

STEEPLE ASHTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Nicola Duke, April Rise, 81 Studland Park, Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 3HN 01373 864127

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on
Monday 6th November 2023 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Leonard (Chair), Cllr Tapper, Cllr Dallison, Cllr Jones, Cllr Cottle, Cllr Petrie and Cllr Yates.

In attendance: Nicola Duke (Parish Clerk), Wiltshire Councillor J Seed, Cllr Mike Sanky (Chair, LHFIG) and 10 members of the public.

Open Forum

Members of the public were invited to make representations to the Council on any matters relating to the work of the Council or to raise any issues of concern:

- A number of residents had contacted the Council and posted on Facebook expressing concern over recent firework displays in the village (noise, disruption and distress to animals). The Chair confirmed that the Council was aware of the issue. *At this point the Vice-Chair took the Chair.* Some residents had attended the meeting to speak to this matter. It was acknowledged that the events had taken place on Bonfire Night and no law had been broken. The high levels of livestock in the village was noted and concern expressed at the distress which had been caused to them as well as to children and pets. The lack of notice about the events was noted, which had not enabled residents to prepare appropriately. Members noted the concerns and comments received and expressed the view that the issue was lack of communication and the lateness of one of the events, asking residents to note that firework displays could not be legally stopped and can run till midnight on Bonfire Night. It was agreed that consideration was required in a rural area where livestock was present and it was noted that unforeseen firework displays presented a health and safety risk to farmers and their cattle. The Vice-Chair thanked residents for attending, noting that lessons had now been learned and an apology had been received via Facebook from the organiser of one of the events. The Council agreed to post a request for next Bonfire Night/New Year's Eve that any residents planning a firework display publicise the event and hold it as early in the evening as possible. Residents would be reminded to be courteous to others and inform their neighbours of their event planning. A resident suggested that parishioners could co-ordinate the displays for Bonfire Night and it was agreed to offer this as a potential solution, although members noted that this could only be encouraged and not enforced. Cllr Seed acknowledged the issue, expressing the view that the situation had been exacerbated by Bonfire Night falling on a Sunday resulting in potentially three days of events over the Friday and weekend. He supported the way in which the discussion had been handled and the solution identified. The Chair thanked the Facebook administrators for their work in dealing with the posts over the recent day, reminding residents to ensure their posts were appropriate. *At this point the Chair re-took the chair.*

| | AGENDA ITEM |
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| 2023.64 | <p>Apologies for Absence and to consider the reasons given</p> <p>None.</p> |
| 2023.65 | <p>Declarations of Interest and Dispensations to Participate</p> <p>None.</p> |
| 2023.66 | <p>Minutes of Council Meetings</p> <p>The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on 2nd October 2023 were approved for accuracy and adopted (proposed Cllr Jones, seconded Cllr Cottle).</p> |
| 2023.67 | <p>Wiltshire Council Report</p> <p>Wiltshire Councillor Seed reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding had been monitored and three blocked gullies would be cleared; the more reports submitted the more action would be taken. Rural areas were being especially monitored. • The Chair reported that the centre of the village had been identified as a priority area for gully clearance due to previous flooding and asked for clarification on the practicality of this. Cllr Seed reported that there were a huge number of gullies in Wiltshire and not all would be done annually, a priority area meant that an annual visit would be received. <p>Wiltshire Cllr Mike Sanky (Melksham area) introduced himself, reported he had just taken over the Chairmanship of LHFIG and reassured members that the parishes were of equal importance to the larger towns. Cllr Sanky provided some background on his experience and his involvement in local government. The budget for LHFIG was reported to be £25,000 per year; the larger parishes being asked to contribute 50% towards any projects, the smaller parishes being asked to contribute 25%. Smaller projects were fully funded by LHFIG. Cllr Tapper thanked Cllr Sanky for his support in moving forward the smaller projects in the village (signs, countdown markers etc). Cllr Sanky encouraged parishes to put forward projects to ensure that funding was evenly distributed through the area. The Chair asked how the projects would be prioritised and Cllr Sanky confirmed this was a remit of the LHFIG as a whole, which would consider the costings and recommendations of the highway engineer with projects being dependent on whether the required contributions were made available by the parish and town councils. Cllr Sanky also reported that the next Area Board meeting would be focussing on Highway matters and suggested this could be a useful way of submitting highway related questions to WC. There will also be a public meeting on highways matters in Semington Village Hall on 6th December.</p> |
| 2023.68 | <p>Planning Applications and Consultations</p> <p>PL/2023/09015 -2 Spiers Piece, Steeple Ashton, Trowbridge, BA14 6HG - Construction of a two-storey extension to the right hand side / Eastern elevation of the existing</p> |

