



# Castlethorpe Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Annual Meeting held remotely by video conference on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**PRESENT: Councillors Ayles, Forgham, Markham, Merritt, Keane, Hinds, Ward Cllr Geary and the Clerk. Members of the public were viewing the meeting via Facebook and Youtube.**

The meeting commenced at 7.30 p.m.

- |          |   | <b>Action</b> |
|----------|---|---------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b><br>Cllr Sawbridge reason: illness. Accepted.   |               |
| <b>2</b> | <b>TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN</b><br>Cllr Hinds proposed Cllr Ayles seconded by Cllr Keane. No other proposals. Agreed unanimously.  |               |
| <b>3</b> | <b>TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIRMAN</b><br>Cllr Keane said that he had been honoured to and had enjoyed being Vice-Chair for the past few years but that it is now obvious that there are several conflicts in his schedule. He proposed that Cllr Forgham be elected, seconded by Cllr Ayles and agreed unanimously.   |               |
| <b>4</b> | <b>TO RECEIVE CHANGES REGISTER OF MEMBERS INTERESTS FORMS</b><br>None were reported   |               |
| <b>5</b> | <b>TO APPOINT COMMITTEES, AND AGREE TERMS OF REFERENCE</b><br>The following appointments were agreed unanimously:<br>5.1. Finance committee: Cllrs Ayles, Merritt, Sawbridge and Forgham<br>5.2. Sports Ground Committee: Cllrs Forgham, Ayles, Sawbridge & Markham.<br>5.3. Village Hall Committee: Cllrs Forgham, Keane, Hinds.<br><b>Secretary's note: Cllr Sawbridge agreed to her appointments at sections 5, 6 &amp; 7 by email.</b>  |               |
| <b>6</b> | <b>TO AGREE COUNCILLORS RESPONSIBILITIES</b><br>The following appointments were agreed unanimously:<br>6.1. Communications and web site Cllrs. Forgham, & Ayles<br>6.2. Dog Fouling Cllr Hinds<br>6.3. Public transport Cllrs. Ayles, Forgham & Keane.<br>6.4. Highways & streetlights Cllrs Ayles, Markham and Merritt<br>6.5. Footpaths & play areas Cllrs Markham, Hinds & Keane<br>6.6. Flower festival Cllr Hinds<br>6.7. Neighbourhood & Parish Plans currently Cllrs Ayles, Forgham, Hinds & Keane   |               |
| <b>7</b> | <b>TO APPOINT REPRESENTATIVES TO EXTERNAL BODIES</b><br>The following appointments were agreed unanimously:<br>7.1 Parishes' Forum: Cllrs Ayles & Keane<br>7.2 Rural West NAG: Cllrs Ayles, Hinds & Keane<br>7.3 Newport Pagnell North and Hanslope Local Area Forum: Cllrs Ayles, Forgham & Keane.<br>7.4 MKALC: Cllrs Ayles & Keane<br>7.5 Milton Keynes Bus Users Group 1 Councillor, Currently Cllr Forgham   |               |
| <b>8</b> | <b>TO ADOPT THE STANDING ORDERS (<i>sent to Cllrs prior to meeting</i>)</b><br>8.1. Cllr Ayles proposed the adoption of Standing Orders issue 2014 v.2 which had not changed since their re-adoption last year. Seconded by Cllr Keane. Agreed unanimously.   |               |
| <b>9</b> | <b>TO ADOPT THE COUNCIL POLICIES (<i>sent to Cllrs prior to meeting</i>)</b><br>9.1. The Clerk had circulated a newly drafted Parish Council Code of Conduct and had circulated it to cllrs before the meeting. Cllr Ayles moved that the policy be adopted, seconded by Cllr Keane and accepted unanimously.<br>9.2. Cllr Ayles proposed the re-adoption of the Complaints Procedure, Disciplinary, Environmental; Equal Opportunities; Freedom of Information, GDPR, Grievance, Health & Safety, Receipt of Gifts and Hospitality, Reporting of Meetings & Volunteer & Neighbourhood Plan policies (Circulated prior to meeting – unchanged since last year) Seconded by Cllr Hinds and agreed unanimously <b>Secretary's note: Cllr Sawbridge agreed by email to adoption of all matters at 8.1, 9.1. &amp; 9.2.</b> |               |

