

North Marston Parish Council

Clerk to the council: Ms Jan Roffe - Email: northmarston@gmail.com. Telephone 07933 624147

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 9th January 2024

Present: Councillors I Mordue (Chairman), A Boyt (Vice Chairman), K Du-Plessis, B Newman, and C Smythe. Buckinghamshire Councillor Phil Gomm and Jan Roffe, Clerk.

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillor Hogbin-Mills.

151/23 Members Interests: There were no declarations of interest.

Open forum for Parishioners: (under adjournment – 20 minutes. 3 minutes per person speaking) to include 100 Club Draws for January 2024.

100 Club Christmas Draw

1st Prize - £30 No.24 Katherine Du-Plessis, 2nd Prize - £20 No.40 Mick Hurrell and 3rd Prize - £10 No.82 Pete Williams

Following the 100 Club draw there was a brief discussion about the recent public meeting held on 6th January in Granborough Village Hall about the proposed Stratera battery storage installation (BESS) to be built on farmland between Hogshaw Road and Claydon Road within the Parish of Granborough.

888 containers, 74 smaller containers and buildings at least 12 metres high will cover 26 acres of farmland, damaging the local ecology and changing the character of the villages affected and their surroundings. If given the green light, this installation will make way for the larger Rosefield Solar Farm covering 2,100 acres and involving the mass destruction of food producing farmland. The UK is already on target to meet its battery storage needs to reach net zero. BESS is surplus to this and is not needed.

Residents are strongly advised to go on to the Claydons Solar Action Group website to acquaint themselves with the facts and to register their comments on the public access site:

www.ClaydonsSolarActionGroup.co.uk

<https://publicaccess.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/online-applications/applctionDetails.do?activeTab+summary&keyVal=S5JZACCLLEZ00>

Facebook: "Claydons Solar Action Group"

152/23 Minutes: The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 12th December 2023 were approved and signed.

153/23 Buckinghamshire Council update: Buckinghamshire Councillor Phil Gomm updated the meeting with the following:

- Buckinghamshire Council is to go through a four-day scrutiny of its budget for 2024-25. Adult Social Care and Children's Services draw on most of the money. The budget is tight, but the council is not bankrupt, unlike some other councils.
- Potholes have been repaired in High Street and other areas are being monitored. The water coming down Church Street and onto the main road is on Councillor Gomm's radar to get something done about it.
- The Community Board is in discussion to provide funding towards CCTV cameras at strategic points in the area to monitor vehicles to help combat crime. Consultation will take place.
- The Community Board will hopefully be able to grant support several projects in the village once the application and grant award process has completed. These include project grants to improve drainage on the Sports field and to provide World War I memorial plaques for the History Club, as

well as smaller grants to support the purchase of Forest School equipment and equipment for the Scouts.

154/23 To receive a brief update on the land at Quainton Road

The Parish Council has written to HM Land Registry again and believes that the evidence is quite overwhelming that HM Land Registry should not have registered the land to those claiming to own it. The Parish Council is in the process of seeking its own legal advice on the matter.

155/23 To receive any updates and discuss actions on the following matters:

Environment

1. Highways:

Councillor Smythe updated on the following:

- The Local Area Technician is looking into areas that have not had their gullies cleaned. At some point this year there will be new parish online portal where parish councils can obtain up to date information about highways issues. (The Parish Council has been advised not to contact Balfour Beatty directly as they are not a public facing company and will not reply to emails).
- The Local Area Technician is also looking into a rat issue outside a residence in Portway that has been reported on Fix My Street. He does not believe this to be a Highways issue but will lift up the chamber cover for evidence of rat infestation and talk to the residents concerned.
- The blocked drain at the bottom of Church Street is still an outstanding issue and is constantly being chased for remedial work to be carried out.

(ii) MVAS

RESOLVED: The Parish Council approved the sum of £341.00 (exc VAT) for an additional temporary pole in addition to the two new sockets previously agreed. Total cost for two sockets and one pole: £1,541.00 exc. VAT was approved. Clerk to arrange installation.

When the new MVAS socket is installed in Quainton Road, there is concern that Highways vehicles may damage the ground that has been cultivated and seeded to provide a wildflower display in the spring/summer.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to write to the contractors and ask them to be careful when installing the new socket and not to park on the verge.

(iii) The ditch in Quainton Road update: The Clerk is waiting to receive quotations for the work.