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| | <p>house. Reconstructing the existing single storey utility area at the rear with new walls and roof – No objection.</p> <p>Wiltshire Council – Local Plan Consultation 2023</p> <p>Members resolved the Parish Council’s response to the Local Plan consultation (summary points previously circulated), which the Chair outlined and which the Clerk was asked to submit. The PC’s response to the consultation would be appended to the minutes.</p> <p>Members considered a planning application received after the issue of the agenda (<i>where the response time fell outside of the meeting schedule</i>):</p> <p>PL/2023/07479 - 15 High Street, Steeple Ashton, Trowbridge, Wilts, BA14 6EL - Proposed replacement of all external windows and doors – No objection.</p> |
| <p>2023.69</p> | <p>Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>The Chair reported that the sites submitted during the Call for Sites (over 20) were being reviewed by the consultant. A public presentation on the sites would take place in January 2024. It was confirmed that all sites would be presented, with the information on their suitability being provided. It was noted that the housing allocation for the village had reduced in the latest version of the Local Plan.</p> |
| <p>2023.70</p> | <p>Luffenham Meadow</p> <p>Members considered the arrangements for the lease for the land and Cllr Petrie reported that she had approached the trustees and asked if she could be granted the lease. This would be to ensure continued access for residents and would ensure the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust recommendations for the site were followed. Consideration was being given by her and Cllr Yates to establishing a Friends of the Open Spaces of SA group so that the community could work together on spaces such as Luffenham Meadow. The lease request was due to be considered by the trustees and the volunteers would be able to continue their much appreciated work. Issues with equipment, funding and access would be considered once the arrangements for the lease had been finalised, with it being noted that the Trusts approval would be needed for any plans. Cllr Petrie reported that the funds brought in by the trustees were used in support of those in financial need. Cllr Petrie noted that there was little village awareness of this and the trustees had agreed to arrange for some information to be publicised around this.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that the cost of adding the land to the PC insurance would be minimal. (Subject to confirmation)</p> |

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| <p>2023.71</p> | <p>Financial Reports (previously circulated) Members received, noted and approved the following reports (proposed Cllr Dallison, seconded Cllr Tapper):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) List of payments and receipts September 2023 b) Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30th September 2023 c) Financial Position Statement as at 30th September 2023 d) Earmarked Reserves September 2023 e) Budget Report as at 30th September 2023 f) List of payments October 2023 |
| <p>2023.72</p> | <p>Parish Council Governance Documents Members resolved to adopt the new Model Documents as circulated (proposed Cllr Dallison, seconded Cllr Cottle):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Standing Orders b) Financial Regulations <p>It was agreed that it would be useful to arrange a session to go through the new documents and it was felt appropriate to arrange this for a Planning Only meeting, when there would potentially be less business to transact.</p> |
| <p>2023.73</p> | <p>Council, Councillor and Clerk Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Community Policing – Cllr Tapper reported the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. There had been no specific SA update from the policing team, although a generic report had been issued and publicised. b. The local team would be visiting the village shop on the 15th November between 9 and 11 am. Residents were encouraged to attend and a reminder would be posted on Facebook nearer the time. c. Cllr Cottle reported on a recent hare coursing incident and encouraged residents to take information on any vehicles involved in incidents and report to the police. Residents were reminded not to confront any individuals involved and to report incidents via 999. b) Highways / CSW Report and Updates – Cllr Tapper reported the following and members approved the Terms of Reference for the new Highways Group (previously circulated) (proposed Cllr Leonard, seconded Cllr Cottle): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. SA Highways Group - the first meeting of the new Highways Group had taken place in October. Cllrs Tapper, Jones and Leonard had attended together with a member of the CSW group and two local residents. A number of actions had been identified and the group was planning to meet again on the 28th or 29th November. The group would initially look at the issue of speeding through the village, which was the major concern reported by residents. Following this, the |

group would expand its remit to consider all aspects of road safety covering all road users.

b. Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG):

