLA will arrange for change of councillor.

Does not come under the FCA compensation scheme.

Recommendation:

1. Resolution that CPC understands the risk and performance of the CCLA Property Fund and confirms its wish to invest £50,000 when the fund re-opens which is expected in early October.
2. Resolution that, following CPC's previous decision to move the deposit account away from Bank of Ireland, it transfers funds into the CCLA Deposit Fund and closes the BoI account.

Philip Ayles

Appendix A5. Castlethorpe Parish Council – APPEAL 19/02444/REM ('Maltings 2')

Background

1. **The Parish Council is absolutely supportive of this land**, known locally as 'Maltings 2', **being developed for housing**. It was included of our own volition in our Neighbourhood Plan which was made in 2017 following a 'call for sites' evaluation, in which this site was chosen, and discussions with WestWaddy, the architects acting on behalf of the then owner, Carington Estates.

Which Application is being Appealed?

2. The Parish Council is unclear of the grounds for this Appeal. It is correct that the original Application was not determined within the statutory period mainly because both MKC and the Parish Council believed they were in discussion with the Applicant to make the Application compliant with Planning Policies and thus acceptable.

Revised designs were sent to the Parish Council on 29th November 2019 by Stonewater. However, they were not posted on the MKC Planning Portal and so were not visible to members of the public and nor did the Parish Council receive an official notification in the normal way (MKC Weekly Lists). On Clerk's advice, the Parish Council felt it could not consider planning matters which were not in the public domain. Revised designs were only posted on 18th February 2020 at the same time as the Appeal

Statement which was dated 12th February 2020.

It is therefore not clear what design is being appealed. Only the original design, was posted by MKC on its Planning Portal prior to 18th February so is it this Application which is being appealed, which through the submission of revised plans is admitted as non-compliant, or the latest plans, which are also not compliant but which weren't posted prior to Appeal?

Design Code

3. Carington Estates had previously developed 'Maltings 1' consisting of two developments, Maltings Court and Paddock Close, to the north of Maltings 2. Paddock Close is adjacent to and directly facing Maltings 2. For reasons of consistency of design and because Paddock Close echoes design features of the Edwardian terraces found elsewhere in the village, the Neighbourhood Plan requires the design of Paddock Close to be followed in Maltings 2 saying:

"4.2 ii The built form, materials, boundary treatment and arrangement of car parking, provided at a minimum of two off-street spaces per dwelling, is of a similar character to the adjoining residential scheme at Paddock Close" and

"4.2.3 A high-quality scheme is required, given the location of the site within the setting of the Conservation Area to its immediate north and west along Maltings Field. 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."

A Modified Neighbourhood Plan (MNP) completed its external Examination in August 2020 and, although the Parish Council regarded 4.2.3 as being clear and unambiguous, a further sentence was added to avoid any possible doubt being *"It has an Edwardian style reflecting the growth of Castlethorpe following the advent of the railway, including bay windows, sash windows, stone window lintels and recessed front porches."* The MNP will either have been made as Planning Policy by the time of the Hearing or be awaiting a delayed referendum and, under the Covid regulations, must be given additional weight.

For completeness, the remainder of 4.2.3 reads *"Here, however, its relationship to the open countryside to the east requires a strong landscape buffer and defensible boundary to be established that will prevent any further encroachment into that countryside. The scheme should also provide for an effective buffer to the busy railway line to its immediate south."*

Finally, the policy also requires that development meets the costs of social and physical infrastructure improvements that are directly related to the development and that this will be secured through a S106 planning obligation." Note the S106 reference which is discussed further below.

The problem with the Stonewater application is that the initial designs put forward, whilst apparently using the same materials, had very different design features. In particular, there was a variety of porch styles, rather than the recessed front porches, and no bay windows in the Edwardian style of Paddock Close. The revised drawings also do not have these features.

From discussions with Stonewater, it appears that, because they are designing affordable homes, they are building down to a price and recessing the porches would reduce interior space below standard and hence they would need to increase the footprint of the houses to compensate and therefore be unable to fit 31 houses on the site.

