



# Castlethorpe Parish Council

Minutes of a Parish Council Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

**PRESENT: Councillors Ayles, Bradbury, Forgham, Hinds, Merritt, Sawbridge, Ward Cllr Wardle, the Clerk and one member of the public. The meeting was also streamed via YouTube.**

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and Cllr Ayles gave an overview of the meeting content.

No matters raised in the Open Forum

<b>1</b>		<b>TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
	1.1	Cllr Markham due to work commitments	
<b>2</b>		<b>TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST by Councillors in any of the agenda items below</b>	
	2.1	Cllr Ayles advised that he, Cllr Forgham and Cllr Bradbury are Directors of Castlethorpe Community Space CIC but as this is a personal interest no declaration of interest was required in the agenda items that relate to the CCS CIC and this was agreed by all.	
<b>3</b>		<b>TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b>	
	3.1	Previous minutes from the Ordinary and Annual Meeting held on the 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2024 were proposed as a true and accurate record by Cllr Bradbury seconded by Cllr Merritt and agreed unanimously	
<b>4</b>		<b>TO RECEIVE REPORTS</b>	
	4.1	<b>Clerks Report &amp; Review of Actions</b> – See Appendix A1. Matters arising from Clerks report.	Cllr Merritt
	4.1.1	Item 5 – village shop extension – Peter Clark has been appointed as Company Secretary of the Castlethorpe Village Shop Association and has invited tenders to develop the extension today.	
	4.1.2	Item 7 - Cllr Merritt hasn't been able to find a contact to speak to in the Estates Department at Hanslope Park regarding an ex-gratia grant in compensation for ongoing development work and its implications, as S106 payments do not apply to government departments, but will continue to try	
	4.1.3	Cllr Sawbridge reported that the grass is getting high at the turning onto Yardley Road, we have an agreement with Cosgrove to contribute towards the cost of cutting this and this will be raised at the next Cosgrove Parish Council meeting.	
	4.1.4		
	4.2	<b>Ward Councillors Report</b>	
	4.2.1	Ward Cllr Wardle advised that the Ward Boundary review consultation is ongoing but no further news from last month.	
	4.2.2	Cllr Hinds asked if there was any update on the three sites in Castlethorpe that have been put forward for inclusion into the new Milton Keynes Strategic Plan for 2050. There is no update at the moment, a freedom of information request has been submitted to see all correspondence on the matter which will be expiring soon.	
	4.3	<b>Clubhouse Progress Report</b> – See Appendix A2. No matters arising	
	4.4	<b>Public Art Report</b> – See Appendix A3 No matters arising	
<b>5</b>		<b>TO CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS (previously viewed on line by Cllrs)</b>	
	5.1	<b>24/01000/LBC</b> - The Coach House 4 Lodge Farm Court Castlethorpe - Listed Building Consent for the erection of a single storey extension, replacement doors and windows and internal alterations – <b>no objections</b>	
	5.2	<b>24/01102/FUL</b> – Lodge Farm Business Centre, Castlethorpe - the construction of a new steel portal frame building to match existing buildings on site erected over the existing open storage area and an area of hardstanding (resubmission of 22/01522/FUL) – <b>no objections</b>	
<b>6</b>		<b>TO RECEIVE REPORT BACK ON PREVIOUS PLANNING APPLICATION</b>	
	6.1	No further comments <b>WNS/2022/1741/EIA</b> Application for full planning permission for the erection of 9 x employment units comprising circa 69,744sqm GIA. of floorspace within Class B2 or B8 Uses, with ancillary class E(g)(i) offices and E(g)(ii) research and development, together	

