

# CHRISTCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of a Meeting of Christchurch Parish Council held in the Community Centre on Monday 13 March 2023 at 7.30pm

**Present:** Cllrs J Bliss, R Gladwin, P Owen, A Sparrow, Cllr W Sutton (FDC), D Gibbs (Clerk), S Potter, M Sadler (Parishioners)

### **149/22-23 Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs S Aldridge, J Hughes, K Miller and M Tanfield (FDC)

In the absence of both the Chairman and the Vice Chair, Cllr Gladwin was nominated and unanimously appointed to take the Chair.

### **150/22-23 Declarations of Interest**

None

### **151/22-23 Chairman's Announcements**

None

### **152/22-23 Public Time**

Mr Sadler reminded the Council that works on trees should take place before the end of March. The Clerk advised members that the trees do not belong to the Council, so any decisions should be made by the Recreation Ground charity. Another resident of Wayside Estate has made a similar request and it was noted that others may come forward. Members agreed to arrange a site meeting with representatives of the Recreation Ground charity and residents, and asked the Clerk to obtain a quote for pollarding a tree. It was suggested that any wood chippings might be retained for use in the Recreation Ground extension.

### **153/22-23 Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February were correctly recorded and signed as being a true record.

### **154/22-23 Matters Outstanding**

- a) Bus shelter improvement project - No progress.
- b) Pavement outside Field Lodge, Upwell Road - No update.
- c) Affordable housing proposal - The Clerk reported that he has written an article for the next edition of the Heron seeking expressions of interest from landowners.
- d) Padgetts Road repairs - Repairs are included in the budget for 2024-25, with £426,000 allocated.
- e) Skate park repairs - The Clerk will ascertain whether the repairs have been carried out.
- f) Household items outside property in Upwell Road - Clarion Housing Group's Neighbourhood Response Team will visit the tenants.
- g) Recreation Ground trees - see 152/22-23 above.
- h) The Coronation of the King and the Queen Consort - The Community Centre will be screening the Coronation and events will take place in the Dun Cow public house.

### **155/22-23 Police Report**

The Clerk reported that he had met with the Wisbech Neighbourhood Sergeant. Current Police priorities are speeding in the villages, and drugs in Wisbech and rural areas, including nitrous oxide. Members asked the Clerk to nominate Church Road and Upwell Road for speed enforcement. Members also asked whether the MVAS speed monitoring devices can be used to provide data to support this work. The Clerk will discuss this with Cllr Hughes.

### **156/22-23 County & District Councillors Reports**

Cllr Sutton informed members that he had initially overlooked the request to invite the Chief Engineer of the Middle Level Commissioners to the Annual Parish Meeting, but had now done so and she has agreed to attend.

Fenland District Council has received a windfall of £2.3 million from the dissolution of Cambridgeshire Horizons Ltd. Cllr Sutton asked at the recent full Council meeting how this money was to be used and whether a fund for community projects could be set up, as had been delivered by East Cambridgeshire District Council with their share of the money. He has sent a list of potential beneficiaries to the Leader, but has not received a response.

The District Council's share of the Council Tax will decrease by 2%, but will remain higher than neighbouring district councils.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Sutton for his report.

### **157/22-23 Clerk's Report**

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including a briefing on the forthcoming elections, the new 20mph scheme application process, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Golden Age Fairs being celebrated in Christchurch on 30<sup>th</sup> June, the launch of the new Home Energy Support Service Plus providing support to people struggling with energy bills or debt, and the Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean taking place from 17<sup>th</sup> March to 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

### **158/22-23 Members and Residents Issues**

- a) School bus service to Neale-Wade Academy - Cllr Owen reported that concerns had been raised with him regarding pupils allegedly being prevented from using the service. The Clerk advised members that the matter had been reported and investigated and the school staff were in discussions with the bus operator.
- b) Trees overhanging Padgetts Road - Cllr Sparrow reported further damage to at least one tree following impact from a passing vehicle. The Clerk will contact the landowner to suggest that the trees are cut back from the road.

### **159/22-23 Recreation Ground Extension**

Members discussed the quotes received for fencing for the dog exercise area and for the protection of the new hedgerow. The dog area needs to be seeded before the fence is installed. It was felt that the cost of the fencing outweighed the benefit in protecting a small section of hedgerow. Members resolved not to proceed now, but to reconsider the fencing requirements as part of the master plan for the site.

### **160/22-23 Planning**

Members considered the following application:

F/YR23/0177/F - Erect 1 x dwelling (2-storey 4-bed) and a detached garage, involving the removal of existing caravan and demolition of existing outbuilding - Cornfields, Euximoor Drove, Christchurch

Members resolved to offer no objection.

### **161/22-23 Finance**

- a) The management accounts as at 28.2.23 showed income of £19,395.97 and expenditure of £17,722.91, resulting in a surplus of £1,673.06 and total funds held of £42,229.33.
- b) Members approved the following accounts for payment:

Clerk salary and home office allowance .....	£	441.13
Clerk expenses .....	£	407.19
Cambridgeshire ACRE.....	£	60.00
- c) Members considered grants to local charities and voluntary organisations under Section 137 of the Local Government Act and resolved to make a donation of £250 to the Magpas Air Ambulance charity.
- d) The Clerk advised members that NatWest bank does not offer free banking to parish councils, so transaction charges of 35p per item would be applied to the new account. The annual cost is estimated to be in the region of £20. Members resolved to proceed with the opening of the new account.
- e) Members reviewed and approved the Governance and Management Risk Assessment.

### **162/22-23 Policies and Procedures**

Members considered the following policies and procedures and resolved to readopt them:

- a) Equality and Diversity Policy
- b) Homeworking Policy
- c) Expenses Policy

### **163/22-23 Annual Parish Meeting**

Members discussed the draft agenda for the meeting. The Clerk confirmed that speakers from the Middle Level Commissioners and Anglian Water would be present. Cllr Gladwin offered to provide the refreshments.

### **164/22-23 Local Council Elections**

The Clerk outlined the timetable for the elections and the process for submitting nomination forms. He also offered to assist members in completing their forms.

### **165/22-23 Matters for Next Meeting**

None.

### **166/22-23 Dates of Forthcoming Meetings**

Due to bank holidays in April and May, the next two meetings of the Parish Council will take place on the third Mondays, namely 17 April and 15 May.