



Ashley Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Ashley Parish Council held on Monday 11th December 2023 at the Pavilion

Present: Cllr Sarah Howell (Chairman) Cllr Simon Hull
Cllr Twink MacLachlan Cllr Maria Parkin
Cllr Sarah Summers Kevin Dadds (Clerk)

01. PUBLIC MEETING

One member of the public was present.

CC/DC Sharp was unable to attend the meeting although sent a report that was read out by the Clerk as follows;

Local Transport & Connectivity Plan

The Combined Authority (CPCA) Transport & Infrastructure Committee on 15th November, voted through the Local Transport Plan, which includes plans to impose Congestion Charging. This was confirmed at the CPCA Board meeting on 29th November.

CPCA Precept

The mayor is consulting on a 200% increase in the CPCA precept to £36 for a Band D property. The £36 annual charge will raise about £10.5m, which is planned to be spent on buses. However, this will allow for little expansion, if any, of the network and some parts of the County who will have no buses and will be unhappy paying for something that they do not receive.

County Council Budget

The ruling Lib Dem/ Labour Administration has advised that there is a £28m budget gap for 2024/25 and the Leader of the Council on Radio Cambridgeshire stated that it is likely that the increase for the County Council's portion of the Council Tax will be 5%.

Highways & Transport Committee

The Highways & Transport Committee met on 5th December, and made decisions about permanently keeping the wands that help divide cars from cyclists along East Road, continuing with restrictions around the Trumpington Road mini roundabouts and Lensfield Road, which is causing massive issues for buses and other vehicles, where artificial congestion created.

Gully Cleaning

The County Council are claiming that they are clearing 50% of the gullies across the County. However, looking at the programme for this work, most of it seems to be in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Council. Questions are being asked when East Cambridgeshire areas will have this work done.

Local Plan Climate & Natural Environment Chapter

Finance & Assets Committee approved the drafting of the chapter in respect of Natural Environment, and this will come out for public consultation towards the end of January and will form part of the new Local Plan, when that is adopted.

The meeting closed at 7.05

02. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Winson-Pearce was unable to attend and made her apologies to the Clerk.

03. TO SIGN & APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13th NOVEMBER 2023

The Minutes were approved, proposed by Cllr Hull and seconded by Cllr Summers and signed by the Chairman.

04. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

04 – Maintenance of the footpath adjacent to 28 High Street – Clerk advised that he had met a representative from PR Build Ltd on site to discuss maintenance of the footpath and adjacent hedges and trees. She told him that they were unaware that they had purchased the footpath, but now accepted that they did own both the pathway itself and the verge bordering the development site. They did not believe they owned the trees and bushes on the other side bordering Hascombe Stud paddocks. Clerk told her that it was our understanding that they did own the belt of trees and bushes up to the mesh fence on Hascombe Stud side, and as owner of the footpath, it was their responsibility to maintain and keep clear of any falling branches from either side. This was accepted, and they have requested detailed HM Land Registry plans that may show in more detail the exact positioning of the boundaries. They agreed to share their findings with us.

04 – Pride of Place Grant – Clerk advised that he had received confirmation that we have been awarded £323.75 and will complete and return the acceptance. Cllrs agreed that the 5 bat boxes could be ordered at the same cost, and Clerk agreed to obtain a quote for the installation. Proposed by Cllr Howell and seconded by Cllr Parkin. **Action – Clerk**

Item 04 – Trees/Bushes in Closed Churchyard – Clerk advised that Planning had been agreed for the felling of the cypress tree and he had received a quote of £250 from Suffolk Tree Surgery for the work, to include clearance of brambles. Cllrs accepted the quote and agreed that the work could proceed, proposed by Cllr MacLachlan, seconded by Cllr Parkin. **Action – Clerk**

Item 04 – Damaged Sign at Pond - Clerk advised that the work has not been completed yet and AFD Ltd will advise when this is the case.

Item 04 – Overgrown Hedgerows – Clerk advised that he had written to the residents on the list prepared by Cllr Hull, and several have now been attended to.

Item 04 – Solar Lights in Church Street - Clerk advised an email had been received from Lucy Frazer MP's office stating that she had been in contact with Balfour Beatty about viable options for street lighting on the bends at the top of Church Street. They had replied that they are re-examining the minimum number of lights that would be compliant with regulations, and also solar options and will contact us directly with amended quotes.

