

Minutes of the Caddington Parish Council Meeting held at Heathfield Centre on 11th December 2023



Present: Parish Councillors M Russell (Chairman), M Tomlin (Vice Chairman), V Malone (also CBC Ward Cllr), A Palmer, B Fitzsimmons, H Palmer, R Catford, M Mackey, J Lovell, CBC Ward Cllr K Collins, Clerk L Heartfield, 29 members of the public.

Public participation:

A discussion was held regarding the Sports and Social Club's decision to lock the small pedestrian gate in the low spectator fence and why chained barriers had been placed over the 3-meter gap at the end of the spectator fencing. Members of the public asked why access to the field had been restricted as all residents should have access to a Parish facility. They commented that by locking the gate the defib is now not so easily accessible, and this could be dangerous as it delays access to vital lifesaving equipment. Because access has been restricted across the field, the public path has to be used. This is steep and very muddy. The fencing along the pathway is damaged and encroaches on the width of the path causing it to be very narrow in places making it un navigable by vulnerable and elderly people and people with pushchairs etc.

A Sports and Social Club representative explained that the gate had been locked because of the increase in the amount of dog waste on the field and that children on bikes were using ramps and churning up the grass and maintenance had risen to £20,000 per year. Members of the public replied that dog mess is less of a problem than locking the gate and forcing people down to the existing unusable path. They also pointed out that children should be allowed to ride their bikes on a community field. Cllr Fitzsimmons commented that he expected the new low gate to be open as there had been reassurances in the past that there would be access to the field at all times.

Cllr Russell will meet with members of the Sports and Social Club's management committee to discuss the matter further and asked the Clerk to add an item to the next full council agenda.

23/24/142 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received and accepted from Parish Cllr S Quinn (work commitments).

23/24/143 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Russell declared an interest in payments for authorisation (agenda item 23/24/158).

23/24/144 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2023 were a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

23/24/145 PROGRESS UPDATE FROM LAST MEETING – for information only

- The Pre-paid card account is now open and £100 transferred to cover any sundry expenses. Cllrs Russell and Tomlin have sight of spend and approve funds transfer.
- Happy Helpers Volunteer Group – Now up and running. Hoping for a bigger response following an advert in the December Village Magazine.
- Parish Council flood equipment, approved last month, has arrived and is being stored at Heathfield.
- Please note additional payments last month after the Christmas event. These have been circulated.
- £100 income from the Fair received after the Christmas event.
- There is now a scam email filter in place for Councillor emails which should reduce the attacks on Councillor Russell's email address.
- Sports and Social Club – The planning application for the changing room extension has been agreed by CBC.
- Sports and Social Club – J M Bygate Designs Ltd have been formally instructed and the first payment was made for work for the proposed field purchase. The corresponding amount has been received from Social Club as agreed at the last meeting.
- Sports and Social Club – a surveyor has been found and will value the land after Christmas. It's should be noted that this is a proposed purchase and only pre-works have been agreed upon at this time.
- New floodlights have been installed on trees on the Green.
- An additional set of marquee lights has been purchased.
- The faulty street light at 2 Fair Green has been chased.
- Due to annual leave over the Christmas period the Full Council January Agenda will need to be finalised by Friday 22nd December so that it can be legally posted on Tuesday 2nd January 2024.

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23/24/146 POLICE AND CADDINGTON WATCH

There had been 14 offences reported since the last Parish meeting in October. Cllr Fitzsimmons read out the full crime statistic report from CaddWatch which had been forwarded to all Councillors before the meeting.

PCSO Downes attended the meeting and reported that the police are working with the Co-op on Manor Road to combat the rise in shoplifting offences taking place. The police are holding community sessions to speak to local residents and gather information. PCSO Downes urged the Parish Council and members of the public to complete the "Have Your Say Survey", results of which will help to shape future policing priorities in the area.

Cllr Malone reported that she had been trying to contact local PCSO Tuck to report the parking outside the scrap yard at Brick Kiln, she is concerned that there may be a very bad crash as it's a narrow unlit road. Cllr Malone has spoken to the anti-social behaviour team at Central Beds Council, who have said it's a Police matter. PCSO Downes stated that she would inform PCSO Tuck.

23/24/147 REPORT FROM CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE WARD COUNCILLOR

Ward Cllr Malone gave the following report:

A repainting request for the roundabout at the top of Hyde Rd. and the speed humps on Mancroft Rd. has been submitted. Highways have put them on the list but have said the majority of the repainting will not be carried out until March when the surfaces are dry and salt-free. Chaul End Road's centre line needs to also be repainted but unfortunately, CBC do not refresh these any more. They only repaint at safety-critical areas such as bends and junctions. They will refresh the sidelines if they need doing.

