

Minutes

of a Meeting of Staploe Parish Council held on Tuesday 18th July 2017 at 7.45pm in the Village Hall at Duloe

Present:

R. Squire (Chairman)

J. Ibbetts (Vice Chairman)

V. Zwetsloot

D. Smith

J. Thomson

L. Crawford (Clerk)

Borough Councillor T. Wootton

Two members of the public

Apologies for absence: G. Meola

368. Declarations of Interest. None

369. Public Open Forum.

A parishioner of Staploe contacted the Clerk because they had been advised that superfast broadband was not available to their property despite being on an 01480 telephone number and on the same cabinet as others in Staploe to whom superfast broadband has now been made available. The Clerk has reported this to Justine Ives at Bedford Borough Council along with the fact that “superfast” speeds in central and western Staploe are nearer 4 mb/s than the minimum 12 mb/s promised due to distance from the cabinet in Duloe and the presence of aluminium cables. She has also requested a quote from BT Openreach for upgrading the cables or installing a new cabinet in Staploe.

In addition, a parishioner has asked that we remind residents to put their bins away once they have been collected. Councillors agreed that this reminder should go in the parish newsletter.

Two residents expressed concern about visibility at the T junction in Upper Staploe onto the Bushmead Road. One resident had a near miss there before the verge was cut and the other reported reduced visibility due to the hedge near the Chestnuts Cottage opposite Tally Ho. Since the initial report the verge has been cut and visibility is now good to the right and the mirror helps visibility to the left. Councillors did not think it was necessary to write to the owners of Chestnut Cottage since the hedge is well trimmed and the mirror aids visibility but Borough Councillor Wootton suggested writing to Andrew Prigmore at Bedford Borough Council to request yellow rumble strips on Bushmead Road near this junction.

Cllr. Ibbetts expressed some concern that the grass in Honeydon is not cut often enough. The Clerk will investigate the options and put this on the agenda for the meeting in September.

370. Minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2017

Having been previously circulated these were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Squire, seconded by Cllr Smith.

371. Councillor Vacancy

The Clerk has received a letter of application from a parishioner in Duloe, she has not heard anything further from the parishioner who expressed an interest in Staploe. She recently heard from a parishioner in Honeydon who is interested but Cllr Ibbetts explained that the latter is unable to apply until the September meeting. Cllr Thomson proposed that the decision to co-opt be postponed until September to allow the parishioner in Honeydon to be considered. Cllr. Zwetsloot seconded the motion. There were 4 votes in favour and one abstention. It was therefore resolved to postpone the co-option until September.

372. Appointments and responsibilities

- Rights of Way. Mina Meola was appointed as representative for Rights of Way.

373. Ward Report

- Ward Forum – Staploe hosting 22nd November 7.15 for 7.30pm start. We hope to have Justine Ives of Bedford Borough Council broadband, a representative from Morelock Signs (who make the mobile speed indicator signs) and Highways represented. However, the police have said that they will not attend and parishes should attend their six monthly priority setting meetings at Kempston instead. Borough Councillor Tom Wootton will discuss this with the police.
- Ward Fund 2016/17 (under-sink water heater not needed, £89.99 refund to spend / return). The Parish Council bought a projector, screen and projector trolley with the money from the ward fund in 2016/17 but, because the projector was not wireless as expected, the trolley was returned. The Council agreed to buy an under-sink water heater instead but then discovered there was already a water heater installed in the ladies toilet which feeds all three sinks. The under-sink heater was, therefore, returned. However, the Clerk advised that the presence of the water heater and the fact that the village hall taps are not run very often requires us to prepare a risk assessment and implement control measures for legionella. A formal risk assessment is around £250-£300 but the key parts of that would be to run the taps for 2 minutes at least once per week and ensure that the water temperatures are below 20°C or above 60°C and test the water annually. The Clerk offered to run the taps for 2 minutes every week when she does her weekly playground inspection and record it in the play area inspection book. It was resolved that the refund should be spent on a legionella testing kit and that the Clerk should write a risk assessment and run the taps as proposed. Borough Councillor Tom Wootton agreed with the proposal to spend the money on a testing kit.
- Ward Fund 2017/18 £1000 available. Cllr Thompson reported that the Village Hall Committee would like to apply for funding for new heaters for the Village Hall. Councillors unanimously agreed with this proposal. The Clerk asked Cllr Thompson to arrange for the Village Hall Committee to obtain three quotes for heaters and installation in time for the Parish Council meeting in September and to explain to the Committee that the heaters would need to be in place by the end of March.