6.2	with country park, ground re-profiling in the country park, new vehicular access from the A508 and associated site infrastructure, including lorry parking – status pending <b>24/00110/DISCON</b> – Cosgrove Park, Main Street, Cosgrove - approval of details required by condition 3 (Surface water drainage), condition 10 (Floor levels), condition 11 (Cycle parking) and condition 12 (EV charging) of permission ref. 21/03346/FUL –	
6.3	conditions 3, 10 and 11 <b>Approved</b> , condition 12 <b>Refused</b> <b>24/00519/DISCON</b> – Cosgrove Park, Main Street, Cosgrove - approval of details required by condition 4 (Construction Phase Surface Water Management) of permission ref. 21/03346/FUL - <b>Refused</b>	
6.4	<b>24/00650/FUL</b> – Lodge Farm House, Wolverton Road, Castlethorpe - erection of a new agricultural building – <b>Approved</b>	
6.5	<b>24/00781/TCA</b> – 4 South Street, Castlethorpe – the removal of approximately 1.5m from the branches on the top of the main trunk on the south side of silver birch tree - <b>Approved</b>	
6.6	<b>24/00899/HOU</b> -13 Shepperton Close, Castlethorpe – erection of single-story rear extension and partial garage conversion –	
6.7	<b>24/00823/LBC</b> – Yew Tree Cottage, 45 North Street, Castlethorpe – Listed building consent for the replacement of windows	
<b>7</b>	<b>TO CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS (all supporting documentation to be circulated prior to meeting)</b>	
7.1	To consider & agree to 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 – proposed by Cllr Ayles, seconded by Cllr Bradbury and agreed unanimously	Clerk
7.2	We are seeking advice from BALC around the Adoption of the Financial Regulations to the Standing Orders so this will be deferred until a response is received.	Cllr Forgham
7.3	Cllr Forgham raised the issue of noise, litter and shining lights all night long from Network Rail workers. He had previously written to the Chief Exec back in March and June 2023 and improvements were seen but have worsened again. Cllr Forgham has drafted a letter to send (see Appendix A4) and this was agreed by all.	Clerk
7.4	Cllr Ayles proposed a Financial Strategy following a recommendation from the internal auditor (see Appendix A5) which was agreed unanimously. This will be published on the website under our policies section.	
7.5	Cllr Ayles ran through the clubhouse project status and funding – see Appendix A6 and advised that Hickfords had generously offered to decorate the Clubhouse as a community donation which is very well received as this is a substantial saving.	
7.6	Cllr Ayles proposed that we engage a consultant, up to the cost of £500, to construct an Expression of Interest and then if successful a full application on our behalf for a BIFFA grant of £20,000. The cost of the expression of interest is £150 and then £350 per day for the full submission. It is hoped that it wouldn't take longer than a day to prepare the full submission. Cllr Forgham seconded and it was agreed unanimously. Cllr Ayles to engage the consultant accordingly	Cllr Ayles
<b>8</b>	<b>TO CONSIDER FINANCIAL MATTERS (circulated prior to meeting)</b>	
8.1	The RFO payment schedule was proposed by Cllr Hinds, seconded by Cllr Merritt and agreed unanimously.	
8.2	Cllr Ayles noted the recommendations following the recent review by our internal auditor and the actions being taken and these were accepted by all - see Appendix A7	Clerk
8.3	Cllr Ayles proposed the annual AGAR report be approved by the Council, Cllr Forgham seconded and agreed unanimously	
<b>9</b>	<b>CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED (circulated prior to meeting)</b>	
9.1	It was agreed to support the House of Lords campaign to improve the safety of lithium batteries (used in e-bikes and scooters) and their disposal	Clerk
9.2	A further correspondence has been received regarding the dog waste bin in Shepperton Close which was circulated to all Councillors. A proposal on moving the bin is awaited from the resident	
9.3	Crime stats for the month had been received (see Appendix A8)	
<b>10</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS (for noting, or for inclusion on a future agenda)</b>	
10.1	None	
<b>11</b>	<b>TO AGREE DATE AND ATTENDANCE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS/EVENTS</b>	
11.1	Next meeting will be held at 7.30 on Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2024	

<b>PART 2</b>			
<b>12</b>		<b>RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST by Councillors in any of the agenda items below</b>	
	12.1	None	
<b>13</b>		<b>TO RECEIVE REPORTS</b>	
	13.1	None	
<b>14</b>		<b>TO CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS (all supporting documentation circulated prior to meeting)</b>	
	14.1	It was agreed that the clerk would check the annual usage of electricity in the village hall and compare the supplier quotes to find the cheapest and then renew the contract for 3 years	
	14.2	Three quotes had been received for the flooring at the clubhouse but didn't include a quote from QC Flooring who were used for the village hall. Cllr Forgham proposed that we get a quote from QC Flooring, to provide the same specification as the other bidders, and then proceed with the cheapest of the four, Cllr Bradbury seconded and agreed by all.	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.04 pm

