

Cosgrove Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Cosgrove Parish Council held on **Wednesday 3 May 2023** at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr D Smith (Chairman), ~~Cllr C Bird~~, ~~Cllr A Bracey~~, Cllr S Comerford,
Cllr M Draddy, Cllr C Peacock, ~~Cllr J Proctor~~, Cllr P Roberts

Mrs J Evans (Clerk to the Council)

Minute	Action
CPC/23/5/1 David Smith unanimously elected as Chair . Clerk to consult councillors ahead of next meeting to identify candidate(s) for Vice Chair	Clerk
CPC/23/5/2 Apologies accepted for Cllr Bird (work) and Cllr Proctor (unforeseen personal matter). Cllr Bracey did not attend	
CPC/23/5/3 There were no declarations of interest	
CPC/23/5/4 Minutes of 5 April, as amended, were approved and signed	
CPC/23/5/5 Matters arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere in the agenda:	
Open Reach transfer of wiring to Western Power poles incomplete. Clerk to follow up and report back.	Clerk
Wayleave for Gigaclear outstanding and dependent on outstanding land registration of village green to be relisted if necessary in September.	Clerk
No reply from Senior Planner at Milton Keynes to email asking for a meeting with Clerk. Clerk to follow up.	Clerk
Clerk to arrange site meeting with Councillors to assess improving access for cyclists via step to towpath by the horse tunnel taking into account Health and Safety concerns of outgoing Clerk	Clerk
Inconsiderate parking on pavements covered in Chair's summary for the May edition of Old Mail	
Helen Howard, West Northants Highways Community Liaison Officer offered to attend PC meeting to discuss highways matters. Clerk to follow up.	Clerk
CPC/23/5/6 meeting closed 19.40	
1. Public Session: Representative from warehouse development objection group FDOG stated a crowdfunding page has been set up to meet the cost of expenses. A banner will be placed on a trailer in the field adjacent to the A5 Stratford roundabout. FDOG happy to work with the Council Planning Sub Committee. 2. Ward Councillor, Ian McCord, commented the Environment Agency (EA) letter to the West Northants Planner maintained their objection to WNS/2022/1741/EIA and the warehouse developers' flood mitigation. EA are not satisfied that the loss of flooding space through buildings and infrastructure at the site has been replaced adequately by other drainage. Cllr McCord has not heard that the application will be sent to the Planning Committee anytime soon.	
Meeting reopened 20.00	
CPC/23/5/7 Chair's annual report was circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting and was well received. Clerk to append to these minutes.	Clerk
CPC/23/5/8 Parish Clerk's report: Bank mandate paperwork went astray. £25 compensation from Lloyds for inconvenience. Clerk will advise Cllrs when online banking is set up.	Clerk
On 25.04.2023 Canal and River Trust (CART) wrote to say they will no longer empty their two dog waste bins in the Parish. PC contractors for dog waste, DNH Contracts, already empty one of these bins (because CART only empty infrequently). Council resolved to add on additional bin (short distance from Cosgrove lock) to be emptied weekly at a cost of £5 each collection. Clerk to liaise over bin usage over the next six months and report back at November meeting.	Clerk
Britannia Bus Company, who operate route 89, have raised concerns about another Parish Council apparently subsidising a competitor. Cosgrove Parish Council resolved to write to Britannia reiterating support for the bus service but not get embroiled in the dispute.	Clerk

Castlethorpe PC, where there is a new clerk, has resolved to offer any support needed over the Castlethorpe turn from Yardley Road. Cosgrove clerk has suggested meeting up with Castlethorpe Clerk and setting up an informal group of local clerks

Old Mail are celebrating 40 years in continuous print on 11 June. Clerk to circulate invitation to all Councillors who **resolved** to send a letter of congratulations

CPC23/4/9 Finance

a). Received end of year financial report from outgoing RFO and approved current state of finance. Noted the internal audit will take place on 17 May 2023 and outgoing RFO will report back to the June meeting (in his own time).

Incoming clerk to provide information on salary scales and bands to increase understanding of councillors and the **resolution** to pay incoming clerk on point 25 of the substantive band in view of the Introduction to Local Council Administration qualification obtained in March.

b). Approved payment of accounts and invoices and signed cheques. (Cheque number 002186 to be retained until Allotment Committee confirm the fence has been completed to their satisfaction.)

