

MONKS ELEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 31 JULY 2017

The Parish Council Meeting was held on 31 July 2017 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Cllr. J Clarke, welcomed the following Parish Councillors –P Derry, D Reynolds, A Forrest, P Day, A Keitley-Webb and the Parish Clerk Nicola Smith. District Councillor Mr Clive Arthey was present. County Councillor Mr Robert Lindsay was on annual leave. 6 members of the public attended the meeting.

In accordance with the changes in legislation, the public and councillors were permitted to film, record, photograph or use social media in order to report on the proceedings of the meeting, subject to complying with certain provisions. ***A full transcript of the statement is available from the Parish Clerk upon request.***

1. Apologies for absence:
 - i. County Cllr Robert Lindsay sent his apologies to the meeting he was on annual leave;
 - ii. Not applicable.
2. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest:
 - i. Cllr Derry declared an interest in items 7ii, 7iv, 10 and 16ii of the Agenda (due to the proximity of her property to the Village Green);
 - ii. No declarations of gifts of hospitality received;
 - iii. Consider requests for dispensation for pecuniary interests for the Agenda under discussion – none.
3. Minutes of Meeting: Clerk apologised to Councillors. She had prepared and had approved by the Chairman the draft Minutes of 22 May 2017 but it transpired at the Meeting that Councillors had not received them. In addition, the Clerk had yet to complete the draft Minutes of 3 July 2017. It was agreed that the draft Minutes of 22 May 2017 and 3 July 2017 will be considered for approval at the next Meeting.
4. To receive a report from District Councillor – Clive Arthey

The update on the move to Endeavour House was that it was still on course to take place at the end of August.

The Local Plan has been approved in draft form and will be sent out next week to Parish Councils. Monks Eleigh has little change. It remains a hinterland village.

Boundary Commission Review – Parish Councils and all individuals in a parish can submit their comments to the boundary review commission. Deadline for doing this is 14 August.

Clerk confirmed that she would provide Councillors with details of the Boundary Commission and how to submit comments and also put details on website/notice boards for parishioners.
5. To receive a report from the County Councillor – Mr Robert Lindsay

Cabinet committees

At the full council meeting on July 20th we debated a change in the constitution to introduce four cabinet committees. Members of opposition including myself will be able to sit on these, which would be improvement on the current, cabinet only system.

Signed.....

Dated.....

However, I voted against the proposal because it states that these meetings will not be open to the public. I think this wrong but my amendment to make them public failed narrowly and the proposal went through as is. It will be “reviewed” in a year and I will not let this lie.

Allowances

Today the administration also proposed allowance increases for the leader, deputy leader and all cabinet members but for no other councillors. I and most of my group voted against this. It is my belief that any changes to councillor allowances ought to be agreed before an election not just after it, so that public can have a say.

I have been appointed to the pension committee and the audit committee at Suffolk County Council and have attended meetings of both.

Risky Pension?

The pension committee is preparing to put the bulk of its £2.6bn in assets into a “pooled pot” with other local authorities across the East and South East as demanded by central Government.

This will reduce, but not remove, the ability of Suffolk County Council to invest sums in the local economy, which is something I am keen to see it do. Though it is early days I would also like to see the pension fund examine how exposed it is to fossil fuel companies since I agree with the Governor of the Bank England Mark Carney who has warned that government legislation to cut CO2 emissions could pose a substantial risk to the value of oil and gas assets.

£400k on care beds for the dead

I have attended my first audit committee which heard that the council has inadvertently paid £400,000 to private care homes for beds for people who have died. This seems to have been a mixture of some care homes not telling the county when their patient dies while in other cases they told the county but no one in the county told the people making the payments Fortunately this was spotted by the head of internal audit and we are told better internal reporting measures introduced. The last time they checked the overpayments had reduced to just £40k. The county has recovered all the money it is owed. The county's own care homes were all outsourced about four years ago to Care UK. I suspect that when this contract happened, county staff were not geared up to control payments.

Pavement extension on Brent Eleigh Road

The last thing I did before going away was to email John Simpson about the likely costs of this. I will get back to you when I have a reply.

6. Public Forum:

- (i) The pathway by Corncraft is full of weeds. Cllrs Keitley-Webb confirmed that it was his responsibility to clear that pathway. He apologised and confirmed that it would be cleared swiftly.

Signed.....

Dated.....