- 10 TO SUSPEND THE MEETING TO ALLOW FOR AN OPEN FORUM**  
No matters were raised
- 11 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** by councillors in any of the agenda items below
- 11.1. Cllr Ayles declare a pecuniary interest in item 13.1.  
11.2. Cllr Forgham declared a pecuniary interest in item 17.1.
- 12 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**
- 12.1. The minutes of the general meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021 were proposed by Cllr Ayles seconded by Cllr Keane and agreed unanimously.
- 13 TO CONSIDER PLANNING**
- 13.1 Cllr Ayles withdrew from the meeting. Cllr Forgham took the Chair.  
**21/01017/FUL** 23 Thrupp Close Castlethorpe Milton Keynes MK19 7PL Loft conversion with front rooflights and rear dormer (Resubmission of 21/00359/FUL)  
Following discussion, Cllr Forgham proposed that the parish council should object to the application on the following grounds:
- The building is in a Conservation Area and is seen directly from the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Castle Field
  - There is inconsistency in conformity of design with other properties in Thrupp Close
  - It overlooks the garden of the neighbouring property depriving it of a reasonable degree of privacy
  - The materials do not match (wood rather than slate), the architecture doesn't match the adjacent houses or indeed anywhere on the estate and the dormer roof is flat rather than pitched.
- Agreed unanimously  
Cllr Ayles re-joined the meeting and resumed the Chair.
- 14 REPORT BACK ON PREVIOUS PLANNING**
- 14.1 **20/02550/FUL** - Proposed siting of 40 static holiday caravans in lieu of 70 touring caravans (re-submission of 20/01298/FUL) Cosgrove Park Main Street Cosgrove – no further comment
- 14.2 **21/00015/FUL** - Proposed 3m single storey rear extension (resubmission of 20/02875/FUL). 12 Shepperton Close Castlethorpe – **refused**. No further comment
- 14.3 **21/00354/FUL** - Proposed single storey rear extensions 22 South Street Castlethorpe – **application granted**. Cllr Ayles had made an informal complaint about this decision and the way it was reached. He had only just had a reply today and will share any matters arising with the Cllrs.
- 14.4 **21/00129/FUL** - New dwelling including new access and amenity space, new access and drive to existing dwelling (re-submission of 20/02803/FUL) 1 Wolverton Road Castlethorpe – **application granted**. No further comment
- 15 TO RECEIVE REPORTS**
- 15.1. **Clerks Report & Review of Actions. (circulated prior to meeting – see Appendix A1)**
- 15.1.1 Item 1 – Snowden Homes had been appointed by Messrs. Stonewater, the plot owners, to do the archaeological excavations for the Maltings 2 site. They had not yet been commissioned to build the properties as there are still outstanding issues over proportion of affordable houses to be built and the s.106 Planning Gain to be paid. Stonewater had said that they expected these matters to be resolved soon but MKC had heard nothing.
- 15.1.2. Item 6 – MKC had issued a 'Highways Deficiency Notice' on Anglian Water requiring them to reinstate the tarmacked area of road in South Street using the same material and the same colour as had been laid when the area was upgraded as part of the village improvement project.  
Further matters to report:
- 15.1.3.
- The wildlife area at the sports ground had now had paths cut through it
  - The war memorial has now been washed and the company will return later in the week to apply finishing touches

- 15.2. **UPDATE ON MALTINGS 2**  
Cllr Ayles had provided this at 15.1.1.
- 15.3. **UPDATE ON PROVISION OF WIFI FOR VILLAGE HALL**  
Cllr Forgham reported that he had contacted potential internet suppliers but they were not able to provide any service as the Village Hall is not on the Openreach register, because Royal Mail had never allocated a postal address to the building. Cllr Forgham had now managed to get the property registered with Royal Mail but Openreach have said that it will take 4-5 weeks to update their system. Nothing more can be done until they do this. The Clerk reminded the cllrs that a previous resolution had delegated Cllr Forgham and himself to select the supplier when this is resolved.