It is worth noting that the parish council had indicated to WestWaddy and to Stonewater that it regarded the open area (opposite the swale) as having been very poorly maintained and, given the abundance of other green space nearby – on the other side of Fox Covert Lane, over the railway bridge and the South St paddock – it would be happy for this open ground to be used for housing. For some commercial reason, Stonewater have decided not to do this.

In summary, the parish council believes the Neighbourhood Plan was clear in 4.2 about the design requirement for Maltings 2 yet Stonewater have acquired the site intent on ignoring it.

Affordable Housing

4. The parish council always expected and welcomed a minimum of 31% affordable housing. In fact, when Stonewater approached us after acquiring the site and said they were planning on 50% affordable housing, the Parish Council remained relaxed.

However, when Stonewater failed to reach an agreement with its builder and decided to apply for 100% affordable housing, the Parish Council became concerned for two reasons:

- 4.1. The Neighbourhood Plan was explicit that it would be *"a housing scheme of approximately 30 dwellings, which will have an emphasis on smaller open market and affordable homes, especially*

starter homes and downsizer homes” (4.2 Policy 2). This clearly indicates that some homes would be open market. Indeed, Stonewater themselves have said that it is difficult for downsizers to access affordable housing and some people wishing a smaller home might want outright purchase rather than rent or shared ownership. In any case, 100% affordable would be non-compliant with NP Policy 2.

- 4.2. The normal maximum for affordable housing is 50% and Plan:MK Policy HN2 says that any affordable housing above this *“only be supported provided that they would maintain (or help create) a mix of housing tenures and therefore a mixed and sustainable community within the wider neighbourhood the proposal is situated in.”*

When parish level statistics were available, Castlethorpe had the second highest percentage of affordable housing of the rural parishes and there is social housing in The Chestnuts, The Chequers, Bullington End Rd and Thrupp Close. There would be a minimum of 10 affordable houses on Maltings 2. There is no demonstrable need for affordable housing above this level specifically in Castlethorpe and note that there will be a large number of affordable houses being constructed as part of the 412 recently approved planning applications in nearby Hanslope.

On sustainability, the parish council notes that there is no evening or Sunday bus service meaning that public transport is not available either for late shift working nor for evening leisure. There is no pub – the nearest is The Navigation at Thrupp Wharf which is a dangerous and long walk especially on dark evenings. Evening leisure facilities in the village are extremely limited; Youth Club, short mat bowls, craft club, WI, Zumba and keep fit classes and a monthly historical society / film club all at the village hall. The SUSTRANS cycle track to Wolverton is a fair ride but is in too poor condition to ride at night. Regrettably, access to a car is a necessity for most residents in Castlethorpe.

- 4.3. The SPD on Affordable Housing (p16) says *“In order to promote more mixed and balanced communities, the affordable housing should be provided on the proposed development site. The affordable housing should be ‘pepper potted’ throughout the site to avoid creating large affordable housing ‘clusters’ (which should generally not exceed 12 affordable dwellings). Smaller groups of affordable housing pepper-potted across large residential sites will be acceptable. There may be circumstances, such as in proposals for flats, where a slightly larger cluster in excess of 12 units is, on balance, acceptable in order to achieve a more feasible and efficient layout for Registered Providers which does not compromise the objective of creating mixed, sustainable and inclusive communities. Proposals for more than 50% of affordable housing in any one development would only be supported provided that they would maintain (or help create) a mix of housing tenures and therefore a mixed and sustainable community within the wider neighbourhood the proposal is situated in.”*

Clearly, a development of 31 houses, all of which are affordable, is not compliant with the SPD and would create a large affordable housing cluster and not contribute to a “mixed and balanced” community.

The Parish Council therefore feels that a proportion between 31% and 50% affordable housing is appropriate for this site.