7. Correspondence:

- (i) Email from Babergh Alliance of Parish and Town Councils with constitution. Cllrs agreed that the matter be placed on the Agenda for consideration at the Meeting in September.
- (ii) Further email with photographs from a parishioner showing cars parked on junction of Church Hill and The Street – matter to be discussed at item 16 of the Agenda.
- (iii) Email response from Area Rights of Way Officer at SCC answering enquiry raised at Item 11iii and 16 of the Meeting on 22 May 2017 – erosion of triangular grass area at the Back Lane end of the Causeway. Clerk read out the email. SCC state that although they are not the landowners they do effectively own the first two spade depths as means of protecting the rights of the public to pass and repass. As Highways Authority, permission would also need to be sought from SCC before installing any form of structure, including bollards. They are very restricted as to where we can authorise new structures and in this case from viewing the site the tests to approve of a new structure would not be met. Cllrs considered the response. Chairman Cllr Clarke proposed and Cllr Derry seconded that the PC would write to the Rights of Way Officer and explain that the PC would like to neaten the area up (at the cost of the PC and help from volunteers) to see if there was any objection to that.
- (iv) Emailed letter dated 12 June 2017 from a parishioner regarding bollards at the rear of The Green. Cllrs had considered the letter. Chairman proposed that in the first instance the PC write to SCC to establish whether or not they owned the pathway. Cllr Reynolds seconded. Once ownership was established then the next steps would be considered.

8. Clerk's Report

- i. To consider schedule of items approved and awaiting authorisation prepared by RFO – Appendix A.
- ii. to receive a report on the Council's financial position – Appendix B.

9. To receive a report of the Meeting on 11th June 2017 attended by Cllr Forrest and Cllr Reynolds, together with Mr R Bines of Village Hall Trust and Mr C Fillingham of Strutt & Parker Farms.

On 11th July 2017, Richard Bines (Village Hall Trustee), Angela Forrest (Parish Councillor and Village Hall Trustee) and Don Reynolds (Parish Councillor) met with Charlie Fillingham (CEO Strutt and Parker Farms), Martin Bowers (General Manager Strutt and Parker Farms Thorpe Morieux) and Sophie from Strutt and Parker Property. Charlie, Martin and Sophie had previously had two meetings, the first with Cornerstone (land Agents for SCC) and a joint meeting with SCC and Cornerstone to discuss the possibility of a road going up to the boundary of the old school site development. S and P Farms would like for access to any further development in Monks Eleigh on their land at the North of the former school site. At the second meeting approval for the change of plan for the former school site to

Signed.....

Dated.....

accommodate this road was agreed by SCC subject to terms and conditions (likely in relation to taking this access over the boundary of the former school site). Charlie is anxious that the Parish Council are aware of this and that they support this access design as it would enable, at some time in the future, the S and P land to be developed for residential purposes, subject to planning, which the Parish Council had supported in the past. He also stated that he is optimistic that the terms and conditions should not be an insurmountable problem. The purpose of the meeting on the 11th July was to discuss pedestrian access from this road across Strutt and Parker land to the recreation ground, to enable easy and safe access to the new village hall. Charlie was of the mind that the pedestrian access was no problem, he is happy that S and P solicitors draw up a provisional Heads of Terms for an agreement between Monks Eleigh CIO and Strutt and Parkers without the need to see and agree the conditions SCC had indicated they would attach to any road redesign. He also indicated that they could provide lighting on their land if required.

10. To consider a request from Strutt and Parker Farms that “the Parish Council should support a road on the former school site up to the boundary of the site in the North East corner. In support of any future development of the land to the North of the former school site and to provide an additional footpath access to the playing field and the new village hall for the benefit of the village”.

Following discussion whereby the Chairman reminded Cllrs that whilst the Parish Council may be in support footpath access to the playing field and the new village hall, it is not able to pre-judge any planning applications. In addition she was struggling to see what “support” could be lent by the Parish Council as it does not have a legal or beneficial interest in either the school site of the field and this must be a private matter between two adjoining landowners. It is difficult to see therefore how MEPC could support anything other than the additional footpath access, for which the Parish Council would be very grateful to SCC and Strutt and Parker Farms. (This is not a matter involving a planning application. All planning applications received are considered on the terms of the application once received by the PC).

Discussion followed. Councillors certainly had no objection to a road being developed over the SCC land. Cllr Reynolds proposed that given that the Parish Council has no legal or beneficial interest in either site it records that it has no objection to the road on the former school site up to the boundary of the site in the North East corner, and that it supports the creation of a new pedestrian access over both the SCC land and the field owned by Strutt and Parker to lead to the recreation ground owned by the Parish Council on which the new village hall is to be built in one corner. Cllr Forrest seconded. All other Councillors (other than Cllr Keitley-Webb) present and voting agreed. Cllr Derry, having declared a conflict of interest did not vote.