## APPENDIX A1 – CLERK’S REPORT AND OPEN ACTIONS

1	Glendale asked to cut verges right up to village entrances and 20m beyond and to cut the seating area back into the wildlife area	For info
2	New defibrillator pads and packs now received and replaced.	For info
3	A freedom of information request has been submitted to MKCC to identify any sites in Castlethorpe being considered in the NCP.	For info
4	Historic England have confirmed that Scheduled Monument Consent would be required to carry out drain repair in Castle Field and that an archaeologist watching brief would be required. Further holes have appeared and Cllr Markham will meet with Michael Lever to investigate and then a decision of action to be taken can be made	Cllr Markham/Clerk
5	Village shop extension - expecting Heads of Terms for signing shortly to transfer land to the side of 6 The Chestnuts. Once received, building works can commence.	Cllr Ayles Ongoing
6	Cllr Bradbury will contact Lee Turnham at Community Speedwatch UK to register and arrange training for the 7 volunteers – <b>contact being made with original volunteers and training will be arranged during October</b>	Cllr Bradbury Outstanding
7	The Clerk has contacted Hanslope and Haversham Clerks for their view on approaching Hanslope Park for an exgratia grant. <b>They are happy to proceed but have no historic data to refer back to. Cllr Merritt will forward speak to a colleague in the Estates Dept at Hanslope Park</b>	Clerk/Cllr Merritt Outstanding
8	There is an issue with one of the floodlights which has become unstable, quote for repair has been received. <b>Cllr Markham has met with Michael Lever to discuss options, awaiting suggestions and quote.</b>	Cllr Markham Outstanding
9	Our new PCSO, Tilly Skippen, has secured a bleed control kit for the village and when this arrives it will be stored in the defibrillator unit at the village hall. The kit is designed to tackle medium to severe level injuries, including knife attacks, road traffic collisions, agricultural accidents or just about anything which causes a significant loss of blood – Tilly is waiting to further responses before committing kits	Clerk
<b>Items to be carried forward</b>		
10	Stonewater Neighbourhood team have cleared part of the swale at Carrington Grove but other areas remain outstanding. Cllr Bradbury will continue to monitor and chase as required.	Cllr Bradbury
11	Listing of water tower: The Clerk had written to Newport Pagnell TC asking for advice as they have recently made application for their Police Station to be listed by English Heritage. The Newport Pagnell TC Clerk informed that they had employed a consultant to make the application. The resultant copy has been circulated	Cllr Bradbury
12	Awaiting Land Registry to process request to turn lease for sports ground into full title – Weller Hedley have advised this is still with Land Registry who are currently experiencing a big backlog.	Clerk
13	Arrange for brambles near the footbridge and going into Fishponds to be weedkilled when needed	Clerk
14	Email sent to Chris Hooper asking for an update on action taken regarding condition of the Carrington Arms – it is on the Heritage at Risk register and continues to be monitored on a bi-monthly basis.	For info
15	Follow up flooding problem on Station Road in relation to the ditch and cattle grid with Luke Stacey – Luke has responded to say the problem is the blocked drain on Station Road which backs up to the drain in front of the cattle grid.	
<b>Items outstanding reported to MKCC Highways Department</b>		
1	Overgrown shrubbery at Devils Dip – this was reported numerous times before a member of the public cut the weeds back. Highways and Landscaping Department advised of this action and requested to cut area back further, a traffic management plan is needed which is causing the delay	
2	Animal crossing sign is still missing	FS614236402
3	Flickering streetlight lamp on North Street (NS9)	FS614193613
4	Bullington End Road pothole – near build out coming out of the village – agreed by Highways and will be scheduled	FS614196248
5	Potholes approaching Devils Dip – agreed by Highways and will be scheduled	FS614194707
6	Fence at 1 Wolverton Road has been erected on Highways land	
7	Missing and dislodged kerb edgings on Station Road causing aggregate to spill onto Station Road – Highways confirmed not at investigatory level	
8	Email and photo sent to Highways customer services asking if it is possible to reverse the priority coming through the build out in front of the terraced houses in Station Road to give priority to vehicles coming into the village. Highways will carry out a traffic survey	

