

RIDGMONT PARISH COUNCIL

Mrs Olivia Burrows
Clerk to the Parish Council

Email: ridgmontparishclerk@gmail.com
Signed *Olivia Burrows* - Parish Clerk
09th February 2023

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 9th February at The Stables

Present: Chairperson M Spearing, Cllrs – T Pick, A Warne, M Dray, R Yexley and Clerk O Burrows.

In attendance: Cllr Sue Clark

MINUTES

496. **To Receive apologies for absence:**

Apologies were received by P Francis, H Francis & CB Cllr R Morris

497. **Open Forum:**

Residents will have the chance to raise anything relevant to Parish Council business but they will not be able to discuss the subject more than once. A maximum of 2 minutes per subject will be allowed.

Resident: There is an application for toilets to be installed on the grounds of the church. Currently there is a porta loo on the site. Will there be something more permanent put in place?

- Chairperson M Spearing responds explaining that the portacabin is an interim measure for the church because the PCC are hoping to get toilets installed internally.

Resident: The potholes have just been amended in Lydds Hill which was a relief to residents.

Resident: Anglian water have been out in Lydds hill. Do you know why this is?

- Chairperson M Spearing confirms that Anglian Water have been in the village because they have found a water leak which they are dealing with.

Chairperson M Spearing gives thanks to Ward Cllr Sue Clark for her assistance in getting Anglian water to have taken note of some of the issues S Clark has raised. This has been an ongoing issue for some time.

Resident: Down station road, there is an old crab apple tree. It leans out over the footpath and road and in the late summer time 100s of apples are falling onto the path and road. It is quite dangerous and slippery for walkers, cars and buggies to navigate this section of path which the apples have fallen.

The resident would like to know if the tree could be cut back so it doesn't lean over the footpath and road. It isn't situated in a private garden.

- Chairperson M Spearing says the Parish Council will have a look at this tree. Due to Ridgmont being in a conservation area the Parish Council would need to get permission from the Council and Bedford Estates.

ACTION: MS & Clerk

Resident: Is there anything that can be done to address the issues with the path going from church Street to the Old Church at Segenhoe? The path is overgrown, very muddy and in some areas the path is barely visible. It can be slippery and a mud bath especially after rainfall.

Another resident asks if this path is part of the Greensand Ridge walk and explains that the path was cleared about 10 years ago.

- Chairperson M Spearing says the Parish Council will get in touch with a footpath officer from CBC to get some advice and ask them to come for a walkabout in the village with the Chair and Clerk.

ACTION: MS & Clerk

498. Declaration of Members' Interests:

a) Declaration of member's interest of a non-pecuniary nature:
(Having membership of a club, charity etc or a close relationship).

Cllr M Spearing: Trustee of The Greensand Trust and PCC and Parish Council representative on Ridgmont Charity.

b) Declaration of members interest of a pecuniary nature:
(Having a financial bearing on a member or their spouse/partner).

Cllr Spearing: Land Owner

499. To approve minutes of the previous meeting:

Resolved: Unanimously agreed to accept the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th October 2022. Proposed by M Dray and seconded by T Pick.

Resolved: Minutes were duly signed as a correct record.

500. **To discuss matters arising:**

Rachel Yexley, Anna Warne and Tim Pick have become Parish Councillors.

In the last Parish Council meeting in October 2022, some residents from Church Street came along to voice their concerns about their housing conditions and the lack of support from Grand Union. Some Residents had been experiencing terrible mould, no heating and broken and dangerous appliances to name a few of the issues. Some of these issues were having a detrimental effect on their health and mental wellbeing.

Although this is not usually within the remit of the Parish Council, the PC will do it's best to support residents where and if applicable.

The Parish Council and Ward Cllr S Clark got in touch with Grand Union housing and have been able to support these residents with getting Grand Union to carry out the work needed. New heating systems, new kitchens and windows have been put into some of the houses. This has been a welcomed relief and outcome to these residents.

501. **To receive reports:**

Report from Ward Cllr Sue Clark:

There are a lot of major applications in the area that Sue is currently looking at. The impact on these applications is cumulative and will affect the whole area across many parishes.