11. Consider and approve Councillors’ portfolios - agreed as follows:

Chairman	Jacqueline Clarke
Vice Chairman	Patti Derry
Footpaths	Angela Forrest

Signed.....

Dated.....

Highways	Adrian Keitley-Webb
Planning and Affordable Housing	Don Reynolds and Patti Derry
Playing Fields and Common Areas	Don Reynolds
Internal PC Auditor	Patti Derry
Asset Register	Jacqueline Clarke
Website	Peter Day
Village Hall Rep	Angela Forrest
SALC Rep	Jacqueline Clarke and Peter Day
Millennium Green Rep	Angela Forrest

12. Consider and approve Person Specification, Job Description and Advert for new Parish Clerk.

Draft documents had been provided to Cllrs ahead of the Meeting. All Cllrs approved the documents and agreed a deadline date for application to be received on 28th September with interviews to take place in the week commencing 5th October 2017. It was agreed to place the adverts on the village website and on the SALC website.

Consider brief amendment to Parish Clerk's employment for the period post 3 August 2017.

Chairman reminded Cllrs that the Parish Clerk's notice period concludes on 3 August 2017. Clerk had kindly agreed to remain on the following terms whilst the PC was looking for a replacement Clerk:-

- i. 8 hours per week at the hourly rate previously being paid to do the regular work of the Parish Council (not any work relating to the longstanding Freedom of Information request);
- ii. Clerk would be required to provide two working days notice of termination of her employment;
- iii. Parish Council would be required to provide the Clerk with two working days notice of termination of her employment.

Clerk agreed to these terms. Chairman proposed that the PC agree to them. Cllr Derry seconded. All Cllrs agreed.

13. Speed Indicator Device

Clerk had received the signed Agreement back from Whatfield Parish Council. However, since the previous Meeting it had transpired that Radarlux were unfortunately no longer trading. SCC had advised of Westcotec as an alternative provider for the SID. Clerk was waiting for information from Westcotec regarding prices and type of equipment. Chairman Cllr Clarke proposed that in order to avoid further delays the Clerk be given authority to spend up to £1250 plus VAT as the parishes' share of a SID, and approximately £200 plus VAT on data analysis equipment. Cllr Reynolds seconded.

Chairman Cllr Clarke and Cllr Derry signed the Agreement on behalf of Monks Eleigh Parish Council. Slight amendment was made to paragraph 1 to remove reference to Radarlux SID and it now reads just "a SID". Clerk initialled amendment.

Signed.....

Dated.....

14. Update on footpath near Millennium Green (Brent Eleigh Road)

Clerk had obtained a response from John Simpson at SCC Highways as follows:-

“In principle I can see why you have proposed the extension of the footway.

Unfortunately, SCC does not have budgets available for local improvement works of this nature and therefore any improvement proposed would need to be funded externally (i.e by private, Parish or County Councillor funds). This would include the design and construction costs.

I am not sure what the full extent of the work is so it is difficult to estimate what the design and construction costs might run to. The costs vary greatly depending on whether any land purchased would be required, what drainage works would be needed, and whether any utilities equipment would be affected.

I would imagine the costs are likely to be significant. If funding can be confirmed a team can then be commissioned to undertake a feasibility assessment and provide a design estimate.”

Parishioner asked Chairman if he could please speak. Chairman confirmed that he could speak outside of the public forum. There is a further problem with the grass verge going out of the village at this point it ideally needs to be widened both going in and out of the village. Asked whether he could have a site meeting with a Councillor. Cllrs Reynolds and Cllrs Forrest agreed to a site meeting and will report back at the next Meeting.

County Cllr Robert Lindsay is aware of the initial problem raised with him and has been liaising with SCC. Need to establish ownership of the verges that are outlined as needing to be taken back and therefore giving a wider footpath. If land needs to be purchased it will become costly, and the County Cllr is unlikely to have sufficient funding. Chairman will do some Land Registry searches and report back at the next Meeting.

15. Consider instructing a Tree Services Company to provide advice on works/maintenance required to the trees on Swingleton Green.

Clerk had noted that one of the trees in particular has some very low branches (almost touching the grass) and perhaps an expert needs to be instructed to advise on any maintenance that is required to all the trees on Swingleton Green. Cllr Reynolds proposed that the Clerk obtain some free advice on indications of works required and quotations. Clerk confirmed that she will try to get three quotations and report back at the Meeting on 25th September.