Ward Report

Local Plan 2035

The Council's latest consultation on its Local Plan, which proposed sites to accommodate 8,000 new homes by 2035, ended on the 9th June. The Council's Planning department is now assessing around 1800 responses received. The details of the draft plan were reported in the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting in March 2017.

Black Cat / A428

Highways England held a consultation between the 6th March – 23rd April 2017 on proposals to improve the Black Cat roundabout and provide a new dual carriageway to Caxton Gibbet.

The consultation document put forward 3 options for consideration for the A428 and 3 options to upgrade the Black Cat roundabout, as set out in the consultation document which

can be seen on the Highways England website (search 'Highways England Black Cat'). A decision on the preferred option will be made this summer.

East West Rail

A consultation is being held from the 30th June – 11th August on the proposed East West Rail scheme.

The western section of East West Rail will connect Oxford, Milton Keynes and Bedford. In addition to this, a central section is planned which will extend the line to Cambridge. The decision has been taken for the Bedford to Cambridge line to pass through Sandy.

The Government backed the scheme in its 2016 Autumn Statement with £110m investment. A new East West Rail organisation is now taking the plans forward.

Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

The body responsible for organising health services in Bedfordshire has announced that it is no longer under 'special measures' after losing control of its finances.

In 2014/15 the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) amassed a £43.2m spending deficit on a budget of around £500m after it failed to deliver a range of efficiencies. This led to NHS England placing 'legal directions' on the BCCG, meaning that it had to agree with NHS England an improvement plan to address its financial position and ineffective corporate governance.

The BCCG subsequently put in place a new Executive which oversaw a surplus financial position for 2016/17. NHS England is now content that the BCCG's position has improved to the extent that it can be given full autonomy once again.

Summer Sports Courses

Bedford Borough Council has announced a programme of sports courses for children to enjoy over the summer holidays.

Broadband

Borough Councillor Tom Wootton suggested that businesses come forward to request improved broadband from Justine Ives at Bedford Borough Council and copy Alistair Burt (MP).

374. Planning & development

- Maye Cottage, Woodhouse Lane, Duloe. The Parish Council did not object but the extension has been refused again by Bedford Borough Council and the owners are appealing the decision.
- New cattle barn, White House Farm, Begwary. The application has been approved.
- Commercial equestrian centre at Chapel Close, Honeydon. The application has been withdrawn.
- 3, Goodwick Drive, Honeydon – erection of garage / workshop and balcony. It was resolved not to object to this application. Proposed by Cllr Squire and seconded by Cllr Thomson. The decision was unanimous.
- Walnut Tree Cottage extension. It was resolved not to object to this planning application. The decision was unanimous.