Regarding the Marston Valley application, all 7 Parish Councils (stake holder group) joined together and wrote a 12-page long objection particularly focusing on the traffic concerns. Last year, Central Bedfordshire Highways did their own response to this planning application and the developers accepted every one of the comments raised and criticisms and they are requiring O&H developers to do a load more work on their traffic modelling and to do all their counts again. All the concerns about where the traffic may flow which includes Ridgmont have been accepted which is great news. Ward Cllr S Clark concludes by saying there will be another huge consultation on this later this year.

- Chairperson M Spearing gives thanks to Ward Cllr Sue Clark for being instrumental on getting a CBC highways team down at J13 last year to discuss all concerns regarding traffic flow and management.

The biggest thing that is currently going on at Central Bedfordshire Council is the approval of the budget. The administrations proposed budget is that there should be no Council Tax rise this year

and that there will be no cuts in services. There will be roughly 5 million spent on Children's services, which is a positive.

Ward Cllr S Clark concludes by giving an update on potholes. There has been an ever-increasing issue with potholes across the whole of Central Bedfordshire. The cold weather has meant there has been a 10-fold increase in potholes reported. The Council were running 2 jet patching machine trucks and this has been increased to 4 with a team out day and night. They are prioritising the deeper and dangerous potholes first and then the smaller ones will be dealt with after.

Ward Cllr S Clark advises residents to report potholes on 'fix my street' on the CBC website.

502. To receive correspondence:

No correspondence to report.

503. To accept payments:

17/10/2022	October 22	October Clerk Salary 19th Sep - 18th Oct	Clerks Salary	£	224.99
19/10/2022	October 22	Npower Elec. Invoice	Energy	£	217.91
15/11/2022	November 22	Clerk's allowance Inv OB009 - October	Clerks Allowance	£	50.96
15/11/2022	November 22	First Rescue Training & Supplies - Defib adult pads	Defibrillator parts	£	125.94
17/11/2022	November 22	Npower Elec. Invoice	Energy	£	239.56
21/11/2022	November 22	November Clerk Salary 19th Oct - 18th Nov	Clerks Salary	£	224.99
01/12/2022	December 22	Nab Landscapes Invoice INV2746	Grasscutting	£	923.00
16/12/2022	December 22	Print Cellar Invoice 2125	Distribution (Printing, newsletter)	£	75.00
19/12/2022	December 22	Npower Elec. Invoice	Energy	£	77.80
19/12/2022	December 22	December Clerk Salary 19th Nov - 18th Dec	Clerks Salary	£	224.99
21/12/2022	December 22	Andy Muskett - 3rd Qtr Invoice 5351	Street Lighting Maintenance	£	114.90
28/12/2022	December 22	Wix Ridgmont Village Website Domain - Invoice 1030984843	Website	£	12.46
09/01/2023	January 23	Wix Ridgmont Village Website Subscription - Invoice 1033567679	Website	£	86.40
09/01/2023	January 23	Clerk's allowance Inv OB010 - November	Clerks Allowance	£	25.00
09/01/2023	January 23	Clerk's allowance Inv OB011 - December	Clerks Allowance	£	25.00
10/01/2023	January 23	Nab Landscapes Invoice INV2748	Grasscutting	£	580.00
16/01/2023	January 23	January Clerk Salary 19th Dec - 18th Jan	Clerks Salary	£	224.99
19/01/2023	January 23	Npower Elec. Invoice	Energy	£	196.01
25/01/2023	January 23	Clerk's allowance Inv OB012 - January	Clerks Allowance	£	25.00
01/02/2023	February 23	Amazon order - Clerks Expenses (Printer, paper. Wallets and folders)	Clerks Expenses	£	104.22
					£ 3,779.12

INCOME:

£ 17,018.00 – 2022/2023 Precept

£ 5120.35 – Bank Balance bought forward from 2020/2021

£ 500.00 – VAT Refund Estimate

£ 22,638.00 TOTAL

Balance as of. 31st January 2023: £6747.24

- It was unanimously agreed to accept payments. Proposed by M Dray and seconded by T Pick.