9	An enquiry with the Adoptions Team to establish current progress with Carrington Grove has been opened	
10	Street name sign for Carrington Grove is outstanding – Carrington Grove is not yet adopted.	Update given 26/2/24
11	Potholes and poor surface of Bullington End Road have been reported to MKCC by numerous residents, Cllr Ayles has written separately to Highways asking for an emergency repair. <b>An emergency repair has been done but residents who reported it have now had their cases closed even though all the other repairs, and finalising the temporary repair, have not been done.</b>	
12	Damaged kerbstones on North St especially corner by No 22 and by No 14. These have been previously reported.	
13	Repair of build out on BE Rd and improved lighting on all build outs- costs recoverable from Bill's coaches for BE Rd damage – repair is being planned once permit has been approved. No lighting will installed though	Update given 26/2/24
14	Resurface parking area by Castlethorpe First School – an inspector will visit to assess	Update given 26/2/24
15	MKCC have asked their contractor to see if they can source the 'golden resin' required to replace black tarmac following street repairs. If positive, they will inform Anglian Water and work out a way forward to relay the surface with their Streetworks team.	
16	Pothole at edge of recently resurfaced section by 'The Chestnuts' / village shop	Reported 22/1
17	Leaning 30mph sign at Station Rd village entrance	FS586527848
18	Protective marking at entrance to School Lane (parked vehicles block residents' Access – Child bollards being trialled 14 <sup>th</sup> June for 1 month	
19	40mph buffer zone from Glenmore Farm to 30mph zone on BE Rd – on hold until a decision is made on the whole village becoming a 20mph zone – Highways have issued a statutory consultation to make this whole stretch 50 mph	Requested 22/1 FS579693690
20	No delimit signs for the new 40mph construction traffic signs at Hanslope Park	FS586534290
21	Conversion of conservation area streetlights to LED (awaiting funding)	
22	Missing cross bars from conservation area streetlights (reported)	
23	Pothole at junction of Thrupp Close and Bullington End Road	FS599956606

## APPENDIX A2 – CLUBHOUSE PROGRESS REPORT

Castlethorpe Cricket Club held their first match using the new pavilion in May and the team was very pleased with the new pavilion. The enlarged changing rooms and new public toilets are to a very high standard.



The extension, which will be the new clubhouse or community space, is progressing well as can be easily seen when walking across the sports ground.

The doors and windows have now been fitted and the work on the interior is progressing at pace. The internal walls, ceiling, insulation, plumbing and 'first fix' electrics have been completed. Plasterers are booked for week commencing 3<sup>rd</sup> June. The remaining work is completing decoration, second fix electrics, laying the kitchen and servery area floors (but not the social area) and building the front and rear access ramps. We hope that Hickfords will hand over the building to us in early July at which point CCS volunteers will fit the kitchen equipment already purchased for cricket teas.

We have been successful in obtaining a small grant from the MK Community Foundation but we need to raise about another £20,000 to fit out the social area, kitchen and serving area so that we can provide a café and bar service. CCS has submitted an application for £20k to National Lottery which should get a decision by mid-August. Thanks to the Plunkett organisation which provided a free consultant who basically wrote the application for us.

Unfortunately, we have been notified that, due to the General Election, the Community Ownership grant application (£10k) we submitted to DLUHC has been put on hold. We have also been told that we have been unsuccessful with the Shared Prosperity Fund application (£5k) which was through MKCC but ultimately funded by DLUHC. We will now consider applying to BIFFA for a grant.

A fast broadband link has been ordered from Gigaclear and the site survey is due on 3<sup>rd</sup> June.

Although we can make the clubhouse available for cricket teas using their existing furniture, it won't be ready for general use until we can obtain some grants to fit it out. The earliest this can be will be late Autumn based on a favourable decision by National Lottery in August

## APPENDIX A3 – PUBLIC ART REPORT

Two meetings have been held. The first, previously reported, was attended by Louise Izod, the MKCC Public Art officer, to explain the process for accessing the S106 Public Art funding.

A second meeting was held on 20<sup>th</sup> May. A number of possible public art projects were discussed and, initially, discussion focussed on five possible projects:

**A new village sign on the triangle.** This is subject to a review of the existing sign by Lawrence Chapman to see if it is repairable. If not, a traditional design in a durable material (advice from Louise Izod) but possibly having the sign rotate with wind via a central pin top and bottom.