- 15.4. **REPORT ON POSITION OF ARTS GRANTS AND POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS**  
Deferred in Cllr Sawbridge's absence

- 15.5. **UPDATE ON DISCUSSIONS WITH MKC HIGHWAYS ABOUT PARKING IN SOUTH STREET**

Cllr Ayles had received 2 emails from South Street residents complaining about careless parking. He has given the PCSO's contact details to the residents so that they can contact him if parking problems persist. The PCSO will then contact the car owners.

Cllr Ayles then said that he had met an MKC Highways officer and they had looked at the parking problem in South Street. They had agreed that there was not much that could be done but had observed that the parking spaces outside of the Nursery were wider than the statutory minimum. MKC Highways have said that they will come out and investigate whether the markings can be narrowed to provide another 1 or maybe 2 spaces.

There were potentially further spaces that could be marked at the east end of South Street underneath some large trees near the junction with North Street. There may be problems in having parking at this location in that it is not close to the area by the school and nursery where parking spaces are in demand. In addition, the trees will drop significant foliage on parked cars beneath. Cllr Merritt suggested that nursery staff be asked to park there. Cllr Ayles will discuss the matter with MKC Highways. A suggestion had been made that South Street be turned into a one-way street but it was unanimously agreed that this would not improve the parking position.

A letter had been received complaining about parking outside the shop and obstructing motorists' views to/from the turn into Station Road. It was agreed that imposing any restrictions there is not practical and would have serious impact on both the shop's trade and also on receiving deliveries. Cllr Ayles will try again to get the area of land adjacent to the shop currently part of a front garden at the Chestnuts signed over.

Finally following a further complaint about the faded status of the school signage, on North Street Cllr Ayles will inspect the signs and determine whether a request should be made to MKC to replace any of them.

Cllr Ayles

Cllr Ayles

Cllr Ayles

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**TO CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS**

- 16.1 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, seconded by Cllr Keane and agreed unanimously.
- 16.2. Cllr Ayles said that the combined Annual Parish Meeting (APM) followed by the general Parish Council meeting in April had gone on for three and a half hours. He proposed that in future the APM be held as a stand-alone event. Agreed unanimously. It was further agreed that, in principle, the meeting would be held on the first Thursday in April.
- 16.3 Cllr Ayles reported that the Government had decided not to extend permission to hold parish council meeting remotely after the 6<sup>th</sup> May despite a case being taken to High Court to challenge the decision. It would be extremely complex and potentially unsafe to revert to physical meetings whilst Covid precautions are still in place. Additionally, there had been significantly more involvement of and exposure to the public whilst the meeting had been held 'virtually'. Whilst the Parish Council cannot now legally hold any meetings unless they are in a single physical location, powers to make most decisions can be delegated to the Clerk through a resolution. The councillors could then meet 'virtually' once per month and could agree how to advise the Clerk in the making of these decisions. Cllr Ayles had discussed this possibility with Bucks Area of Local Councils (BALC) and they had confirmed that such action is lawful except for certain specific