(iv) Parking: (a) Vehicles are continuing to park on the grass verges causing deep and unsightly ruts, particularly at the junction with Granborough Road and Gibbings Close. There is also an issue with parking at the end of the High Street nearest School Hill where cottages do not have any off-street parking. It was suggested by Councillor Gomm that marked parking bays might be an answer, but this would have to be investigated through Buckinghamshire Council and would have to be paid for by the residents.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to write to the residents concerned requesting that they park on their drive or on the road and not on the grass verge (two wheels may mount the pavement if there is room for pedestrians and those in mobility vehicles to pass). The Clerk to contact the Local Area Technician for advice on bollards to prevent vehicles from parking on the verge at the Gibbings Close/Granborough Road junction.

(b) The question of parking in the road parallel to the High Street was raised as the High Street is due to be resurfaced later in the year. The parallel road would provide an alternative route for cars whilst the repairs are underway, but would be impassable if residents' cars are parked there.

RESOLVED: Clerk to investigate whether Highways can enforce that residents do not park their vehicles along the parallel road whilst repairs are taking place to High Street as it is a highway. Also, to check who is responsible for writing to them to request that they do not park there whilst the works are carried out.

2. Grass and hedges and tendering

RESOLVED: The Clerk to amend/prepare the new grass and hedge cutting tender to be checked by the Parish Council before sending out to prospective contractors as soon as possible and by the end of January latest.

156/23 Parish Action Plan: To receive any relevant updates on/discuss the following:

1. **The Parish Barn:** The Parish Council had commissioned a chartered surveyor to assess the barn and prepare a condition report and estimated costs for the repairs. This had been received with the estimated costs of £6,500 for repairs to include materials and labour. The possibility of a volunteer workforce attending to the repairs for the cost of the materials only was discussed. The Parish Council's insurers will not insure the barn until the repairs are completed.

RESOLVED: The Parish Council resolved to repair the barn. The Clerk to send Kevin O'Donoghue a copy of the condition report. It was agreed that Kevin O'Donoghue would speak to his contacts and report back at the next meeting to let the Parish Council know if they would be available to do the repairs and if so, when. Also, to give an estimate of costs for the materials required.

2. Play Area

- (a) Councillor Boyt advised the Parish Council that he had researched the cost of two new goal posts with nets and that they would cost £2,700 exc. VAT.

RESOLVED: This was considered too expensive. It was therefore agreed not to buy new goal posts for the time being.

- (b) The quotation received from Edwards Surfacing for over £9k to excavate and resurface the path running across the play area, was considered far too high.

RESOLVED: The Parish Council agreed not to go ahead with this quotation, but to look at other possible solutions to keep the gravel from migrating onto the safety matting. Councillor Mordue suggested a bonding resin and agreed to try it out on a small area of the path to see how effective it is and report back.

3. Village Pond and Parsnip Pond – no updates.

4. Defibrillators

RESOLVED: The Clerk to purchase defibrillator pads for the Village Hall G3 and the Wesley Centre G5 Powerheart defibrillators as they are both about to expire. The cost for both £98.00 and £19.60 VAT.

157/23 Projects: To receive any updates and/or discuss:

- (i) **New streetlight opposite Sportsfield entrance** – Councillor Mordue is investigating solar powered lights most likely to be fixed on top of the signage to illuminate the entrance and exit and the road at the gates.

- (ii) **Encouraging Wildlife/Aylesbury Vale Wild Project** – no updates.

(iii) Website upgrade

There were no further updates on the upgrade but the Clerk is looking at options. It was mentioned that some of the content for various groups is out of date.

RESOLVED; Councillor Mordue agreed to write to all the groups and ask them to send updated content.

158/23 Sportsfield: To receive any relevant updates to include the Forest School:

Councillor Mordue advised that the sink has been delivered to Men in Sheds to make a new mud kitchen for the Forest School.

159/23 Finance:

1. PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET 2024-25:

RESOLVED: The Parish Council approved the budget for 2024-25.