The flood attenuation scheme for Dunstable/Mancroft Rd. is gaining momentum. It is split into 7 stages, some of which, are yet to be agreed but the following have gone to design (please note the numbering refers to these design stages and are therefore not sequential)

Stage 1a, the attenuation tank in Bury Farm is receiving maintenance to make it function to reduce water,

Stage 1b, design and then construction of new attenuation weirs upstream of the Bury Farm tank,

Stage 4, construction works behind the cottages on Mancroft Rd. (accessed from Dunstable Rd.)

Stage 5, Crosslands headwall and screen design, bagged wall and trash screen (hoping for construction next year)

Stage 6a, Ditch maintenance at the Aley Green end of Mancroft Rd.

Stage 6b, Upgrade of Pipers Lane culvert design (hoping for construction next year)

Stage 7, Culvert design for end of Mancroft/Woodside Rd. (hoping for construction to begin next year). I'm so pleased that we are finally getting some work for the residents of Mancroft, Dunstable and Woodside Rd.

Hopefully, we should soon get the results of the speed data strips that were placed in Chaul End Rd. and Luton Rd. in November, although the Luton Rd. strip was placed in the wrong location, right next to a speed hump so this may affect the results and I will ask if it can be repositioned next time they lay them.

Finally the bus shelter windows. After receiving permission to fit perspex windows in the bus shelter to offer some protection to the children and senior citizens who wait for buses, the windows were fitted in September. A complaint was made by a resident that the windows obscured the view when entering and exiting their drive. Meetings between myself, the Head of Highways, Cllr Collins and the resident have resulted in Highways stating that the centre wooden bar holding the two pieces of perspex in place needs to be removed. To do this the windows would need to be remade as the wooden bar is built into the frame and we would need to replace the two pieces of perspex with one large thicker piece. I have argued that after being permitted by CBC in writing twice, it is unfair of Highways to expect the Parish Council to pay for the works as it was their mistake, but they have stated that if the middle bar is not removed then Highways will remove the windows.

Ward Cllr Collins reported the following:

The round of hearings discussing the expansion of Luton Airport continues. There are three points which affect Caddington:

1) Traffic levels; concerns that the model being used refers to data gathered during Covid and may not represent normal traffic flows.

2) Noise; the baseline measurements use out-of-date passenger numbers that have already been exceeded.

3) Installation of triple glazing. Cllr Collins hopes that more areas may be included in the scheme as he was always surprised that Caddington and Slip End were not eligible.

The examination will end on 10/2/23. The applicant has already been sent away with lots of questions to answer and there currently aren't many common ground agreements between neighbouring authorities. The examiner will send their report to the Secretary of State during the summer.

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Central Bedfordshire is currently carrying out a resident survey regarding the 2024/25 budget. Residents are encouraged to respond. It will be a challenging year and difficult decisions will need to be made.

23/24/148 CADDINGTON AND SLIP END BUS USERS GROUP (CaSeBuG)

A representative from CaSeBuG reported that most of the group's activity has been engaged in communication with CBC regarding the proposed revision of the 232/74 minibus services which are now under threat. The group have communicated with all Parish Councils involved with the proposed revision of the 232/74 service, but the plug has been pulled on all their available transport budgets by CBC, so all minibus services are under threat of complete withdrawal.

The representative mentioned the CBC community participation exercise to gain residents' feedback before setting the budget. He stated that one consultation option is to reduce bus subsidies and stated that people living in the furthest parts of the County like Caddington and Slip End rely on public transport for their well-being and livelihood. This should be protected. The representative urged all residents to visit the CBC website and vote for maintenance of the village transport services, and for the Parish Council itself to mandate our CBC representatives to do likewise. Stating that once a village service has gone it is almost impossible to get it back.

23/24/149 RELOCATED BUS SHELTER (MANOR ROAD STOP A)

It was **AGREED** that the bus shelter should be relocated and that the Clerk should inform Central Bedfordshire Council.

23/24/150 FEEDBACK FROM THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON EVENT

Cllr Malone reported that the event went very well and very positive feedback has been received. She thought everyone had done a brilliant job, the Elf was great fun again and special thanks to A. Dye and T. Dye for all their help and use of the electricity and marquee storage. All the help with putting up and taking down the marquee was greatly appreciated. Cllr A Palmer thanked Cllr Malone and all those involved for all their hard work. Thanks to Scouts for holding their stall and raising £431.47. As agreed this has been donated to Keech Hospice (£216.47) & The East Bedfordshire Ambulance Service (£215).

