

Allington Parish Council

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held in the village hall
Wednesday 9 November 2011

Present: Councillor Bosworth Councillor Jackson
 Councillor Taylor Councillor Cragg
 Councillor McKinlay Councillor Hubbard
 Sharon Milne (clerk)

Also present: District Cllr Rosemary Kaberry-Brown
 County Cllr Chris Farrar
 2 villagers, inc Theresa Tanner – Chairman VHMC

1. **Chairman's remarks**

1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting and thanked those present for attending. Prior to the formal Parish Council meeting there was a public session for villagers to raise issues. The following point was raised:

- a) Mrs Tanner said that the work on the village hall car park had commenced but the top layer of tarmac was yet to be laid. She was a little concerned about the standard of the work that had already been done as some of the base layer of hard-core was still visible beneath the layer of tarmac. She was advised to seek advice and only pay upon satisfaction. Cllrs would look at the surface in its present state.

2. **Apologies**

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Cant. She was working.
- 2.2 Les North the Parish Council's representative on the Neighbourhood Panel meeting also sent his apologies.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 Cllr Taylor declared an interest in the planning application for 1 Bottom Street as she resides in the neighbouring property.

4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2011**

- 4.1 The minutes were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

5. **Correspondence received since the meeting held on 14 September 2011**

- 5.1 The clerk reported on some of the correspondence received and sent:

- a) Letter to Mr Scott re: copse
- b) Info from Pageantmaster, The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Beacons
- c) RoSPA report
- d) Info from Energy supplier: smart meter cannot be supported by EDF
- e) Posters from LCC re: car sharing scheme, call connect & wheels for work
- f) Email from company selling grit bins
- g) Letter re: Review of Polling Districts & Polling Places
- h) Invoice for Election costs May 2011
- i) Letter re: footpath No 4 with map
- j) Letter from Les North re: Neighbourhood Panel meetings

5.2 This and all other correspondence will be circulated to Councillors in the box as usual.

5.3 Re: point (d), the Parish Council cannot now contract with EDF for electricity as they don't support the new 'Smart' meter that was installed by Bt Gas in August. The only energy supplier that supports 'Smart' meters is British Gas so the Parish Council has no option other than to stay with British Gas. However, the clerk reported that she has been able to recontract with British Gas as a new customer and therefore eligible to their new customer rates which is a standing charge of 21.9p/day and 11.5p/unit – considerably cheaper than the current contract and probably cheaper in the long run than EDF. This contract runs for 12 months.

5.4 Re: point (h), the invoiced cost for the election in May 2011 is £783.15. Cllrs asked the clerk to obtain a breakdown of this sum from SKDC before paying it. **(Action point: clerk)**

5.5 *Post meeting information: The costs of the May 2011 election have been shared between the Referendum, District and Parish. Though some of the costs, eg ballot papers were a direct cost. The breakdown (rounded) is as follows:*

*Polling Staff: £135
 Polling Station:£38
 Postal Vote Staff:£63
 Postal Vote Packs:£54
 Postal Vote postage:£99
 Ballot Papers:£100
 Nomination Packs:£45
 Returning Officer/Clerical:£149
 Verification/Count:£98*

6 Neighbourhood Panel meeting – Les North

6.1 Les North was unable to attend the meeting but he had provided a letter which the clerk read to the Council.

6.2 Through his letter, Les reported that the lady who was the full time co-ordinator for Neighbourhood Watch is no longer in the role and therefore communication is now poorer than ever.

6.3 Les also stated that he'd tried to get over to the Neighbourhood Panel that one PC was woefully inadequate for 37 villages. He further stated that, in his opinion, the Panel was just a 'talking shop' and that the meetings were not "fit for purpose". He respectfully suggested that no more time be spent on the meetings for the meanwhile.

6.4 The clerk will inform the panel that the Parish Council will no longer be represented on the Panel. **(Action point: clerk)**

7 Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

7.1 Cllrs spoke about the defunct Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the village. The signs for it are still on the village's street lights but they are very faded and illegible. The clerk will contact a neighbourhood watch scheme co-ordinator to invite them to attend the next Parish Council meeting in January. Cllrs would like further information so that there can be an informed discussion to consider whether to resurrect the scheme in the village. The item will be placed on January's agenda. **(Action point: clerk)**

8 Sedgebrook Road gritting

8.1 Cllr Taylor reported back on the Winter Weather Workshop recently held at SKDC's Chamber. Cllr Taylor attended with a Parish Councillor from Sedgebrook. Cllr Taylor stated that the workshop was not very helpful with regard to local issues of gritting. It was clear that Sedgebrook Road would not be in the gritting route again this winter.

