

# RIDGMONT PARISH COUNCIL

Mrs Olivia Burrows  
Clerk to the Parish Council

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Signed *Olivia Burrows* - Parish Clerk

18<sup>th</sup> October 2022

**Minutes of the Ridgmont Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at The Stables, Rose & Crown pub, Ridgmont starting at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Chairperson M Spearing, Cllrs - P Fewings, H Francis and Clerk O Burrows.

**In attendance:** CB Cllr S Clarke.

## MINUTES

### 484. To Receive apologies for absence:

Apologies were received by P Francis, M Dray, CB Cllr K Matthews & CB Cllr R Morris.

### 485. 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** – Moved into a property in the village last year, which had a few issues that needed addressing. Within the first month, this resident made a complaint to Grand Union regarding the mould and sewage smells. It took 3 months for Grand Union's contractors to attend and try and rectify the problems. Unfortunately, the resident is still experiencing the same issues.

The resident's main concern is the mould in the kitchen from rising damp and hasn't used the kitchen in over 1 year. The cupboards are falling apart and appliances are rusty and have blown up due to the dampness. The resident proceeded to show the Parish Councillors photographs of the mould.

This resident experienced concussion when a kitchen cupboard fell on her and now suffers with asthma due to black mould on lungs. The living conditions have affected this resident's health and mental wellbeing.

- Chairperson Maria Spearing - The Parish Council have heard about issues with Grand Union and how they've been responding to residents. The evidence that has been provided to the Parish Council is shocking and the Parish Council are appalled at how Grand Union are treating the people that live in their homes. Although this is not within the remit of the Parish Council, the Council is extremely concerned about the welfare of its' residents. The Parish Council will write to Grand Union and raise concerns and will also copy Central Bedfordshire Council into the complaint.

Chairperson M Spearing advised residents to supply the Parish Council with evidence i.e photos and written contemporaneous records that can be included in the letter.

**Resident** - *Family member acting as representative at the Parish Council meeting.*

Major concerns regarding the living standards of a resident. This resident is experiencing mould from rising damp, poor roof tile placement, sealant with black mould and damp cabinetry. This resident is highly vulnerable and is experiencing major health and breathing issues.

Damp has been caused by a hole which has not been fixed properly, which has exacerbated the situation. A few months ago, this resident fell in the garden on an uneven path which led to hospitalization. There needs to be grab rails at front and back of the house and the paving needs to be evened out.

- Chairperson M Spearing – Added that social services and these resident’s Doctor surgeries will also be copied into the letter. The Parish Council is committed to trying to get Grand Union to listen and take action.

**ACTION: M SPEARING**

**Resident** – Another Grand Union Resident reported that they do not have heating in their property.

**486. 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 H Francis** – Trustee on Ridgmont charity and PCC

**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

**487. To approve minutes of the previous meeting:**

**Resolved:** Unanimously agreed to accept the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Proposed by P Fewings and seconded by H Francis.

**Resolved:** Minutes were duly signed as a correct record.

**488. To discuss matters arising:**

The Parish Council has replaced 5 of the old mercury Lamp posts. There are a further 4 to be replaced early 2023.

Peter Fewings and Andy Downie are stepping down as Parish Councillors. Peter and Andy were thanked for all their hard work and support. They have been amazing!

Rachel Edmunds, Anna Warne, Tim Pick were put forward to join the Parish Council  
It was resolved to co-opt Rachel Edmunds, Tim Pick and Anna Warne as members of the Council.

**489. To receive reports:**

No reports

**490. To receive correspondence:**

1. Consultation on the proposal submitted for Husborne Crawley Lower School to become an academy and join Kingsbridge Educational Trust.

- There were no objections to this application.

2. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 – Section 53– Proposed deletion of part of Ridgmont Footpath No. A15

Central Bedfordshire has informed the Parish Council that part of the footpath No.A15 from Church Street to the High Street will be deleted. This part of the footpath goes through houses and bungalows in the village and therefore no longer used.

- The Clerk will correspond with the footpath officer to confirm that the Parish Council have no objections to this footpath section being deleted from the Definitive Maps.