The Clerk reported that there have been some outages due to water ingress with the tree lights and that replacements are not available until April 2024. Electrafit will attempt to keep the lights on for this season.

23/24/151 UPDATE ON CADDINGTON VILLAGE SCHOOL PARKING ISSUES

Cllr Lovell reported that there were still parking issues around the school such as parking on the pavements, corners and over driveways. Drivers are often abusive to residents, some are driving too fast, without seatbelts and while using their phones. The parking buddies were partially successful but have now been returned to Central Bedfordshire Council. The PTA can apply next year for a grant from the Parish for the school to purchase a set of their own. Cllr Tomlins said that Dunstable Police have mobile ANPR cameras that could be deployed. PCSO Downes again urged the Council and members of the public to complete the current "Have your Say survey" as this could help the Police prioritise issues like school drop-off parking.

23/24/152 APPROVAL OF INSTALLATION OF ELECTRICAL PILLAR POST IN EDGE COTE PARK FOR CCTV

Two quotes for the installation of an electrical pillar post in Edgecote Park were presented to Councillors. It was **AGREED** to accept the quote for £1687.54 from Electrafit. Clerk to arrange.

23/24/153 APPROVAL OF SCRIBE PARISH ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

Costs and rationale for a new parish accountancy package had been circulated to Councillors before the meeting. It was **AGREED** to accept the quote for £1379 + VAT from Scribe. Clerk to arrange.

23/24/154 2024/25 BUDGET REQUIREMENTS AND 2024/25 PRECEPT

A detailed budget & precept information sheet had been sent to Councillors before the meeting. Paper copies were distributed and discussed by the Councillors present. The Clerk had broken the potential precept request into four options, ranging from no increase in the Band D charge to an increase of 6.7% to mirror the current rate of inflation.

Cllr Fitzsimmons pointed out that in real terms a 6.7% increase from £89.80 to £95.82 would equate to an additional payment of approximately 50p a month per Band D household. He proposed that the council increase the precept to £95.82, this was seconded by Cllr A Palmer. Councillors voted 8 in favour with 1 abstention.

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It was **AGREED** to increase 2024/25 Band D to £95.82 and for the Clerk to make a total precept request of £182,052. It was **AGREED** to defer the 2024/25 budget decision to next month for the Clerk to present more information on the Edgecote Park Play area refurbishment, which may require an increase in earmarked funds.

23/24/155 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS ON PERSONNEL MATTERS

It was **RESOLVED** to move this item to the end of the agenda.

23/24/156 PLANNING COMMITTEE COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS ON PLANNING MATTERS

It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would forward the following planning comments to CBC Planning Officers.

CB/23/03583/OUT Land to the East of A5183 Watling Street and West of Millfield Lane, Caddington Application for a Solar Farm and Outline Application Electric and Hydrogen Vehicle Charging Service Station and Battery Storage, All matters reserved other than access.

No Objection – but we ask that consideration be given to allowing a wide enough entrance for large vehicles turning in and out of the site.

CB/23/03823/FULL Pipers Farm, 145 Mancroft Road, Aley Green, Luton, LU1 4DR Demolition of existing stable and residential outbuildings and construction of two new houses with new vehicular crossover and landscaping

Officer's Decision.

CB/23/03890/DOC 147 Manor Road, Caddington, Luton, LU1 4HJ

Discharge of Condition 2 against planning permission CB/22/04891/FULL (Residential development to provide 1no. adjoining property with rear extension to an existing dwelling)

Councillor's comment: Does this application meet the officer's concerns for installing condition 2 in the first place? There is no documentation saying that highways have agreed to move the lamp post so the decision is left to the officer.

CB/23/03855/FULL Land at Cotswold Business Park, Millfield Lane, Caddington, Luton, LU1 4AJ

Erection of a physiotherapy treatment centre (Use Class E(e)) with associated access, parking and landscaping.

Comments will be sent after clarification.

Cllr Tomlin asked the Planning Committee to consider meeting again in public so that applicants can hear discussions and make representations if necessary. He suggested a hybrid model where the Planning Committee continue to assess, view document online and circulate their views but also meet at 7 pm before the Full Council meeting allowing member of the public to attend. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would book the Heathfield Centre small meeting room for 8th January 2024 and post an agenda along with the Full Council meeting on the 2nd January 2024.

23/24/157 CORRESPONDENCE

A list of correspondence this month had been circulated to Councillors for information before the meeting.

23/24/158 AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

It was **RESOLVED** to note additional payments from last month and authorise the following accounts for online payment.