Cllr Ayles

- decisions. Cllr Ayles proposed therefore that the Clerk be given authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council on all matters that can be lawfully delegated, as informed by a 'virtual' meeting of the councillors and following a majority vote. Seconded by Cllr Keane and agreed unanimously.
- 16.4. In the course of a dialogue about another matter the poor state of the water tower and the surrounding area had arisen. Cllr Merritt said that an area made over to leisure purposes would be of great value to the village. It was agreed that he and the Clerk look at options and potential funding opportunities for both the preservation/improvement of the water tower and also the creation of an area for leisure. **Cllr Merritt/  
Clerk**
- 16.5. The Clerk had recommended that there should be a policy for conducting parish council meetings by video. He will produce a draft to be considered in the future. **Clerk**
- 16.6. Cllr Ayles said that there have been several occasions recently where the parish council could not reasonably react to changes to planning applications that were being allowed by MKC Case Officers without any extension of deadlines for comments. He proposed that where the parish council is unable to meet within the requirements of planning deadlines that the Clerk, with the support of two cllrs, be empowered to make comments on behalf of the council. Further, to permit the Clerk to withdraw any previous objections should a majority of the council concur. Agreed unanimously.
- 16.7. Castlethorpe Residents Association had been advised by legal counsel that a Judicial Review to reverse the MKC decision for the Modified Neighbourhood Plan (MNP) to go to referendum without Gobbey's Field declared as Local Green Space was most unlikely to succeed, as it could not be established that MKC had acted 'unreasonably' in making the decision. The parish council had agreed to fund half of the cost of obtaining legal advice and issuing a 'Letter Before Action' up to £4,800 but it as this latter stage would not now be needed the cost would be less, at around £3,300 (for half). On seeing an invoice, the Clerk will arrange for the revised payment to be made. Now that the referendum on the MNP is definitely going ahead MKC had suggested a date of the 17<sup>th</sup> June. Cllr Ayles thought that this date should be put back to where Covid guidelines were further relaxed and suggested that a date of 22<sup>nd</sup> July be requested. Agreed unanimously. Cllr Ayles to contact MKC. **Cllr Ayles**
- 16.8. Cllr Ayles had now received an estimate from MKC to replace streetlights in Thrupp Close and the Chequers with similar to those in Lodge Farm Court at a cost of £13,950 and £12,165 respectively. Also, to replace units in Shepperton Close with heritage style lanterns similar to South Street for £11,860. The prices were given as 'approximate' and when questioned MKC said that they were probably within 5%. Cllr Ayles had asked for the prices to be specific. Cllr Ayles had also requested additional quotes for replacing the lights at the Chequers and/or Thrupp Close with heritage style lanterns which would seem to be slightly cheaper given the alternate quotes received. As a decision had already been made to replace the lights at Bullington End Road and Station Road costing c. £18,000, the further amounts would take the total to c. £56,000. This would be affordable as parish council reserves currently stand at c. £105,00 and would leave £49,000 for contingency, an amount well within the recommended threshold of between one and two times Precept. Cllr Ayles proposed therefore that subject to the final quote being within the 5% leeway, an order be placed to replace all streetlights as above, but if alternate quotes for heritage style lamps at Thrupp Close and the Chequers come in as being significantly cheaper to change the order for these streets to install the heritage style lamps. Agreed unanimously.
- 16.9. Cllr Merritt said that Covid guidelines had prevented the running of training events on use of the defibrillators, but now it is sensible to start planning for some. It was agreed that it would be good to involve representatives from sports teams and local groups and to potentially run an event at the forthcoming sports ground Open Day. Cllr Merritt will liaise with the village First Responder and produce a plan. **Cllr Merritt**

17 17.1. **TO CONSIDER FINANCIAL MATTERS**

Cllr Forgham withdrew from the meeting.

The RFO Payments Schedule was proposed by Cllr Ayles, seconded by Cllr Keane and agreed unanimously.

Payee	Description	Invoice	Amount
S Bradbury	Salary April 2021	per pay slip	£624.62
S Bradbury	Anti virus s/w renewal	per attached receipt	£58.32
Stacey Blease	VH Cleaning	invoice awaited	£0.00
RTM	Landscaping April	invoice 2768	£391.67
R Forgham	Refund purchase letter box VH	per attached receipt	£24.32
R Forgham	Entrance sign VH	per attached receipt	£6.26
Simon Bates	Village weedkill	per attached invoice 188	£400.00
Janus Safety Solutions	PAT test VH & SG pavillions	per attached invoice 8318	£75.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£1,580.19</b>
<b>Direct Debits</b>			
Google Ireland	26107096G05ASYDKH7		£32.10
XLN	4976199 16674975		£27.64
EON	089208742670A		£112.00
EDF	671070653836.00		£76.00
<b>DD Total</b>			<b>£247.74</b>

Cllr Forgham returned to the meeting

- 17.2. The annual accounts for 2020/21 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.