#### 491. To accept payments:

16/05/2022	May 22	Nab Landscapes Invoice INV2724	Grasscutting	£ 580.00
16/05/2022	May 22	May Salary 19th April - 18th May	Clerks Salary	£ 224.99
23/05/2022	May 22	Npower Elec. invoices IN03520682	Energy	£ 242.54
06/06/2022	June 22	Clerk's allowance Inv OB004 - May	Clerks Allowance	£ 50.96
07/06/2022	June 22	A P Downie - Street party expenses	Contingency/Reserves	£ 200.00
19/06/2022	June 22	Nab Landscapes Invoice INV2728	Grasscutting	£ 580.00
20/06/2022	June 22	June Salary 19th May - 18th June	Clerks Salary	£ 224.99
21/06/2022	June 22	Npower Elec. Invoice	Energy	£ 233.70
29/06/2022	June 22	Clerk's allowance Inv OB005 - June	Clerks Allowance	£ 25.00
04/07/2022	July 22	Andy Muskett - 1st Qtr Invoice 5212	Street Lighting Maintenance	£ 114.90
18/07/2022	July 22	Nab Landscapes Invoice INV2731	Grasscutting	£ 580.00
18/07/2022	July 22	July Salary 19th June - 18th July	Clerks Salary	£ 224.99
20/07/2022	July 22	Npower Elec. Invoice	Energy	£ 207.19
26/07/2022	July 22	Clerk's allowance Inv OB006 - July	Clerks Allowance	£ 25.00
26/07/2022	July 22	the Print Cellar invoice 2042 - Local plan Newsletter RPC share 300 copies	Distribution (Printing, newsletter)	£ 105.00
26/07/2022	July 22	The Print Cellar invoice 2041 - Ridgmont 250 copies	Distribution (Printing, newsletter)	£ 42.00
09/08/2022	August 22	Nab Landscapes Invoice INV2735	Grasscutting	£ 580.00
15/08/2022	August 22	August Salary 19th July - 18th Aug	Clerks Salary	£ 224.99
17/08/2022	August 22	Npower Elec. Invoice	Energy	£ 209.88
24/08/2022	August 22	Bedfordshire Association of town & council	Affiliate Fees	£ 94.00
24/08/2022	August 22	Clerk's allowance Inv OB007 - August	Clerks Allowance	£ 25.00
01/09/2022	September 2	BHIB LTD - Insurance ref. LCO02710 4th Sep 22 - 3rd Sep 23	Insurance	£ 602.20
02/09/2022	September 2	Print Cellar Invoice 2042	Distribution (Printing, newsletter)	£ 140.00
16/09/2022	September 2	Playsafety LTD Invoice 64444	Safety Inspection	£ 92.40
16/09/2022	September 2	And Muskett LTD Invoice 5241 - 5 Lamposts upgrade	Replacement lamposts	£ 2,088.00
22/09/2022	September 2	September Salary 19th Aug - 18th Sept	Clerks Salary	£ 224.99
26/09/2022	September 2	Nab Landscapes Invoice INV2738	Grasscutting	£ 580.00
27/09/2022	September 2	Npower Elec. Invoice	Energy	£ 209.85
03/10/2022	October 22	Clerk's allowance Inv OB008 - September	Clerks Allowance	£ 25.00
05/10/2022	October 22	Andy Muskett - 2nd Qtr Invoice 5278	Street Lighting Maintenance	£ 114.90
14/10/2022	October 22	The Poppy shop - Wreath	Poppy Wreath	£ 23.99
15/10/2022	October 22	Nab Landscapes Invoice INV2743	Grasscutting	£ 580.00
				<b>£ 9,476.46</b>

#### 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. 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 : £11,166.03**

- It was unanimously agreed to accept payments. Proposed by P Fewings and seconded by M Spearing