375. A1, Highways and Rights of Way

- Staploe Parish A1 Working Group –report from the first meeting. Having been previously circulated the minutes of the meeting held on 21st June were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Squire, seconded by T. Tagg who was present at the meeting.
- Since the meeting the Clerk has contacted the following Parish Councils: Northill (which contains Ickwell Bury), Roxton, Wyboston, Great Barford, Blunham and Hail Weston attaching a map of the 1994 proposals and outlining our concerns about a new route to the west and suggesting that they might like to write to Highways England, Glenn Barcham at Bedford Borough Council, BATPC, Alistair Burt (MP) and Tom Wootton to express their preferred route. She has also asked them to let her know what their preferred package would be ie. Package A (new motorway to the west), B (removal of roundabouts and improvements in situ) or C (improving roundabouts near Hatfield). In addition she has added the new housing developments around Tempsford and Sandy to the A1 maps, chased road consultants without success and will approach CPRE and the campaign for Better Transport to find out more about whether building new roads attracts more traffic.
- Highways maintenance four year programme (resurfacing / new drainage schemes). The Parish Council proposed the following be added to the programme:
 1. Replace railings in Honeydon between the triangle at the bus stop and Dairy Farm – repair but caution – badgers in residence (Western end of UC35)
 2. Repair railings at the bottom of Cadbury Lane (next to the triangle opposite the bus stop), Honeydon (junction of UC34 and UC35)
 3. Repair railings near Chapel Close, Honeydon on UC35
 4. Resurface Shakers Way (UC25) between Duloe Butts (corner south of Duloe) and Bushmead Rd
 5. Resurface Bushmead Rd C26 from Bushmead Crossroads to St Neots and improve drainage and lines. The road surface is poor and water gathers at the edges and in the holes so drivers use the middle of the road - at speed. This has been proposed by Colmworth and Staploe parishes. Renewing the lines has also been requested by both parishes.
 6. Sort out drainage issues on the hill between College Farm, Duloe and Duloe Butts (we have water running down the middle of the road from about 8-10m north of Duloe Butts down to the Butts whenever it rains).
 7. Sort edges of Duloe Road UC24 between number 14, Duloe and the graffiti bridge (A1).
- Rights of Way. Councillor Zwetsloot reported that the footpath through the traveller site (Footpath 21) needs cutting. The Clerk will ask the Borough Council to cut it.
- Speeding
 - Mobile speed indicator devices £3000 – do we want them, how would we fund them? It was agreed to wait until we receive the results of the traffic data from the temporary data recorders to be installed by Bedford Borough Council before deciding whether these are appropriate.
 - Reports from postman. The postman has reported a number of regular businesses have been speeding in the village. It was resolved that the Clerk should write to the businesses reminding them to abide by the speed limit.
 - Data recorders. These will be positioned near Manor Farm, Duloe, just west of Orchard Cottage between Duloe and Staploe and near the phone box in Staploe in late summer. They will be provided by Bedford Borough Council

on a temporary basis.

376. Playing Field and Football

- Approve terms of reference for hiring the playing field for an event. Having been previously circulated these were approved. Proposed by Councillor Squire and seconded by Councillor Ibbetts.
- Football Club audit – agree date and terms of reference. Approximate dates for audits were agreed and terms of reference were updated in line with the new agreement for 2017/18. Proposed by Councillor Ibbetts and seconded by Councillor Zwetsloot.
- Review playground inspection checklist. Having been previously circulated the list was approved. Proposed by Councillor Squire and seconded by Councillor Ibbetts.

377. Maintenance

- Cutting grass on Duloe Common. Councillor Smith is happy to continue this year but would like the Council to arrange a contractor for next year. The Clerk explained that she had a quote from Ian Bygraves for £10 per hour but he would like to be employed by the Council to do it. It was resolved that the Parish Council did not want to employ anyone for this task and the Clerk should seek quotes from self-employed contractors for 2018.
- Staploe and Duloe benches. Adrian Woolley has kindly replaced the rotten wood on the bench in Staploe with maintenance free wood effect polymer. It was resolved that the Clerk would purchase some wood preserver and seek a volunteer to repaint the bench in Duloe.
- Noticeboard in Duloe. Councillor Meola has asked her brother to quote for repairing the noticeboard but nothing has been received yet. Councillor Thomson will ask her neighbour Ian to quote.
- Payback team. The Clerk will find out from Councillor Meola whether she has been able to arrange with Ian Bygraves for the team to visit to cut hedges and verges at the playing field and Duloe Common.

378. Police, crime and antisocial behaviour

- Police priority setting meeting 22nd August. The Clerk will ask Councillor Meola if she wants to attend.