**The clubhouse.** Rather than public art on what is a modern building, it was suggested that the garden area to the west of the clubhouse (between it and the tennis courts) should be designed as a piece of public art. Note that, if this is done as something that will want regular maintenance, then the public art application will have to make financial provision for maintenance. It was suggested that it should pick up on the themes that identify the village such as the castle, the railway and agriculture and, if possible, the school and Youth Club should be invited to suggest some themes.

Matt Parry and Carrie Grayson agreed to work up some ideas.

**The village shop.** It was felt that the shop was not a good place for public art given the display of goods outside it and the proximity of public art nearby - the village sign.

Justin's suggestion of stained glass had been circulated but it was thought this might be difficult to see (given fruit and veg racking) and match with the style of the shop itself. Needs further discussion when Justin can attend.

It was felt that an 'old fashioned' Castlethorpe Shop sign might be the most appropriate.

**Bus shelters.** Suggestion was for some tiles or mosaics with village scenes (castle, church, school, historic houses?) on the back wall of the three shelters. Also consider stained glass in the shelters

Graham Flagg said he would develop some ideas and a subsequent site visit was made by Honey Mosaics.

**Village Green.** Suggestion of a mural on the brick wall at the back of the green.

Needs further thought. Note the wall belongs to MKCC Housing but probably no problem with artwork on it. Just need to ask them.

## APPENDIX A4 – LETTER TO NETWORK RAIL

andrew.haines@networkrail.co.uk

Mr Andrew Haines  
Chief Executive  
Network Rail  
1 Eversholt Street  
London NW1 2DN

Dear Mr Haines

Castlethorpe Parish Council wrote to you in March and June 2023 following complaints from residents about the noise and disruption caused by your staff and contractors' staff carrying out night-time work on the West Coast Main Line in the vicinity of Castlethorpe. You very kindly looked into the complaint and for a while things did improve, although some crews were still unaware of our complaint and had to be asked to turn off their van engines and lights.

Unfortunately, the disruption has now got much worse, with most crews leaving noisy diesel engines running and headlights on, culminating in probably the worst we have ever had over the entire late May Bank Holiday, day and night, as a large number of vehicles arrived and left in shifts while the engine of a diesel support locomotive was running for virtually the entire weekend.

Access to the track is in the centre of the village so the crews park their vans in South Street (MK19 7EL) near the Village Green, where there are a number of houses which front directly on to the road. However some larger vehicles are parked down in the old Station Yard where some new houses (as yet unoccupied) have been built, so is it possible for the crews to park their vans there as well? If not could you please instruct crews to turn off their engines and lights and park well away from the houses fronting directly on to the road so as to minimise the nuisance they cause.

There have been a series of complaints over the years to Network Rail's Contact Centre and workers who have been causing noise have been told not to, but it seems now that each time new workers arrive they are unaware of this and so the problem goes on.

I am sure that Castlethorpe is not alone in suffering this problem so I am asking you on behalf of the Parish Council and our residents to look into why we keep suffering late night noise and use your best efforts to ensure that it stops as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

## APPENDIX A5 – FINANCIAL STRATEGY DOCUMENT

Reference the associated paper on current and future funding, the proposal is that the Clerk should use funds in the following order:

1. Lloyds Treasurer's Account. This will hold sufficient funds for forecast expenditure in the immediate future.
2. Lloyds Business Instant Access Account. This will hold funds sufficient for expenditure in the current fiscal year. MKCC will be asked to pay any monies it is sending to the Parish Council to this account. Funds will be transferred to the Treasurer's Account as needed as approved in the monthly RFO Report.
3. Bank of Ireland Account. It is intended to close this account. Any receipts in the BoI account will be immediately transferred to the Lloyds Business Instant Access account where it will earn a better rate of interest as well as be visible to Clerk and Councillors and be easy to transfer to the Treasurer's account without writing cheques.

Once MKCC have been through a complete cycle of using the Lloyds account (rather than the BoI account) for precept, landscaping, S106 and other grant deposits, **it is proposed that the BoI account will be closed.**

4. CCLA Deposit Account. This earns a better rate of interest than the Lloyds Business Instant account and it is intended that this is used for CPC reserves.

It is currently intended (and previously resolved) to **keep a minimum of £20k** in this account as the Parish Council contingency reserve. This will be reviewed periodically.