- i. Proposals to address concerns with speeding down Sandpits Lane and access to the playing field had been developed by members and the WC Highways Engineer and approved by LHFIG. The measures agreed were a) the installation of a village sign entering the village from Rode Ashton b) road markings and c) signs either side of the kissing gates to indicate pedestrians in the road. It was hoped that the visual reminders would slow vehicles down as they entered the village from this direction. The costings for the work had been reported at £700 and, given that this was a small project, no contribution was required from the PC. Members approved the proposed works (proposed Cllr Leonard, seconded Cllr Jones).
- ii. In addition to the above works Cllr Tapper had requested a traffic survey at Sandpits Lane to assess the speed of vehicles outside of the 30mph limit. Members were reminded that WC had not felt it appropriate to 'push back' the speed limit. Further works for Sandpits Lane would be considered once the traffic survey had been completed and the results analysed.
- iii. The pedestrian entrance to the playing field had also been considered, given that there were concerns over the treacherous nature of the entrance and the risk of residents slipping into the road. Work could be done to improve this access and consideration had also been given to creating a new entrance via the paved area adjacent to the bungalow at the far end of Sandpits Lane. Prices for the works were estimated at between £2,500 and £3,500 each. More work needed to be done on these plans, particularly with resolving the impact of any works on the established rights of way. Cllr Tapper would report back to the Council at the next meeting.
- iv. Concern was expressed at the van which was parking on Ashton Road close to the junction with Common Hill, which was impacting visibility for road users. A neighbour agreed to mention this to the vehicle owner referencing the concerns lodged and the PC's responsibility to address that concern.
- v. Cllr Tapper reported on concerns over young people running/playing into the road adjacent to the Newleaze play area and the bus stop. Consideration had been given to installing a barrier to protect children and the costs for this and the associated splays had been confirmed at £1,800. The project would therefore require a contribution of £450 from

the PC. It was resolved to approve the works and allocate the required sum of £450 from the EMR Highways Fund (proposed Cllr Leonard, seconded Cllr Jones). Members noted that the grass verges were overgrown in the area, which was exacerbating the issue and noted that this was WC land. Cllr Jones would liaise with the Parish Steward to get the grass cutting regularly attended to.

- c) Landscape maintenance contract & site meeting – Cllr Leonard reported that members had met with the maintenance contractor to discuss issues with work in the village, which the contractor had confirmed would be attended to. The ongoing issue with a parked vehicle blocking access to St Mary’s field was noted. It was also noted that a retendering process for the grounds maintenance contract would be carried out in the New Year.
- d) Keevil ‘shed’ project for Steeple Ashton – Cllr Leonard reported that there had been a very limited response to the article in the newsletter seeking volunteers to assist with this project. It was agreed to therefore proceed on a case by case basis.
- e) Annual play area inspections – The Clerk reported that the annual play area inspection reports had now been received; no urgent issues of safety had been identified. The report would be reviewed and a report issued to members. It was noted that the contractor appointed to take down the kick wall had not yet attended site and Cllr Cottle would chase for a date for the works.
- f) Salt bin request Southbrook Lane/Spiers Piece – Cllr Petrie reported that the previous salt bin had disintegrated and requested a replacement. This was approved and the Clerk would arrange for a bin to be ordered and delivered to Cllr Cottle. The associated costs of £130 were approved from the contingency budget (proposed Cllr Petrie, seconded Cllr Yates).
- g) Revised lease for WWMRC Acreshort Hut – Cllr Leonard reported that he and the Clerk had attended a meeting with representatives of the WWMRC to agree required revisions to the lease. A draft document had now been sent to WWMRC for their comments.
- h) Winter preparations - Cllr Cottle reported that 40 bags of salt were in stock. Further stock had not been collected due to the distance to the depot. It was agreed to contact Martin Rose at WC to see if it would be possible to arrange a collection from the Semington depot.
- i) Meeting with other local parish councils – Cllr Leonard reported that there had been recent events hosted by Keevil and Bulkington and it was agreed that it would be appropriate for the PC to now host a liaison event. Any associated costs would be met from the Chair’s Allowance (maximum allocation £50).

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| 2023.74 | Correspondence None. |
| 2023.75 | Village Newsletter Members agreed the following items for inclusion in the village newsletter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fireworks NYE • New salt bin • Planning • My Wilts app • CSW report – Cllr Tapper inc Edington Road survey results |
| 2023.76 | Date of next meeting Monday 4 th December 2023 – Planning Only if required (7.00pm) /Neighbourhood Planning (7.30 pm). |

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.00 pm.