18 **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED (*circulated prior to meeting*)**

- 18.1. None

19 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

20 **TO AGREE DATE AND ATTENDANCE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS/EVENTS**

- 20.1 A meeting of Councillors will be held by videoconference at 7.30 on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June

**PART 2**

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

- 21.1. None

22 **TO CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS**

- 22.1. The Clerk's appraisal had previously circulated by Cllr Ayles having been discussed and agreed with the Clerk and was endorsed unanimously by the councillors. As the Clerk is now at the top of scale in the appropriate grade for a council of our size (LC1), the council did not feel able to make a salary increase award by way of increase in scale.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A1 – CLERK’S REPORT 5/5/2021

1. Maltings 2 site has been fenced off and archaeological work continues. There have been no further updates on the further intentions of the housing development.
2. We have a provisional delivery date of 18<sup>th</sup> May for the 2 memorial benches for the sports ground and the bench next to bus stop in North Street. A tradesman has been lined up to remove old benches that they will replace from the sports ground and to lay a concrete base by the bus shelter to accommodate bench.
3. Floodlight on side of cricket pavilion now repaired and working but light now operating is ‘dawn to dusk’ and not triggered by motion sensor. Neighbour has reported that light is shining into one of his bedrooms. Electrician has been asked to look at options – replacement of sensor, replacement of light, shield on light etc.
4. New groundsman has performed a cut of the sports ground but did not cut wild life area paths as requested.
5. MKC have received a revised quote from Serco to plant a mulberry tree at MKC cost and a chestnut (to replace fallen tree) at CPC cost @ £348.50 per tree. Laura Summerbell has informed me that MKC have queried this quote as the retail cost of the trees is c. £95. When planted it will be our responsibility to keep the hydration bags topped up.
6. Anglian Water have repaired the road following works at South Street with black tarmac. Cllr Ayles has written to MKC asking for the repair to be re-done using same material as the rest of the area that was laid as part of the village centre upgrade.
7. Resurrection Stonework had informed me that the war memorial would be cleaned last week but this was not done. No answer to subsequent phone calls asking what happened.. Many thanks to Ward Cllr Bowyer who has provided a grant to meet the full cost.
8. Quote has been requested to remove Elder tree and repair post and rail fencing and gate at west South Street entrance to Castle Field.
9. Grass at Village Hall garden will be removed on 31 May and re-turfed at end of that week during which time handyman will build and fill raised beds. Patio to be cleaned also. Outside tap will need to be fitted in the meantime.
10. James Walsh of MKC Rights of Way team has put the replacement of the following public footpath signs on the schedule for replacement in the ‘next few months’: Wolverton Road - track to Lodge Farm Business Centre, by gate to Castle Field, outside Village Hall, Maltings Field, Station Road railway bridge, river Tove road bridge.
11. We are told that a first draft of the MKC Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan will be produced in August.

No progress/unknown status on outstanding actions:

- No pipes in loft are lagged in cricket pavillion. SGC to consider remedial action for future.
- SGC to consider the matter of whether to replace the cylinders at a later date.
- SGC to agree model for sharing cost of cutting sports ground with CSA.
- Review of draft plans for possible development of club house at sports ground
- Reach agreement with Allotments Association on transfer of land at sports ground to the parish council
- Clerk to get further quotes for maintenance of playground and outdoor aerobic equipment. No time this month.
- There has been no update on looking at replacement of street nameplates since meeting with MKC 15th January 2020. Low priority for MKC and on hold due to Covid.
- 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
- 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**

**5/5/21**