5. CCLA Property Bond. Notice has already been given to close this account and the proceeds will be received in August 2024 and it has already been resolved to use the proceeds for the clubhouse project.

PWLB Loan. This loan has been approved and can be drawn down in tranches as required with the final tranche being drawn down no later than 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025. The interest rate is fixed at that prevailing at the time of the draw-down.

Depending on the success of grant applications, it may not all be required. It would be better not to use PWLB loan if possible, even if the Parish Council forgoes a better short-term interest rate from CCLA, as the PWLB loan results in a 20 year charge on the parish.



## APPENDIX A6 – CLUBHOUSE PROJECT STATUS AND FUNDING REPORT

### Current Funding Situation

The base contract with Hickfords is valued at £272.9k. We have further authorised a total of £11.2k for:

- Change Orders for the front and rear ramps, asbestos floor tile removal, NMAs to the planning permission and corridor heating
- Equipment including Ventaxia fans, bike rack, door mats and some kitchen equipment for cricket teas

**which is a total of £284.1k committed expenditure**

This is to be funded by:

- S106 of £185.5k
- The SG bond originally valued at £50k but in fact financial travails reduced this to £45k
- £30k from our reserves which stood at £90k but which also had to cover the streetlights bill of £56k.
- MK CF – use £1.4k for Ventaxias (out of £5k grant leaving £3.6k available)
- PWLB - use £22.2k (out of £50k loan leaving £27.8k available)

**which is a total of £284.1k.**

**We currently have £31.4k available for the clubhouse project** being the balance of the MK CF grant and PWLB loan shown above.

We have agreed a payment schedule with Hickfords of £20k in June (for May), £20k in July and the final balance, currently ~£17.4k, in August.

The Parish Council cash position is tight but manageable in June. July is very difficult to forecast because we still don't know about the streetlights invoice which would be £67.2k (incl VAT) and our worst case forecast shows this being paid 'next month' ie July. In fact, we will be disputing it for the light not converted (£1k) and the management charge (19%). To balance this invoice, we will have to draw down on both the CCLA deposit account and the PWLB loan though the loan will be the last to be used. Hickfords have also agreed to defer the July payment if our cash flow is adverse. In August, we receive the proceeds of the CCLA Bond and our cash flow is then fine for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The other point which was raised in the Internal Audit is about VAT liabilities and legal advice is being taken. It should be said that the HMRC Advice Note which we read at the start of this contract appears to be very clear but VAT is complex and, now that it has been raised by the auditor, we must take her recommendation to get advice.

### Further Funding

The MK CF grant can only be used for the Ventaxias (above) and kitchen equipment listed in their award document

We have applied to the National Lottery for funding, with considerable support from the Plunkett consultant, in three areas:

- Counters £5k
- Furnishings 8.4K
- Kitchen equipment £6.6k

These numbers are less than the estimated amounts but we had to keep to a total of £20k and it should be possible to switch between these categories as necessary. The decision will be made by 16<sup>th</sup> August.

We had two other grant applications:

- UK Prosperity Fund (by CPC through MKCC) for £5k **but this was unsuccessful**
- Community Ownership Fund (by CPC to DLUHC) for £10k but **this has been put on hold** due to the General Election as it is government funded.

We had put the BIFFA application on hold but we propose to re-activate it for £20k as in the next resolution to use the Plunkett consultant. If we obtained £20k as well as the National Lottery grant, this could be used, if the timing worked, to avoid drawing down some of the PWLB loan though undoubtedly we will have forgotten some costs elsewhere.

## Phase '1a'

The next steps are to decorate the social area and to put down flooring which are estimated at £4080 (Hickfords) and £6533 respectively. **Hickfords have very generously offered to make a donation in kind for the decoration as their way of supporting the community.** (I understand they are also supporting in kind the Duck Race.) Therefore, no resolution to approve funding is required.

The kitchen floor is part of the original Hickfords contract but not the social area floor. Being over £2k, the social area floor has to go to competitive tender. Flooring has been considered by CCS and is recommending dark oak vinyl. CCS has received three tenders and made a recommendation which CPC is asked to approve in Part 2.

As soon as the kitchen is decorated and floored, CCS volunteers will install the 'cricket teas' kitchen equipment which has already been approved and delivered and, at our July meeting, we will bring forward a list of other kitchen equipment to be purchased using the £3.5k balance of the MK CF grant (only £1.5k has been committed so far for the Ventaxia fans). We may also ask for small expenditures eg to put a front and counter top on the front counter.