504. Review budget for April 2023

FEBRUARY 2023		
INCOME 22/23:	SPEND TO DATE:	BANK BALANCE FEB 2023
£ 22,638.35	£ 15,635.33	£ 6,643.02
		Bank Estimate End of Financial Year
		£ 3,500.00
Monthly Fixed Expenditure		
Clerks Salary	£ 224.99	
Clerks Allowance	£ 25.00	
Grasscutting	£ 580.00	
Energy	£ 220.00	
Yearly Expenditure		
Street Lighting Maintenance	£ 500.00	
Insurance	£ 603.00	
Affiliate Fees	£ 94.00	
Clerks Expenses	£ 200.00	
Rec Rent	£ 20.00	
Poppy Wreath	£ 24.00	
Website	£ 100.00	
Distribution	£ 100.00	
Safety Inspection	£ 93.00	
Contingency/Reserves	£ 1,000.00	
JAN - MAR 2023 Expenditure Estimate		
3 months Clerks Salary	£ 674.97	
3 months clerks allowance	£ 75.00	
Clerks Expenses	£ 100.00	
3 months energy	£ 650.00	Estimate
Street Lighting maintenance	£ 114.90	
Rec Rent	£ 20.00	
Website	£ 100.00	
4 remaining lampposts replacements	£ 1,500.00	Estimate
Grasscutting	£ 580.00	
	£ 3,814.87	
BANK ESTIMATE end of financial year		
		£ 3,529.00

The Clerk has reviewed the current state of the budget and has estimated that the Parish Council will have around £3500 of funds left at the end of the financial year at the end of March 2023. The Clerk explains that this is an estimation and may be less or more depending on additional or unaccounted for expenses.

The Parish Council are responsible for the burial ground, war memorial, recreational ground, Insurance, village maintenance, street Lighting, clerks' salary plus other adhoc expenses.

The Precept for 2023/2024 will be £20K.

- Chairperson M Spearing says that the Parish Council aim to build up some financial reserves in the coming year.

505. Station Road parking and antisocial behaviour

Chairperson M Spearing says that the Police were noted that there were people seen loitering behind the Church.

Update on the Old Church at Segenhoe:

Chairperson M Spearing has emailed historic England and asked for an update and see if the archway will be fixed. Residents have asked about getting the gates taken down.

Station Road Parking:

The Parish Council have received many complaints about the parking on Station Road. This matter isn't necessarily within the parish council remit; however, the Parish Council will endeavour to solve problems if/where possible.

People have been parking their vehicles on the bend going up Station Road. The number of cars parking there has increased over recent months, which has become dangerous for cars and pedestrians. Parking on this section of the road often means drivers cannot see oncoming traffic, and residents fear it won't be long before there is an accident.

Chairperson M Spearing asks residents present at the meeting if they have any suggestions about this that the Parish Council can put forward to Ward Cllr Sue Clark.

Resident asks: Could there be yellow lines put down this section of road?

Chairperson M Spearing explains that yellow lines would have to be enforced by CBC which would be highly unlikely as CBC would need to have an officer patrol that area often.

One resident explains how they can see points of views from both sides. Residents are parking on this section at their own risk and most residents who live along Station Road do have alternative parking options. The parking on the bend is dangerous but it does slow some of the cars down, the speed limit of 40 is much too high for that road.

Residents suggests: could a traffic calming give way island be an option?

Chairperson M Spearing concludes by saying that the Parish Council will get in touch with the Highways agency for advice and facilitate a meeting on this matter. It would be good if a highways officer could come out to meet us and take a look at the situation and to discuss the options.

Motorbikes:

The parish council have received complaints about excessive noise from motorbikes passing through the village and issues about motorbikes in the woods. The Parish Council posted about this on the village facebook page, which received many comments from residents. The Parish Council have looked at the comments raised and invited residents to attend today's Parish Council meeting to voice their opinions on this matter. The Parish Council would like to reiterate that the post was not directed at any individuals and was not

intended to cause offence. The Parish Council were merely responding to a number of complaints made about the noise levels of motorbikes passing through the village. The objective of the post was to flag the issue up to residents.

Chairperson M Spearing continues by saying that the Parish Council have received a letter from a resident who is unable to attend the meeting this evening. M Spearing reads out the letter to the Cllrs and residents present.

Chairperson M Spearing mentions that some people on motorbikes have previously been spoken to about trespassing. However, the main issue residents have approached the Parish Council about is noise level, particularly late and night and in the early hours.