8.2 Cllr Taylor stated that the Sedgebrook Parish Councillor had done quite a bit of research on costings for gritting Sedgebrook Road and it was suggested that Sedgebrook Parish Council be invited to the next meeting in January to consider what could be done as a joint force. **(Action point: clerk)**

9 Village Paddock

9.1 The paddock field next to the Manor House is rumoured to be for sale. However, this could not be confirmed. This field is very important to the village, it is a focal point in the village and it plays a part in the village's character and history. Councillors would therefore like to protect its status as a field if at all possible.

9.2 After discussion it was decided that the clerk would contact Brown & Co, the agent looking after the field and ask whether the field is for sale or not. Also, the clerk would ask whether the agent if the owner/leaseholder would consider registering the field with the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Fields scheme to retain it as an open space for future generation. **(Action point: clerk)**

9.3 Other open spaces for consideration for the scheme would be the Playing Field and the park area off of Park Avenue.

10 Memorial for the late Maurice and Irene Leeming

10.1 Friends of the late Maurice and Irene Leeming have asked whether the Parish Council would be agreeable to a village sign in memory of the couple to be erected in the village. The friends believe that this would be a fitting tribute to this couple who were so fond of Allington and contributed to its many events, especially the Village Hall. Cllrs agreed in principle but it would be put on the agenda for a fuller discussion at the January Parish Council meeting. **(Action point: clerk)**

11 Frequency of Parish Council meetings

11.1 The Chairman asked whether it would be beneficial to hold Parish Council meetings more frequently to try and keep the business moving faster. Councillors were often unable to attend due to other commitments. Councillors discussed the pros and cons of more frequent meetings but it was finally concluded that the meetings would remain bi-monthly.

12 Playing field matters

12.1 Cllr McKinlay stated that the Playing Field Committee had met recently and she referred councillors to the minutes of that meeting that had been circulated.

12.2 There was a considerable problem with the amount of rabbits at the field. They are burrowing all over the field and their holes are causing a hazard for field users. The Playing field committee are considering using ferrets to diminish their numbers.

12.3 Cllr Jackson reported that the Bonfire night celebrations had gone very well and around £1300 had been raised by the fundraising group. Well done to all the fundraisers for an excellent well organised evening.

12.4 Cllr McKinlay spoke about the RoSPA report on the children's play area. There are no high risk areas of concern.

12.5 The portacabins are in need of some essential maintenance. It was decided that replacing them with something more permanent would be very costly for the village. It was agreed therefore that quotes would be sought from local builders to look at the cost of repairing/ replacing the roofs and floors, sorting out the electrics, and painting the cabins to extend their lives for the meantime. The clerk would write letters to builders and Cllrs agreed to hand deliver them. **(Action point: clerk, AH, DC & GJ)**

12.6 Cllr Jackson reported back on the toilet block drain problem. A pipe joint had dislodged. Cllr Jackson would further investigate the problem and get a quote for its repair. **(Action point: GJ)**

13 Planning matters

13.1 Applications received and determined since the last Parish Council meeting on 14 September 2011:

- Notification of SKDC Committee hearing – 1 Bottom Street, demolition of property and construction of 5 dwellings.

- Application – St James Bungalow, approval of details reserved by Condition 2 (materials) of S10/2548
- Application – Woodnook, Side Street, pruning and lowering of crowns to 3 sycamore trees

13.2 The SKDC committee hearing for the proposal for 1 Bottom Street would be heard on 15 November, following a site visit from District Councillors from the Development Committee on 9 November. Cllr Bosworth would attend to represent the Parish Council.

14 Financial matters

14.1 The clerk reported on the income and outgoings since the last meeting on 14 September 2011:

Income

- Precept – part 2 - £7500
- Bank interest - £5.14
- GYFC pitch hire - £278
- SKDC Caretaker's grant - £308.36

Total £ 8091.50

Expenditure

- Hempstead (MUGA maintenance & 2011 grass cutting) - £2175
- British Gas (electricity) - £36.75
- Playsafety Ltd (RoSPA inspection - £75.60
- Mudfords (marquee deposit Fab4) - £354

Total £ 2641.35

Plus Clerk and Caretakers' salaries.

14.2 Councillors unanimously approved the payments retrospectively.

14.3 The clerk stated that the budget for 2012/13 would be on the agenda for the January meeting. The clerk reminded Councillors that they need to consider potential village expenditure for the next financial year in time for the January meeting. The precept request will have to be with SKDC before the end of January. **(Action point: all cllrs)**

15 Any other business for future meetings

15.1 The agenda for the next Parish Council meeting will include:

- a) The Neighbourhood Watch Scheme
- b) Sedgebrook Road gritting - Sedgebrook Parish Councillors to be invited
- c) The Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee celebrations

d) Budget considerations for 2012/13

16 Date of next meeting

16.1 The next Parish Council meeting will be on Wednesday 11 January 2012 at 7.30pm.

Signed: ----- (Chairman). Date: -----