Flooring and decoration, together with the 'cricket teas' kitchen equipment (basically hand and pot sinks, a prep surface and a storage shelf), would make the new pavilion usable by cricket and, in theory, for other very basic use.

Hickfords are currently saying that they will hand over the clubhouse to us on 16th July. We will therefore order the social area flooring for that or the following week and we will ask cricket to move the remainder of the tables and chairs back from the football pavilion so that **the clubhouse is ready for their League match on 27th July.**

**Please note that the clubhouse will not be suitable for public use** – the servery counter and kitchen equipment will be very basic, the tables are the old cricket pavilion trestles and the chairs are the cricket chairs. The standard, at this stage, will be significantly lower than the village hall.



## Phase 2

This Phase will be to fit out the kitchen and furnish the social area so that it is ready for public use. However, we need to be successful with a grant application for about £20k to fund this. As above, we would expect the National Lottery decision by mid-August and the BIFFA application in November.

If we are not successful, then we will have to revisit the specification and / or review CPC's financial outlook at that time. The CPC outlook to year end has significantly improved which might allow further expenditure.

## Phase 2a

This is the extended cafe which will be dependent on demand. It costs about £10k.

## Phase 3

This Phase is about running the clubhouse / community space. There are two options; CCS runs it itself or it is sub-leased in the same way as the shop is sub-leased by CVSA to Udi and Dina. The CCS Board is considering these options. The VAT matter raised at the end of section 1 may be an important factor.

## APPENDIX A7 – INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Audit undertaken 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024

### 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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The audit was based on a review of a sample of items appearing in the Cash Book, other documentation, and discussions with the Clerk and Cllr Bradbury.

### Overall Opinion

Generally, the systems in operation appear to be sound and adequate to meet the Parish Council's requirements.

A few items of expenditure in the cash book were noted as not having sufficient information to identify the payee. The Clerk has undertaken to obtain the details.

The asset register was reviewed and was found to be up to date and complete although the financial investments are not recorded. (Noted in previous years). Assets are now inspected on a regular basis and the inspections are noted.

All relevant policies audited are being followed. However, it is noted that there is no investment strategy which should be included in Standing Orders or otherwise made available to the public. Where the investments exceed £100,000 Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments (item 18) states: "The guidance includes a new requirement for councils to prepare an investment strategy at least once a year. The format and presentation of this will not be prescribed, so long as it is approved by full council." (Noted in previous years).

All relevant insurances are in place and cover appears to be adequate. It is noted that the insurance cover will need to be reviewed this year on completion of the new Community Space (clubhouse)

Bank reconciliations are completed promptly and VAT is generally claimed correctly, although I am uncertain as to the VAT claimed against the construction costs of the new building.

Financial information has been added to the website but is difficult to find as it is attached to the minutes of a meeting.

Standing orders have been updated where noted last year.

Some security issues were identified relating to storage of confidential information both electronically and physically. Also, some electronically held documents were not password protected

### Recommendations

- That where a sole trader submits an invoice the Council should satisfy themselves as to the identity of the trader and ascertain that they are registered with HMRC.
- That the financial investments should be recorded on the Asset Register.
- That an investment strategy should be devised
- That financial information should be recorded separately from the meeting minutes to aid clarity
- That any physical documents of a confidential/sensitive or legal nature should be kept in a locked cabinet which should be fireproof if applicable and that electronic documents should be password protected.
- That expert guidance should be sought on the matter of reclaiming the VAT on the building costs.
- That the Clerk should receive some training on the use of Excel in order to assist recording of financial data.

### Conclusion

Overall, the accounts are recorded accurately, expenditure is monitored well and authorities for expenditure complied with. Processes and systems are efficient and comply with legal requirements and policies.

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

APPENDIX A8 – CASTLETHORPE POLICE REPORT

Crime Statistics for period between 02/05/2024-02/06/2024

Crime Report Incidents

Dangerous dog	1
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Other Incidents not crime related

Sus person	1
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Other Incidents in surrounding villages

	0
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**Any Other Business**

Tool thefts are rising as well as bike thefts- make sure bikes and tools are locked away securely.

With summer approaching wildlife crime may rise so if you hear or see anything report it.