S106 Agreement

5. There are a number of demands in the village for additional infrastructure. The Neighbourhood Plan was explicit that *“Where investment in physical and social infrastructure is shown to be necessary as a result of the development and relevant to it, this will be secured through a S106 planning obligation”*(4.2 v) and the Affordable Housing SPD p14 says *“As part of a residential development, the provision of affordable housing should be balanced with the need to deliver other services and infrastructure through planning obligations. These developer contributions will be sought by the Council on a case-by-case basis depending on the need.”*

The parish council therefore engaged with the then Planning Obligations Officer to agree the parts of the S106 Agreement relevant to ourselves. Incidentally, this included funding for the local surgery at Hanslope where the two parishes councils are working with the surgery managers to identify options for expansion. It also included funding for Castlethorpe First School which was then over-subscribed and, although it has some places next September, is likely to be full again as Maltings 2 and the new sites in Hanslope are occupied.

The S106 was signed as usual as part of the Outline Planning approval. Stonewater have said to us that they do not believe that, as a social housing provider, they should pay any S106 as they have ‘done their bit’. No Viability Statement or request for a change to the S106 Agreement was provided prior to 18th

February and so cannot be part of the Appeal. Incidentally, the only document submitted prior to 18th February is the original Carington outline planning application which has 30% affordable. The Viability Statement now provided says that the S106 payments are unaffordable which of course they would be if the site is to be 100% Affordable Housing. Stonewater have said that this is a difficult site but the SPD says p15 *“Under no circumstances will the price of land be relevant justification for failing to accord with relevant policies in the plan. For example, in the case of brownfield sites it is expected that the need for decontamination or site clearance should be adequately reflected in the price offered for the site, rather than such costs affecting the provision of affordable housing or other planning obligations.”* The SPD is clear that the provision of affordable housing should be balanced with the need for other services and infrastructure which this application is not.

The circumstances are probably different but we note an application by Grand Union Housing in Bradwell appears to be for a similar number of houses, all affordable, with significant added costs for rainfall collection and yet they are able to pay a similar S106 contribution to this.

The parish council believes a change to the S106 Agreement to be unacceptable. Stonewater acquired the site in the full knowledge of the S106 Agreement contracted by their predecessors and appear to be extremely cynical in their approach not to honour the Agreement.

Appeal Statement

6. Paragraph 3.4 of the Appeal Statement is almost 100% incorrect!
 - The parish council did not object that the consultation period fell prior to a council meeting. From memory, it may have been that the application was logged on the Planning Portal less than the 3 statutory clear days before a meeting required by law and so could not be considered at that meeting but it was considered at the following meeting and no delay was caused. They may be referring to the documents sent to the parish council (but not apparently to MKC) on 29th November which would have been too late for them to be considered at the meeting on 2nd December but they weren't lodged with MKC for the parish council meetings on 6th January nor 10th February either and so were not considered until 2nd March. (See 7 below.)
 - The parish council did object that there are no open market homes (as in 4 above) but, to the contrary, we did NOT object to full ownership in due course of the shared ownership homes but the complete reverse, that we would ask MKC to withdraw DPA status from this development so that shared homes could become fully owned!
 - The parish council has no recollection of asking for the location of shared ownership homes to be changed and has no view on this. The applicant may be confusing this with correspondence with some of the adjacent residents in Maltings Field but it is NOT the parish council position.
 - As in 4 above, the parish council objects to a change in the S106 Agreement though, from our conversation with the applicant, they are requesting it be totally annulled!
7. Paragraph 3.5 shows some confusion in the applicant's mind. It is correct that, as in 2 above, the parish council felt that the design did not meet the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan. Although revised drawings, also regarded as not meeting the requirement, were sent to the parish council on 29th November. However, they were not lodged on the Planning Portal until 18th February. The Appeal on grounds of non-determination can therefore only be being made on the basis of the original, and indeed replaced, documents. If so, fair enough but they have already effectively conceded that those designs were non-compliant by submitting revised drawings.
8. Paragraph 3.6 is a matter of opinion. The parish council says that the harm of a hotch-potch design in clear contravention of the design guidance in the Neighbourhood Plan, the non-provision of open market housing as required in the NP and the wish not to contribute towards the facilities the residents will need through the S106 Agreement is harm which outweighs the virtue signalling of 100% affordable housing.
9. Paragraph 4.2 summarises the applicant's position and the individual points have mostly been addressed above. However, the second bullet is untrue and certainly does NOT reflect the *expectations of the parish council*.
10. Paragraph 4.2 Bullet 5 is also untrue.
 - *The benefits of a 100% affordable mixed tenure scheme in this location are considerable* – the only reason Stonewater are proposing 100% is because the deal with their builder fell through not because of any altruism.
 - *largely because of a lack of affordable housing within the village* – although we are not aware of up to date data, in 2008, Castlethorpe had the second highest proportion of affordable housing of all the rural parishes in MK. Of course, there is always demand for affordable housing in the villages and the parish council is aware of a small number (less than 5) persons with a connection to the village who wish to come here but this could be met with a lower percentage than 100% (probably less than