16. Consider whether MEPC should write to the local Police to ask them to be aware of and mindful of the parking of cars at the junction Church Hill and The Street as referred to as 7ii and to take appropriate action.

Cllr Derry declared an interest in this matter and therefore did not take part in the discussion or voting.

Cllr Forrest proposed that the Parish Council had already spent a lot of time discussing this matter and that the parishioner could email the Police directly. Chairman proposed that the Parish Council write to the Police and raise further awareness of the ongoing problem at the

Signed.....

Dated.....

junction and then ask the parishioner to contact the Police directly with pictures of the vehicles badly parked on the junction. Seconded Cllr Forrest. All other Cllrs agreed.

17. Parish Councillors' Reports

Cllr Reynolds said that he had been told that some of the Blackthorn trees are dying along the Causeway because they have been flooded, and this is because the ditch needs cleaning out. He has had a look and some of the Blackthorn trees are dying but it is a water meadow area and there is a natural Spring that runs through there. The ground is wet but by virtue of the nature of the area it will be. The ditch was dug out about 3 or 4 years ago and it would be difficult to build the banks up any further. It was agreed that the matter would be discussed in more detail at the next Meeting, so Cllrs had time to consider the matter. Cllr Forrest reported that the Village Hall is not yet sold, but she hoped that it would happen very soon. The Village Hall AGM was to take place on Thursday 3rd August 2017.

With regards to the Millennium Green, the lawn mower had been broken and the grass had got quite long. However, the mower is now fixed and some grass cutting has taken place. Some longer grass areas have been left for wild flowers and butterflies. The matter of relocating a dog bin from the Millennium Green to the grass verge at the bottom of the steps was still ongoing. Clerk will provide Cllr Forrest with contact details for Babergh so that Cllr Forrest can get confirmation from them that they are happy to collect and charge for the additional bin collection if SCC agree to it being relocated to the verge by the Millennium Green steps. Finally, the footpath near the sub station on Church Hill had been cut back by Malcolm Every.

Cllr Derry and Cllr Keitley-Webb reported that they had both had a look at the hedge by Westknoll (this followed an email received by the Clerk the day before the Meeting). Cllr Keitley-Webb indicated that he would go and speak with the owners about tidying up the vegetation that had grown onto the footpath.

Cllr Derry confirmed that she had been working on the update to the Emergency Plan with Cllr Reynolds. Would Cllrs agree to an article going into the Whats On Magazine asking people who have recently moved into the Village to contact the Clerk if they wished to complete a Questionnaire and alert the Parish Council to any particular medical needs in the event of an emergency. Cllrs all agreed that this was a sensible course of action.

Chairman Cllr Clarke reported that she had obtained a £100 refund from the PC insurers, which was by way of an apology from the insurers for not answering a query raised with them in a timely manner.

18. Planning

The Parish Council considered the following planning application and made the following observations:

Signed.....

Dated.....

- i. Application No: DC/17/03678 – new dwelling at New House, Mill Lane, Monks Eleigh, IP7 7JE.

Councillors considered the application and no objections were raised.

Decision Notice

Application No: B/17/00906 – Spring Farm, Stackyard Green, Monks Eleigh, vary condition 2 attached to application B/16/01140/FHA – Permission has been granted.

Meeting ended: 9.30pm

Next Meeting: 25th September 2017

Appendix A

Income received since 22.05.17

Expenditure (movement since 22.05.17)

N Smith – reimbursement of expenses	12.34
Pro-Scape – grass cutting	252.00
Strutt & Parker – rent	37.50
SALC – subscription	243.24
N Smith – clerk’s salary	576.40
HMRC – tax and NI	86.00
D Reynolds – Repairs to strimmer	295.00
	1502.48

Schedule of verified invoices agreed for payment

Pro-Scape – grass cutting	500.40
Community Heartbeat (Defib battery)	235.00
Information Commissioner (data protection fee)	35.00
J C Clarke (reimburse expenses)	77.60
N Smith (reimburse expenses)	97.45
N Smith (salary)	553.20
HMRC (tax and NI)	109.20
	1607.85

Signed.....

Dated.....

Appendix BAs at 31.07.17

Add income received	0.00
Less expenditure	1502.48
Less expenditure	1607.85

Bank Reconciliation

Business reserve	6547.42
Community Account	15774.65
Less cheques	1607.85
Plus uncredited lodgements	0.00
Millennium account	165.45
	20879.67

Signed.....

Dated.....