Additional payments made in November after the last meeting:

17/11/2023	Transfer	SLLC Ltd	Clerk Training - FILCA	£ 144.00
17/11/2023	Transfer	SLLC Ltd	Parish Clerk Membership Fee	£ 229.00
21/11/2023	Transfer	Electrafit	Inv 18119	£ 811.62
21/11/2023	Transfer	Equals Card	November Top Up	£ 100.00
27/11/2023	Transfer	Graham Crisp	Christmas Lights Switch on Event - Entertainment	£ 150.00
27/11/2023	Transfer	Linda Heartfield	Reimbursement for extra Marquee Lights Christmas Lights Switch on Event	£ 52.00
27/11/2023	Transfer	Simon Maxwell	Christmas Lights Switch on Event - First Aid	£ 150.00
27/11/2023	Transfer	Perfect Personalised Parties	Christmas Lights Switch on Event - Entertainment (ELF)	£ 150.00
28/11/2023	Transfer	Arco Ltd	Flood equipment (10 Aqua sacks, 10 Aqua Snakes)	£ 192.00

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December payments for authorisation

Date	Payment	Payable to:	Payment Details	Total
01/12/2023	SO	Village Garden Services	Ground maintenance ref Inv 7670	£ 801.74
01/12/2023	SO	NJ and S Arthur	Allotment management	£ 45.00
04/12/2023	Transfer	J M Bygate Designs Ltd	35% of total payment for Sports and Social Changing rooms planning application	£ 1,050.00
04/12/2023	Transfer	Rita Tims	Reimburse refreshments for Christmas Exent	£ 76.28
12/12/2023	Transfer	Staff	Salary	£ 2,328.35
12/12/2023	Transfer	Beds Pension Fund	Pension	£ 922.51
12/12/2023	Transfer	HMRC	Tax NI	£ 1,301.52
12/12/2023	Transfer	Heathfield Centre	Printing costs Villager Mag (VM-034)	£ 500.00
12/12/2023	Transfer	Heathfield Centre	Heathfield rental charge for Parish meeting CHC-2402	£ 40.00
12/12/2023	Transfer	Village Garden Services	Parish Warden cover November, leaf removal, replacement knee-high rails for the green Inv 7684	£ 1,684.80
12/12/2023	Transfer	Village Garden Services	Gritting 8/11/ - 2/12 INV 7685	£ 888.00
12/12/2023	Transfer	Village Garden Services	Christmas Tree for CaSE (Lyons Community Centre) INV 7690	£ 234.00
12/12/2023	Transfer	Andrew Shaw Computer Services	Microsoft 365 & Virus checker (Inv 220416)	£ 21.38
12/12/2023	Transfer	Andrew Shaw Computer Services	One hour remote support to apply scam email filter (Inv 220417)	£ 50.00
12/12/2023	Transfer	Electrafit Ltd	November christmas lights check and extra lights	£ 595.44
12/12/2023	Transfer	Cllr M Russell	Chairman's Allowance	£ 3.80
12/12/2023	Transfer	Linda Heartfield	Chairman's Allowance - Christmas Events electricity gift	£ 15.50
12/12/2023	Transfer	CPRE Bedfordshire	Understanding Planning Workshop 2024 - Cllr Quinn	£ 50.00
12/12/2023	Transfer	Scribe	Financial account onboarding and annual fee	£ 1,654.80
12/12/2023	Transfer	BATPC	Affiliation 23/24 (Late payment)	£ 921.00
12/12/2023	Transfer	Clyde & Co.	VAT only following Avia claim	£ 362.53
31/12/2023	DD	Zusi Ltd	Clerk & Warden phones	£ 26.40
31/12/2023	SO	James Macpherson	CCTV service contract	£ 200.00
31/12/2023	DD	Unit Trust Bank	Service Charge	£ 40.20
31/12/2023	DD	Castle Water	Allotment water supply	£ 31.34

Public participation:

- Why is the precept calculated on Band D properties only? Band D is the middle band of Council Tax and is supposed to represent the amount of Council Tax paid on an average property in the area. The Band D equivalent provides a measure which allows precepts among councils of different sizes to be compared.
- A suggestion that non-teaching staff could be used to provide traffic patrol at the school at drop off and pick up time.
- How will residents get to the library or medical hub in Dunstable if bus services are reduced? Cllr Malone replied that she agreed and was fighting to protect these services.
- A point of clarification was requested on whether planning permission is required if a new development is within the existing footprint of a previous development on the same site. Cllr A Plamer confirmed that planning permission wouldn't be needed in this case.

The public section of the meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Moved agenda item :

23/24/155 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS ON PERSONNEL MATTERS

It was resolved to exclude the public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the confidential nature of the following business being transacted. Discussions took place confidentially between the Councillors present and the Clerk with no members of public.

The confidential section of the meeting closed at 9.25pm.