31%!). Furthermore, there will be about 130 affordable homes being built as part of recently approved developments in Hanslope just 1.5 miles away where there is the same bus service, two pubs, shops and a takeaway. There is no need for development in Castlethorpe to only consist of affordable housing.

- *and a clear lack of opportunities for new development outside of the settlement boundary of the village* – this is a statement of the blindingly obvious. A settlement boundary encompasses where development will take place by definition.
- It is worth noting that Castlethorpe has been given an Objectively Assessed Housing Need of one dwelling. There are 42 outstanding planning permissions in Castlethorpe including Maltings 2. 9 permissions are for low cost dwellings in the old Station Yard and there will be a minimum 10 in Maltings 2. Castlethorpe meets its housing need and Plan:MK ensures that MK meets its housing requirement in other developments.

In light of the reasons given above, the Inspector is respectfully requested to refuse this appeal.

Philip Ayles
Chairman, Castlethorpe Parish Council
7th September 2020

Appendix A6. Internal Auditor's Report 2020

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – CASTLETHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Audit undertaken 16th July 2020

1. Objectives and Scope of the Audit

To review the processes and procedures of Castlethorpe Parish Council in relation to the financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2019. The audit was based on a review of a sample of items appearing in the Cash Book.

2. Overall Opinion

There is a generally sound system of controls designed to meet the organisation's objectives. The Clerk has obtained all UTRs for sole traders prior to payment and now checks that VAT registered businesses display VAT numbers on all invoices.

Only one instance was found in the sample where a limited company had failed to display their company registration number. It is a legal requirement for limited companies to quote their company registration numbers on invoices and for VAT registered companies to quote their VAT registration numbers.

The asset register was reviewed and was found to be up to date and complete.

All relevant policies audited are being followed with the exception of the policy on tendering for goods and services. It was noticed that the provision of a village sign was not put out to tender although the value was over £2,000 (S.O.17)

It was noted that a copy of the contract for grass cutting, which is a joint contract with Hanslope Parish Council, was not held. All contracts for services should be documented and available.

All relevant insurances are in place.

3. Recommendations

- That the missing company registration number should be obtained and the company informed that their invoices do not comply with Company Law (the Clerk has undertaken to do this)
- That S.O.17 should be adhered to in all future cases.
- That a copy of the grass cutting contract should be obtained from HPC. (The Clerk has undertaken to do this).
- That a copy of the Public Liability Insurance certificate should be displayed in all Parish Council owned buildings.

• Conclusion

Overall the accounts are recorded accurately, expenditure is monitored well and authorities for expenditure complied with. VAT numbers, where displayed, are checked for validity and the Clerk has made every effort to obtain UTR numbers where applicable

I should like to, once again, record my thanks to the Clerk for ensuring that all questions were answered and all information requested was made available promptly.

Jayn Oliff
19/07/2020