



SIMPSON AND ASHLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 7th February 2022 at Simpson Village Hall

Councillors present: Cllr Pye - Chair (DP)
Cllr Barnes – Vice Chair (PB)
Cllr Ezeh (CE)
Cllr Thornton (ST)

Also present: Katherine Harmsworth, Parish Clerk (KH)

Apologies: Cllr Eatwell (RE)

Others present: 9 Members of the public (MOP)

1) Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Eatwell.

2) Specific Declarations of Interest

None received.

3) Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 1st November 2021 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true and correct record.

4) Public Forum

Issues discussed included:

a) Five Acres

- (a) Some residents reported that they had not been able to add any objections to the planning portal prior to the deadline.
- (b) Residents reported that there had been considerable police activity around Five Acres in recent weeks.
- (c) PB reported that the planning application will go to the Development Control Committee, but a date has as yet, not been confirmed.

b) Road Traffic Incidents on Groveway

- (a) A resident reported that there have been 2 road traffic incidents on Groveway in the past 10 days. He understands that to close the junction of Groveway and Simpson Drive would take specific data and could be costly. However, he asked if it would be possible to campaign for a lower speed limit of 40mph on this road. He added that he had put in a Freedom of Information request to Thames Valley Police, asking to see the data regarding road traffic incidents at this junction.
- (b) ST reported that the PC had previously spent 18 months campaigning for this junction to be altered, after there had been 2 fatalities. At the time MKC would not agree to reducing the speed limit or closing the junction, instead the junction was altered from 2 lanes into 1. However as 8 years have passed, the situation may be different now.

ST suggested that the best way forward would be for concerned residents to approach Ward Cllrs initially.

(c) DP explained that in 2014 the PC was told that a roundabout would be put in at the junctions of the Open University/Walton and Groveway.

c) The Jubilee

(a) A resident asked if there were any plans in place to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee.

(b) PB explained that further information would be included in the PC newsletter that would be circulated shortly. He was aware of the Church, Simpson Garden Group and the Mount already planning ideas.

(c) A resident suggested the idea of taking photos of families outside their houses this year, to compare to historic photos and that perhaps some local enthusiastic photographers would be willing to help.

(d) DP reminded residents that the PC has a budget for grants and that the PC would be happy to receive applications.

5) Finance Report and Discussion

a) The spend from 22nd October 2021 until 28th January 2022 was reviewed and agreed.

b) The budget for 2022/23 was reviewed and agreed. As previously noted, the precept will be raised by 2% for the 2022/23 financial year.

c) The regular financial payments for 2022/23 Financial Year were reviewed and agreed.

d) It was agreed that financial payments should be made via BACS where possible.

e) It was agreed to pursue the accounting software and online booking system Scribe Accounts, with a view to implement from the new financial year. The initial setup cost is £397 + VAT, with an annual subscription charge of £564 + VAT.

6) Ashland Meeting Place (AMP) Update

a) DP thanked everyone involved in the set-up of AMP and particularly the Architect Andrew Armes.

b) ST thanked the steering group and local residents for their help in sourcing suppliers to help with the internal fit out. ST also thanked the Parks Trust for working with the PC on the external landscaping.

c) ST updated us that the electrics have been connected, the internal flooring is now down and that the water will be connected shortly. The external doors are on order and should be in place soon. The next step will be to buy furniture for the Meeting Place.

d) It is hoped that AMP will be open in late spring, with an exact date to be confirmed.

e) It was agreed that the PC would start to research the role of a Facilities Manager in running both AMP and SVH.

7) Simpson Village Hall (SVH) Update

a) ST reported that the SVH working group are planning some social events to encourage the use of SVH and to explore how to use this community asset going forward. On 19th February from 6-8pm there will be a social evening and on the morning of 19th and 20th March there will be a coffee morning to coincide with the Spring celebrations around Simpson and Ashland.

b) The table tennis sessions have been postponed due to illness.

c) DP reported that RE has received several quotes for an external emergency light fitting. It was agreed that the PC would spend up to £400 on this.

8) Open Space Update

- a) DP thanked all volunteers and the Canal and River Trust (CRT) who took part in planting a replacement hedge behind Warren Bank/along the Canal Towpath.
- b) ST reported that residents in Lissel Road have planted a new hedge.
- c) ST reported that any leftover hedge whips from the planting in Lissel Road and the Canal Towpath will be used on the boundary of the Church. The Church has cleared a lot of space and now has space for 20 to 30 more graves and the hedge will give a clear boundary between the church and Parks Trust land.
- d) PB reported that there will be towpath repairs by The Mount on 26th February from 9:30am and by Bowlers Bridge on 5th March from 9:30am. CRT are providing hardcore and equipment, however volunteers are needed to transport the hardcore from roadside to canal side with wheelbarrows.
- e) ST reported that a meeting will be arranged in March 2022 to discuss the upcoming years mowing arrangements. KH, ST and a group of residents will be attending.
- f) PB reported that the Environmental Agency will be working to clear fallen trees and other debris from the River Ouse between Caldecotte lake and Middleton.

9) Energy Efficiency Project

- a) ST reported that the project is going well after the recent online workshop. There is now a project coordinator for Lissel Road, Hanmer Road and the older Simpson properties. ST suggests that some consideration should go into how this project can be replicated in other areas of Simpson and Ashland.

10) Website

- a) It was agreed to have a new website built, to comply with WCAG 2.1AA. The PC will obtain 3 quotes for comparison and a contractor will be chosen from this group.

11) Planning Applications

- a) (21/02173/FUL) 426 Simpson – This was approved at the Development Control Committee which PB attended. PB reported that there was a piece of land under disputed ownership, that was confirmed to belong to 426 Simpson.
- b) (21/03108/FUL) Five Acres – This was discussed during the public forum as a resident asked for an update (minute 4 a).
- c) (21/03416/FUL) 2 Millholm Rise – The PC had no comments to make.
- d) (21/03502/FUL) 39 Newington Gate – The PC had no comments to make.
- e) (22/00018/FUL) 368 Simpson – The PC had no comments to make.
- f) (20/03226/FUL) Little Bears Day Nursery Appeal – An application made in 2020 to extend the nursery was previously rejected by MKC due to an increase in traffic volume, congestion and an increase in noise level. The Little Bears Day Nursery are now appealing this decision and the appeal will go to the Secretary of State. The PC has sent in objections and are now awaiting the outcome.

12) Review of Financial Regulations

The Financial Regulations were reviewed and agreed.

13) Review of Delegated Decisions

The list of delegated decisions were reviewed and agreed.

14) Other business discussed included:

- a) The DRT – The scrutiny committee reviewed a report written by ST after the meeting at Simpson Village Hall on 18th January.
- b) Charles Warren Academy – The school is aware of parking issues in the surrounding area and are tackling this with parents. They are also hoping to do some litter picking around Old Groveway in the future.

15) To note that the next meeting of the Full Council will be held on Monday 16th May.

Meeting ended at 21:30