Item 09 – Play Equipment at Recreation Ground – Cllrs discussed further and Clerk provided a brochure to detail various options. Given the limited clearance around the "Bridge" that will be removed, it was agreed to replace with a stand up see saw. This was fully discussed at November meeting and quotes provided. Whilst the equipment is wooden, the legs in contact with the ground are metal, giving the required durability. The quote from Online Playgrounds was the most favourable and as they have installed other recent purchases, they will be able to match the resin surface. The cost for removal, installation and surfacing is £7,612 plus VAT with an addition for preliminaries more than covered by a loyalty discount. Funding will be from the CIL monies received for the High Street development. Proposed by Cllr Summers and seconded by Cllr MacLachlan, with all Cllrs present in support. Clerk was asked to place an order. **Action – Clerk**

Item 11 - Notice Boards – Clerk provided quotes as requested to replace the notice board at the Pond as it is now showing major signs of wear and the door has become difficult to open.

Quotes ranged between £1700 and £2000 + VAT + delivery with the lower end being recycled plastic and the higher end oak with recycled plastic posts. Cllrs discussed the options and agreed that oak would be more appropriate given the setting, and the oak posts surrounding the pond. The cost of this option from Greenbarnes Notice Boards and Signs is £2,017.70 + shipping £103.45 + VAT £424.23 making a total of £2,545.38. Proposed by Cllr Hull, seconded by Cllr Parkin and supported by all Cllrs present. Clerk was asked to place an order. **Action – Clerk**

05. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

06. PLANNING MATTERS

- a) 23/00918/FUL Double garage to front - Rayners Cottage, Church Street, Ashley – **WITHDRAWN**
- b) 23/01221/TRE T16 Cypress – Remove – St Mary’s Church, Ashley. **APPROVED**

07. FINANCE MATTERS

(a) To note following receipts in November/December

	£
None	

(b) To authorise the following payments

	£
Anglia Fabrication and Design Ltd – new memorial bench at pond (50% share)	2,878.80

- c) The invoice has been received for a new memorial bench at the Pond for Peter Bridge. It was agreed at the February PC meeting that the PC would share the cost of the bench with Ashley Pavilion Trust. The half share is £2,878.80. Peter Bridge left a legacy of £2,000 to the PC and whilst this was earmarked to maintain the village sign sited at the Pond, that Mr Bridge made, Cllrs felt it would be appropriate to use the funds towards the memorial bench. The PC will maintain the village sign from annual income as required. Proposed by Cllr Howell and seconded by Cllr MacLachlan.

8. PAVILION TRUST

Clerk advised that he had chased the Fairhaven’s agent who replied suggesting that we drafted a letter of our requirements and sent to him vial email, and he would discuss with Lord and Lady Fairhaven. The Chairman of APT had a similar discussion with him and Clerk has suggested that a draft letter is prepared for approval by both the PC and APT. Cllr Howell suggested that if no progress was made with the landlords, a schedule of repairs for the existing building would be appropriate along with possible more extensive improvements within the existing structure.

9. PRECEPT

ECDC have asked for the PC’s annual request for funding via the Precept. Clerk suggested that with a near 10% increase in his own salary amounting to £600 and similar percentage rises in many of the PC’s costs, it would be advisable to request an increase after the freeze last year. County and District councils are restricted to 4.99% and it was agreed by all Cllrs present to request a similar 5% increase. **Action – Clerk**

10. WEBSITE

Cllr Howell advised that the Chairman of APT had been in discussion with our web provider about the architecture of the site and whether it could accommodate the requirements of a site used by both the PC and APT. A reply is awaited.

11. TEMPORARY TRAFFIC ORDER APPLICATION (TTRO)

An application to close the High Street for up to 8 days for electrical connection has been received by Highways. Start date is 24th February 2024 and finish date 3rd March 2024. Diversions will be in place and access for pedestrians will be maintained.

12. LEASE TO ASHLEY PAVILION TRUST

The lease from the PC to APT expired nearly 2 years ago and has been rolled over on the same terms whilst issues relating to the PC's lease with Fairhaven Estates is discussed. Little progress has been made in this respect but recent contact may move matters along. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to APT from the PC confirming that the terms of the lease be extended for a further year until 31st December 2024. **Action - Clerk**

13. URGENT MATTERS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

- a) Crown Public House – it was agreed to discuss at January PC meeting with a view to inviting residents to give their views prior to February PC meeting.
- b) Removal of Old Phone Box – Clerk has contacted BT asking if the electricity supply can be disconnected to enable removal of the box. They have confirmed they will arrange for this to be actioned, but it may take up to 16 weeks.

15. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) Street Lighting Replacement - LED lantern replacement project is proceeding in 2024
- b) ECDC press release: Planning changes - Right 1st time initiative to encourage applicants to fully and accurately complete planning applications. Removal of "no fee" re-submissions will encourage.
- c) The Old Suffolk Road Byway – Complaint received by Dalham PC about condition of surface and passed to Highways by them. Cllr Hull has walked the footpath and drafted a report that Clerk will send to Dalham Estates - **Action - Clerk**
- d) Lucy Frazer – Transport improvements – Discussed at previous meeting.

16. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Monday 8th January at the Pavilion.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm

KEVIN DADDS