



SIMPSON AND ASHLAND PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting date: 5 October 2020

Venue: Zoom Online Meeting

Councillors present:

Cllr Pye – Chair (DP)

Cllr Barnes – Vice Chair (PB)

Cllr Ezeh (CE)

Cllr Thornton (ST)

Also present: Thomas Walker, Parish Clerk (TW)

Apologies: None.

Members of public: 10 members of public.

AGENDA ITEMS AND MINUTES

Item 20032: Welcome, Introduction and Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

Item 20033: Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made with respect to any items on the agenda.

Item 20034: Public Forum

Residents and members of the Parish Council have been placing sandbags to combat the recent flooding. No properties have been inundated. The Parish Council has been in contact with the Environment Agency and MK Council Highways. Councillors also stood in the street slowing cars to reduce their wake in the water. The Parish Council asked for volunteers to join a small contingency group that could provide support as and when required at times of extreme weather or other events,



Concern has been expressed that water is still standing where drains are. MKC have looked into this before and don't fully understand how the drains work in Simpson. If the river level is too high water may have nowhere to go. The PC will contact the relevant MKC officer to discuss further the drainage issues affecting Simpson.

It was noted that the Bletchley Sainsbury's will close in January and that bus subsidies will end in April, almost certainly meaning service 18 will be replaced with a demand-responsive transit solution. Cllr Thornton and a resident will be attending a meeting on 14 October to discuss issues relating to bus transport and will report back.

MK Council are undertaking a refuse trial with a new bin system in other parts of the city, which will presumably be rolled out boroughwide if successful. Cllr Barnes suggested that the PC monitor the trial.

Item 20035: Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 3rd August 2020

The minutes, as previously circulated, were approved.

Matters Arising:

Regarding the Five Acres application, new national guidance has been released on the smallest size of 1-bed flats which are legal, and the Five Acres proposals do not appear to be consistent with these new guidelines. The Parish Council intend to raise this point at DCC, which is likely to be on 5 November. The case officer for Five Acres has confirmed that every response received by email has been logged.

Item 20036: Chair's Report

Councillor Pye reported that the Ashland meeting place has received planning permission. The Clerk is leaving on October 9th. An advertisement has been released and interest received. The new role will be for a 'parish manager', including management of both community facilities as well as normal Clerk duties.

Item 20037: Ashland S106 project

The Steering Group has been unable to meet but are hoping to soon. Discussion with MK College is ongoing about students undertaking fitting out work. Concerns have been raised about potential flooding at the meeting place location. It was noted that the location is 30m uphill from the furthest extent of the current flooding, and that the Parks Trust would not have allowed the plans to go ahead if the proposed building was inside a flooding high risk area.

Item 20038: Devolved Services Third Option

Councillors Pye and Thornton had a meeting with the Clerk and a representative from Serco, giving the Parish Council a direct contact at Serco now. This included a walk in Simpson (the Parks Trust



manage Ashland). He was given a copy of the biodiversity audit. The Parish Council is seeking individual costs from SERCO on various works which residents have asked for and discussing options for topping up services. Councillor Thornton is attending monthly landscape contract meetings with MK Council. Cllrs have also requested financial information from MK Council to enable them to effectively manage the open spaces maintenance contract.

Action: ST

Item 20039: Working Groups

- Biodiversity

Thanks, were expressed to Councillor Barnes and the residents involved for organising and delivering the Heritage Open Weekend walks, and to those involved in preparing the Biodiversity Audit. A Hanmer Green biodiversity working group has been set up by residents. Other such groups might be forming (The Mount was named as one possibility). A film has been made about biodiversity in the churchyard and the church is encouraging attendants to take an interest in it. There has been some concern from churchgoers about long grass preventing access to graves.

- Open spaces

Residents reported on works to improve the open space at Lissel Road. One resident has objected to these works. It was noted that any trees that are blocking paths/roads or streetlights can be reported to Serco for remedial works.

The Garden Group have four apple trees which need planting (these kept to save heritage trees some time ago). It was suggested that this can go in the next newsletter.

Action: PB

- Resident activity

No update.

Item 20040: Village Hall

The possibility of reopening the hall was discussed. It was noted that the Government Rule of Six needs to be followed. In the hall itself, sanitisers are in place and a legionnaires disease test has been done which revealed that the water tank needs replacing. As and when the hall is hired, only the disabled toilet will be available for use and the kitchen will not be available.. Lost income from the village hall is around £800 per month.

The Parish Council will ask for resident views on reopening possibilities. The Parish Council are committed to reopening and the hall has been used in a limited capacity a few times already.



Councillor Barnes has been in contact with user groups. Some are very cautious. Some others are keen to resume. Councillor Thornton recommended reading the ACRE advice on halls. She suggested that the Parish Council open to the wider community the possibility of creating kind of management committee to reopen the hall and keep it operational as the situation continues.

It was suggested that the hall be used as a food distribution centre / community larder as has been done in Great Linford.

Works are needed to the flowerbeds at the hall, and a small group of residents is kindly taking this forward.

Item 20041: Finance Report and Payments list

The report, as previously circulated, was noted. The Clerk noted that expenditure has been below normal during the Covid-19 situation, which has to some extent alleviated the losses incurred due to the village hall being closed.

Item 20042: Planning Applications

No new planning applications at the present time.

Item 20043: Delegated Decisions

The following delegated decisions made since the last meeting were ratified:

- Agreement for payment for the habitat survey to Rebecca Hiorns for £1,260.00
- Agreement to adopt the website accessibility statement
- Agreement for expenses payment to Councillor Barnes of £38.00

Item 20044: Changes to Risk Management

No changes to report.

Item 20045: Any Other Business

The condition of the open space at Warren Bank was discussed.

Councillor Ezech raised the matter of family activities, which the Parish Council may sponsor if there's interest (sponsoring specific families in need).

Milton Keynes Council is running a boroughwide biodiversity consultation until 23 November.

Councillor Barnes expressed thanks to those helping with the newsletter, which should be getting together through this week for delivery next week.



Councillor Pye raised the issue of the Government White Paper on Planning, which has elicited much concern from Parish Councils and Milton Keynes Council, due to the fact it would effectively cut local people out of planning decisions and move a lot of policymaking to a national level.

Item 20046: Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 7th December 2020, 8.00pm by Zoom Online Meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Signed Chair Date

Signed Clerk Date