379. Finance.

- Receipts and payments and list of authorised payments

Summary of Transactions for Staploe Parish Council for Approval at Meeting in:				July 2017
Payments				
Date	Payee	Details	Cheque Number / Reference	Amount
22/05/2017	Playsafety Ltd	Annual play area inspection		£79.80
06/06/2017	Opus Energy	Power to street lights 24th Apr to 21st May 2017		£35.21
06/07/2017	Opus Energy	Power to street lights 22nd May to 20th June 2017		£14.92
18/07/2017	Duloe Village Hall	Hall hire (July)		£25.00
18/07/2017	Andy Muskett Ltd	Street light maintenance 1st quarter		£90.00
18/07/2017	Lexis Nexis	Arnold Baker book for Clerk		£75.60
18/07/2017	Kim Webb Ltd	Internal audit of accounts year ended 31st Mch 2017		£30.00
Total				£350.53
Receipts				
Date	Payee	Details	Reference	Amount
03/04/2017	Barclays	Interest on base rate reward account		£1.81
13/04/2017	Bedford Borough Council	Precept and support grant		£5,019.50
02/05/2017	Barclays	Interest on base rate reward account		£1.60
02/05/2017	Viking	Refund for trolley returned in March 2017	100003	£122.36
01/06/2017	Barclays	Interest on base rate reward account		£1.65
08/06/2017	HMRC	VAT refunded for 2016/17		£650.17
03/07/2017	Barclays	Interest on base rate reward account		£1.76
Total				£653.58
Transfers				
None				
Posted balances after the above transactions clear				
Community Account 30833940			£7,600.29	
Base Rate Savings 43461580			£8,036.82	

Councillor Smith proposed the receipts and payments and Councillor Thomson seconded them after they were checked against the list of authorised payments and invoices.

- Sign cheques. There were no cheques. All payments will be made online.
- Review bank mandates and banking arrangements. The Parish Council currently bank with Barclays and the Clerk, and Councillors Squire, Smith, Zwetsloot and Thomson are signatories to the accounts. The Clerk, Councillor Squire and Councillor Thomson are online signatories as only three are permitted.
- Review interest rates on savings account. The interest rate on the Base Rate Savings Account with Barclays is 0.25% pa and AER. The Clerk has reviewed other savings options for Parish Councils and there are no high street accounts offering more with the type of account we need. It was resolved to remain with the Barclays Base Rate Savings Account.
- Review level of fidelity guarantee. This should be sufficient to cover the maximum amount of cash likely to be held by the Council at any one time during the year (which will be less than £20 000). The Council's fidelity guarantee is £250 000 with a £100 excess so it was agreed that this is sufficient.

380. Policies for review

- Complaints policy. This was approved and will be reviewed again in 3 years.
- Data protection policy. This will be reviewed in September when Councillor Meola is present.
- Media policy. This was approved and will be reviewed again in 3 years.

381. Newsletter, website and Hamlets Exchange

- New editor needed. Councillor Squire will invite Nigel Cutts.

382. Community Event

- Village Walk to Bushmead Priory on Sunday 23rd July. 26 people have signed up for the walk.
- Bedfordshire Day 28th November. Councillors agreed that a Tuesday in November wouldn't be the ideal time for a social event so they decided not to arrange anything for this date.
- The harvest supper will be held on 30th September.

383. Clerk's pay and Working From Home Allowance

- The Clerk is paid according to NJC pay scales which are agreed between the unions and the government (employers). The unions have opened negotiations for the 2018-19 pay award with a claim for a 5% increase. NALC are seeking the view of Parish Councils on this increase before 28th July. It was resolved to write to Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils to suggest that a 3% increase is more suitable as it is closer to the rate of inflation. Proposed by Councillor Squire and seconded by Councillor Thomson.
- Working From Home Allowance – tax free. The Clerk reported that, following advice from Lynn Shephard who is the accountant who prepares the payroll for Colmworth Parish Council, she has confirmed that this £18 per month allowance should be tax free.
- Transparency Code grant. A grant of £476.64 has been awarded to the Parish Council to cover the Clerk's hours spent complying with the code.

384. Correspondence

- Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes healthcare report. A report on "What We Have Heard So Far" has been published regarding the Sustainability Transformation Plan for healthcare in this area.

Next meeting of the Parish Council: Tuesday 19th September at 7.45pm.

The meeting closed at 9.27pm