2. PRECEPT:

RESOLVED: The Parish Council approved the Precept request for 2024-25 of 5%

3. To approve the Receipts and Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED: The following Payments and Receipts were approved:

Receipts and Payments of Accounts

Parish Council

Payments made on behalf of the Parish Council

Tesco Mobile – Parish ‘phone contract December - £7.50, no VAT (DD)

HPI Instant Ink – printer ink contract - £5.49, £1.92 VAT (DD)

KAE Ltd (Edwards Surfacing) – VH Car park - £1,020.00, £170.00 VAT

John Nettleton Chartered Surveyors – Parish Barn condition survey - £360.00, £60.00 VAT

SSE Energy – Streetlighting 1st November to 30th November - £17.90, £1.98 VAT

Payments to be paid on behalf of the Parish Council

Clerk Salary – December £***.**, no VAT

Clerk expenses – December - office allowance, £26.00 no VAT

Blades Turf Care – December grass cutting - £915.90, £152.65 VAT

Payments received on behalf of the Parish Council

North Marston Community Shop Association – donation towards car park repair - £425.00, no VAT

Village Hall

Payments made on behalf of the Village Hall

Lovell’s Fuels – Oil December delivery - £370.13, £17.63 VAT

Payments received on behalf of the Village Hall

Schorne Pre-School – VH hire Autumn Term ‘23 - £2,816.64, No VAT

James Garey - Hire of SR for map reading tuition - £15.00, no VAT

Emma Ehren – Zumba VH hire Autumn Term - £144.00, no VAT

Payments to be made on behalf of the Village Hall

Hayley Henderson – Refund of deposit for hire of VH for party

Kate Hurst/Wetherall – VH weekly clean November - £150.00, no VAT

E-on Next – Electricity Schorne Room 4th Dec to 3rd January - £39.92, £1.90 VAT

Sports Field

Payments made on behalf of the Sportsfield

Rebecca Parker (Marvellous Marigolds) – SF pavilion cleaning December - £82.50, no VAT

E-On Next – Electricity Pavilion 1st-30th November - £82.77, £3.94 VAT

Payments received on behalf of the Sportsfield

Dean O’Connor – Donation to SF - £10.00 cash

The following 100 Club subscription fees :

Richard Devas - £15.00£\Mandy Putman - £15.00

Cynthia Hall - £15.00

James Radcliffe - £15.00

Jo Radcliffe - £15.00

K Brooke - £15.00

John Spargo - £15.00

R Butterworth - £30.00

R Cartwright - £15.00

Gordon Bowden - £30.00

W Osborne - £15.00
Rachel Callander - £30.00
Rosemary Mobsby £15.00
V Turner - £15.00
R Rowland - £15.00
P Williams - £30.00
J Cresswell - £15.00
Jan Roffe - £15.00
Jason and Christina Hutson - £15.00
Paul Bagni - £15.00
Michael Finnemore - £15.00
D Bunyan - £30.00
Elaine Kelly - £15.00
Trevor Lane - £45.00
S Manser - £30.00
J Dancer - £15.00
J Forsyth - £30.00
B Guiver - £15.00
R Kemp - £15.00 (cheque)

Payments to be made on behalf of the Sportsfield

000800 100 Club 1st prize January Draw, £30.00, no VAT
000801 100 Club 2nd prize January Draw, £20.00, no VAT
000802 100 Club 3rd prize January Draw, £10.00, no VAT

160/23 Items for the next agenda

Parish Councillor Vacancy

The Chairman was sorry to announce the resignation of Councillor Christina Hutson from the Parish Council. In her absence, the Chairman thanked her on behalf of the Parish Council, the Clerk, and residents, for all the work she has done since she was co-opted in May, and for her active participation in Parish Council projects to move them forward.

Christina has kindly agreed to continue to check the status of the three defibrillators in the village on the required monthly basis and report to the Clerk when consumables such as new pads are required. Christina will continue to help with other projects, including the maintenance of the Village Pond and Parsnip Ponds. Christina will be a great loss to the council.

Co-option

A vacancy has therefore arisen for a Parish Councillor to be co-opted at its next meeting. Those who are interested should email the Parish Clerk at northmartston@gmail.com for an Expression of Interest form and for more information about the role and the qualifying criteria.

161/23 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday **13th February 2024** at 8pm in the Village Hall

162/23 Motion to move to a closed session was agreed:

RESOLVED: The Clerk to contact the Buckinghamshire Council member to arrange a meeting to discuss how to move forward in 2024 after an unfortunate breakdown in the relationship between the two parties. The Clerk also to ask the Buckinghamshire Council member to write to HM Land Registry to argue that emails written by him should not have been used to support the case for those claiming to own the land.

Jan Roffe, Clerk to North Marston Parish Council, 17th January 2024