

CHRISTCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Christchurch Parish Council held in the Community Centre on Monday 10 July 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs J Hughes (Chairman), J Bliss, P Owen, S Potter, A Sparrow, Cllr D Roy (FDC), D Gibbs (Clerk), Four parishioners

036/23-24 Apologies for Absence

Cllr M Summers (FDC)

037/23-24 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman apologised that he was unable to attend the recent Golden Age Fair.

038/23-24 Public Time

Mrs Kay reported that Crown Drove is becoming overgrown and there is evidence of fly-tipping. Members asked the Clerk to clarify who is responsible for cutting the grass. Ms Nason advised members that she has stepped down as Chair of The Heron, with Lorna Kirk taking over. Clive Benjamin will be assuming the role of Editor shortly.

039/23-24 Membership of the Council

Mr Feeney and Ms Hayes indicated that they would like to join the Council and were duly co-opted. They signed their declarations of acceptance, witnessed by the Clerk.

040/23-24 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June were correctly recorded and signed as being a true record.

041/23-24 Matters Outstanding

- a) Bus shelter improvement project - Cllr Sparrow has spoken to Townley School who asked for clarification of the number of stones and the approximate area. This information will be provided shortly.
- b) Pavement outside Field Lodge, Upwell Road - No further update.
- c) Affordable housing proposal - No further update.
- d) Skate park repairs - The repairs have still not been carried out. Cllr Sparrow will speak to the contractor again and will provide an estimate for the cost of fencing the site until the repairs are completed.
- e) Household items outside property in Upwell Road - Some waste may have been cleared from the site. The site is now overgrown, so it is unclear what remains. One of the properties appears to be unoccupied.
- f) Wayside Estate pedestrian safety - The Clerk reported that following the involvement of Cllr French, a Road Safety Officer will attend to consider the issues. Members asked to be advised of the date of the meeting.
- g) Annual report to residents - Members discussed the draft of the Annual Report and with minor amendments, it was agreed to proceed with printing and circulating it.
- h) Parishioner engagement - Cllr Sparrow has prepared a draft questionnaire which will be circulated by email for comment. Members agreed that October would be a good time to circulate it. The previous parish surveys have been uploaded to the website. Members discussed the possibility of establishing a Parish Council Facebook page. Cllr Feeney offered to assist with social media activities.

- i) History of Christchurch website - Lewis Bennett has made a copy of the website to retain all of the information. Some paper records have been located, but nothing relating to the purchase of the domain. A suitable home for the paper records will be required and members offered to assist the family of Mr Brookes in identifying a future depository for them.
- j) Outdoor gym equipment - Cllr Sparrow suggested that the initial purchase should comprise a cross trainer and a skier. Members agreed. He will send information regarding specification and costs to the Clerk.
- k) Picnic tables - It was agreed that the benches should be installed near the concrete path just beyond the end of the canopy and between the play equipment and the line of willows. To facilitate easy maintenance, a base of a recycled rubber and aggregate mix will be laid under and around each table. Cllr Sparrow will provide a quote for the base and installation of the benches.

042/23-24 Police Report

The Clerk reported that no meetings had taken place. A meeting is scheduled for later this week.

043/23-24 County & District Councillors Reports

Cllr Roy welcomed the new councillors and commented that it is good to see younger people becoming involved. He reported that the recycling credits are paid annually to the Community Centre charity, with the next payment due before the end of July.

He noted that some of the flooding problems in the village and elsewhere are caused by a lack of maintenance of watercourses by riparian landowners. He is proposing faster use of enforcement powers by the District Council to minimise the risk of future flooding issues.

The enforcement action regarding the caravan behind Syringa House is imminent.

044/23-24 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including a forthcoming Back to Nature event and a planning training day organised by the District Council.

045/23-24 Members and Residents Issues

- a) Campaign to Protect Rural England membership invitation - Members considered this and agreed to join at a cost of £36 for the year.
- b) Local Highways Improvement funding - The Chairman reported that the application for a traffic island in Church Road at the junction with Padgetts Road was successful. He was congratulated for preparing and presenting the application.

046/23-24 Recreation Ground Extension

- a) Cllrs Hughes and Potter reported that the steering group has met on several occasions to refine plans for the site and prepare an application to the Whitemill Environment Fund. The hedgerow planted earlier in the year is becoming established.
- b) The first phase of works will include the dog walking area, orchard and bridge from Crown Drove. The cost of these works is approximately £12,600. The bridge from the Recreation Ground, the pond and amphitheatre will form a second phase. Members agreed to submit an application to the Whitemill Environment Fund for £10,000 towards phase one, with a further £3,000 being contributed by the Council from the designated budget. The remaining funds will be retained to support applications to other funders and to cover cost overruns on this winter's works programme.

047/23-24 Planning

Members considered the following application:

F/YR23/0572/O - Erect up to 3 x dwellings involving the formation of a new access (outline application with matters committed in respect of access) including detached garage to serve no. 52 and demolition of existing outbuildings - Land East of 52 Church Road, Christchurch

Members expressed concern regarding the arrangements for maintenance access to the watercourse adjacent to the site. This strategic watercourse provides drainage to the whole of the village of Christchurch and is already overgrown due to the proximity of the wooden sheds on the site that inhibit access. Whilst the Middle Level Commissioners may have indicated their acceptance of the 9m access including the frontage of the properties, this will result in the annual destruction of the front gardens of dwellings 2 and 3. There are also two designated parking spaces within the 9m strip.

The Council does not support this type of backfill development and members expressed concerns that the granting of this proposal would set a precedent for other similar developments in the village. Members raised no objections to the proposed dwelling 1 as infill development on the established frontage.

Occupiers of these dwellings will be dependent on the use of private motor vehicles, contrary to the picture painted by the design and access statement. There is no village shop in Christchurch and no public transport to enable residents to access amenities elsewhere.

Members resolved not to support this application.

048/23-24 Finance

a) The management accounts as at 30.6.23 showed income of £11,859.10 and expenditure of £3,599.99, resulting in a surplus of £8,259.11 and total funds held of £49,577.37.

b) Members noted the sum of £10,000 transferred from the Council's Barclays Bank account to the new NatWest Bank account.

c) Members approved the following accounts for payment:

Clerk salary and home office allowance	£	441.13
Christchurch Recreation Ground Charity (Golden Age Fair).....	£	45.00
Fenland District Council (street lighting).....	£	2,958.67

049/23-24 Golden Age Fair - 30 June

Members discussed the recent Golden Age Fair. A good selection of exhibitors had attended and most seemed happy with their involvement, although footfall was modest. The Chairman thanked Cllrs Bliss and Owen and the Clerk for representing the Council.

050/23-24 Matters for Next Meeting

None.

051/23-24 Date of Next Meeting

Members resolved not to meet in August. The date of the next Meeting of the Parish Council will be Monday 11 September.