#### 492. Review budget and agree on precept for 2023:

<b>OCTOBER 2022</b>		
<b>INCOME 22/23:</b>	<b>SPEND TO DATE:</b>	<b>BANK BALANCE Oct 2022</b>
£ 22,638.35	£ 11,856.21	£ 10,422.14
		<b>Bank Estimate End of Financial Year</b>
		£ 4,900.00
<b>Monthly Fixed Expenditure</b>		
Clerks Salary	£ 224.99	
Clerks Allowance	£ 25.00	
Grasscutting	£ 580.00	
Energy	£ 220.00	
<b>Yearly Expenditure</b>		
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	
<b>Next 6 month Estimate</b>		
6 months Clerks Salary	£ 1,349.94	
6 months clerks allowance	£ 150.00	
Clerks Expenses	£ 100.00	
2 months Grasscutting	£ 1,160.00	
6 months energy	£ 1,500.00	Estimate
Street Lighting maintenance	£ 230.00	
Rec Rent	£ 20.00	
Poppy wreath	£ 24.00	
Website	£ 100.00	
4 remaining lampposts replac	£ 1,500.00	Estimate
	<b>£ 6,133.94</b>	
<b>BANK ESTIMATE end of financial year</b>		
	<b>£ 4,892.19</b>	

This year the Parish Council have reviewed the current Precept and analysed the current budget and prediction for next year's expenses. Due to the increase in energy and other expenditure, the current precept of £17K is not enough to cover our yearly expenditure. The Clerk explained that: *this year we had £5K brought forward from 2021, which has helped keep the finances afloat.*

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

- Chairperson Maria Spearing mentioned that maintenance is a big cost

The Parish Council have therefore decided to increase the Precept for 2023/2024 to £20K.

The Parish Council will review the budget and expenditure in the next financial year and consider decreasing the precept for 2024/2025.

- Chairperson Maria Spearing proposed to residents present at the meeting to increase the precept to £20K.

Unanimously agreed Precept by Parish Councillors and residents present - Proposed by P Fewings and seconded by H Francis

#### 493. Section 106 grant funding and tree planting grant:

Ridgmont Parish Council - Section 106 - Oct 2022		
Category	Amount	Spend by Date
LINF	611.64	25/03/2023
LINF	328.62	18/02/2024
LINF	201.83	no spend by
<b>Total to spend</b>	<b>1,142.09</b>	
LOUT	1016.28	18/02/2024
LOUT	625.79	no spend by
LOUT	1,890.11	25/04/2023
<b>Total to spend</b>	<b>3,532.18</b>	
LREC	4,069.94	25/04/2023
LREC	2,187.77	18/02/2024
LREC	1,345.92	no spend by
<b>Total to spend</b>	<b>7,603.63</b>	
	<b><u>12,277.90</u></b>	

The Parish Council has received some funding of £7600 for the Recreational ground, however the Parish Council may need to contribute some finances to pay for all the works. There is also some funding available for two other specific 'open spaces' in the village. The Parish Council will look at these spaces and come up with some ideas on how the funding can be spent to benefit the residents.

- Chairperson M Spearing – The Clerk will do a walkabout in the village to look at these open spaces.

#### Resident question – Can the village have additional dog poo bins?

- Chairperson M Spearing responded, saying that the Parish Council can ask Central Bedfordshire if the village can have more dog poo bins.

The Parish Council is investigating the CBC Tree Planting Grant. The Parish Council will look for the best places in the village where new trees can be planted.

- Chairperson M Spearing explained that residents are eligible to have a tree planted in their garden.

**ACTION: CLERK & M SPEARING**

#### **494. Village gates and village issues:**

The Parish Council are aware of the following village issues; potholes, overgrown verges, dirty wooden gates, drop kerbs, raging motorbikes through village, vandalism at the old Church and dog poo.

Chairperson M Spearing mentioned that the wooden gates at either end of the village need cleaning and possibly painted and welcome volunteers to help with this. The gates are made out of wood and are showing signs of environmental damage.

- Resident suggestion – Could the Parish Council look at changing the wooden gates for recycled plastic ones?
- Chairperson M Spearing replied saying that that was a good idea and the Parish Council can look at the budget in the next financial year to see if the village can get new ones.

**ACTION: CLERK**

#### **495. Local Plan Update:**

The Prologis planning application for the Expansion of Marston Gate has not been determined. The application is not an exemplar scheme and CBC have asked for more information. Based on the current submission the application should be refused.

- Chairperson M Spearing said that the Parish Council have tried everything in their power since 2017 to object to this application. The Parish Council are still objecting to the application and wish to see it refused or substantially reduced.
- It is important to make it clear to residents that CBC are still accepting objection letters. If residents haven't yet sent in a letter, now is the time.

#### **496. Date of Next Meeting:**

Thursday 9th February at The Stables

**Meeting closed at 20:30pm**