Chairperson M Spearing asks the residents present if anyone has any suggestions from both sides on tackling this issue?

One resident present asks: *Can we get a community officer out to speak to the village?*

After a discussion with the residents present at the meeting, it was agreed that the Parish Council would contact a community officer to ask for advice on this matter.

506. **Rose & Crown pub donation & Coronation celebration**

At the end of last year the Parish Council arranged a lunch for the elderly residents in the village. The lunch was held in the Stables at the Rose and Crown. The lunch was cooked and provided by Tom and Rachel who worked hard in making this a great success.

Cllr Anna Warne approached the PC with the idea and was instrumental in organising a voucher donated by Tesco.

The Parish Council would like to thank Tom, Rachel and Anna for their hard work and contributions in providing an enjoyable and memorable lunch for residents.

- Chairperson M Spearing says, the Parish Council would like to propose a small donation of £50 to Tom & Rachel as a gesture of good will. Is everyone in agreement?
- It was unanimously agreed to offer a donation of £50 to Tom and Rachel, the landlords of the Rose & Crown pub.

Chairperson M Spearing mentions the King's Coronation which is happening on the 6th May 2023. The Parish Council have spoken to Tom and Rachel and it has been confirmed that The Rose & Crown Pub is happy to host a village party for the coronation celebrations.

- Under the 1972 act, the Parish Council can give a donation to the Coronation committee to help cover some of the costs of a village celebration. The Parish Council would like to make of £1 per head x the number of residents in the village. There are roughly 400 residents in Ridgmont, so this would be a donation of £400.

- Chairperson M Spearing asks if all Cllrs present are in agreement with this donation?

It was unanimously agreed. Proposed M Dray seconded by R Yexley.

507. Village issues: Gates, lampposts LED upgrades & overgrown verges

Village Gates:

At the last Parish Council meeting in October 2022, Cllr Tim Pick suggested that the village gates could be cleaned or upgraded to recycled plastic gates that have a 30-year life and are low maintenance.

- Chairperson M Spearing and the residents present at the meeting said that this would be a great idea for the village. The village would need 6-8 gates in total. The Parish Council will review the budget in the next financial year April 2023 and look into the costs involved and then make a decision.

Cllr Tim Pick is happy to look into this further.

ACTION: TP

LED upgrades:

The village had 9 mercury lampposts to upgrade to 20-Watt LED lampposts. So far 5 have been upgraded and the remaining 4 lampposts will be completed in February or March.

Overgrown Verges:

Resident: Last year I informed CBC and the Parish Council that the verges were overgrown down Lydds Hill and asked if they could be strim or mown. The issue has been back and forth with CBC but remains unsolved.

The Clerk explained that these verges are not the Parish Councils responsibility and that the Parish Council had been in touch with CBC about this numerous times. Eventually a member of the highways team came out to see and they informed the Parish Council that this was not deemed as high priority.

- Chairperson M Spearing says that the Parish Council will put in a complaint to highways about this again. If the PC fail with highways, the Parish Council may need to look for alternative ways to sort this out. One idea could be a community work day to help cut back some of these overgrown verges in the village.

ACTION: MS & Clerk

General:

It was suggested from one resident that there should be more disability access and sensory play included into the recreation ground.

Chairperson M Spearing asked all present if remote parish council meetings could be an option if the meeting couldn't take place in person.
It was unanimously agreed that this could be an option.

508. Local Plan Update:

Ward Cllr S Clark reports that Prologis were due to submit additional material for their planning application before Christmas 2021, they have not submitted anything. This is regarded as good news for Ridgmont and those opposed to this planning application. There is no action likely this side of the election until significantly passed May. There will be a fresh Consultation on the additional material.

- Chairperson M Spearing explains how Ward Cllr S Clark has been incredibly instrumental in supporting the village and has supported the Parish Council throughout the whole objection process. The Parish council are very grateful for Sue's help and guidance. A huge amount of work has gone into this over many years and the Parish Council could not have done this without Sue's help.

509. Date of Next Meeting:

Next meeting is 11th May 2023 – this will be the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.00pm followed by the Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm

Closed at 21:00pm