20.04.2023	£ 460.00	D Everett	April salary	002176
20.04.2023	£ 115.00	HMRC	PAYE tax	002177
20.04.2023	£ 11.11	D Everett	ISP	002178
20.04.2023	£ 14.00	D Everett	phone	
20.04.2023	£ 55.00	D Everett	Green Bin	
20.04.2023	£ 596.82	J Evans	Jan to Mar salary	002179
20.04.2023	£ 149.21	HMRC	PAYE tax	002180
12.05.2023	£ 2,730.00	A Hickford Lighting Ltd	The Stocks street light	002181
30.04.2023	£ 84.00	DNH Contracts	emptying dog waste bins	002182
01.05.2023	£ 460.00	D Everett	May Salary	002183
01.05.2023	£ 11.11	D Everett	ISP	
01.05.2023	£ 14.00	D Everett	phone	
01.05.2023	£ 115.00	HMRC	PAYE tax	002184
02.05.2023	£ 823.32	NJ Blackwell Garden Services	mowing on 3, 12,19/4/23	002185
03.05.2023	£385.00	Landmark Landscaping and Driveways	construction of allotment fence and gate	002186

c. Advice had been sought about Resolution (CPC/4/7/e) to contribute up to £1,000 towards professional expenses incurred by Furtho Development Opposition Group, FDOG. The outgoing Clerk had raised concerns about PC liability.

On 27 April 2023 Northants County Association of Local Councils (NCALC) stated:

“The parish council is only a consultee as is the action group. It is West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) that is the Local Planning Authority and the one responsible for determining the planning application. There is no legal impediment to a parish council making a grant to an action group. However, there are significant risks, not least the reputational risk (imagine the action group using the money from the parish council to launch a paint attack on the WNC offices).....It can work successfully ..where the parish council and action group work together to identify common issues....The parish council could commission [a report] and contract directly with the consultant so that the invoice is in the name of the parish council and the transaction is between the council and the contractor.” The report can then be shared with the action group. Councillors felt this guidance was helpful and clarified the way ahead.

CPC23/5/10 Planning

Outgoing RFO

Clerk

Clerk

<p>a. Resolved to support application 2023/5061/TCA Medlar House, Stratford Road works to trees in the Conservation Area as the trees were unsafe.</p> <p>b. The first meeting of the Planning Sub Committee took place on 25 April. Minutes were in draft. The aim of the Subcommittee had been left open for discussion but was broadly to provide advice to the main PC committee about the AL5 warehouse development WNS/2022/1741/EIA. Contact had been made with the author of the report about the development that appeared in the MK Citizen in April. There had been much interest and the author was keen to meet with the Sub Committee and produce another article. A joint meeting with the author and FDOG was felt to be a good idea. Planning training by NCALC to be investigated. The Sub Committee had decided to recommend to the PC an invitation to Rt Hon Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, should be sent inviting him to visit the area and see for himself how inappropriate the proposed development would be. Approaches to be made to parish councils in the surrounding area to assess interest in joining with Cosgrove in extending that invitation.</p>	Clerk/Cllr Peacock
<p>CPC23/5/11 The Agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday 17 May 2023 at 19.00 was agreed. Resolved to invite FDOG to present update on warehouse development. Clerk to email participants to ask for any presentations to be sent ahead of the evening; presentations to be time limited. Resolved to meet the cost of the Village Hall hire (£28). Decided not to invite the Police Fraud team but Clerk to find out more details of the cybercrime awareness talk as this could be arranged for the community.</p>	Clerk
<p>CPC23/5/12 Allotments The M&S Water final invoice for water installation at the allotment was for £5,390 plus £1,078 VAT total £6,468. This was higher than the original quote (£4,335 plus £867 VAT total £5,202) because two items (for local authority permissions and highway reinstatement) had been omitted. A request for a further contribution from the original land owner (Grand Union Homes GUH) had been made by Cllr Proctor but there had been no response. Resolved to pay the outstanding invoice (£6,468) if there was no response from GUH by 12 May 2023. Accounting for the expenses associated with the installation of the water had been further complicated by the solicitors deducting their fees (£2,238 plus £477 VAT total £2,687 rounded) for land registration and dealing with the matter from the contribution of £4,335 made in September 2022 by GUH. Outgoing Clerk will make necessary adjustments in the account.</p>	Outgoing RFO
<p>CPC23/5/13 Councillor updates:</p> <p>Cllr Comerford reported the "Beat Bus" visit by Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Matt Taylor on Tuesday 2 May was well attended. Matters such as smoking of cannabis, inconsiderate parking and speeding were raised by residents. There was little that could be done about smoking of cannabis and police were more focussed on dealers and growers. Only vehicles causing an obstruction by blocking the pavement or indeed the highway could be removed by police. It might be possible to request a mobile speed trap on Stratford Road. Details of how to arrange community speed watch training were given and the clerk will investigate. PCSO has had mediation training and could broker a meeting between PC and Cosgrove Park if needed.</p> <p>The planters at the crossroads had been cleared out and were ready for restocking. Cllrs Peacock and Comerford to liaise over possible sponsorship by Homebase.</p> <p>The rain butts were ready for reconnection by Cllr Draddy who will also make a new cover.</p> <p>Cllr Peacock reported he had changed the data collection parameters on the Speed Indicator Devices (SID) and will share the instructions on downloading data on Teams. Data will be presented monthly starting at the June meeting. A variety of settings for the SIDs were available and it was resolved Cllr Peacock would make adjustments to see what effect they had on speeds.</p> <p>Cllr Smith reported there had been a good turn out of volunteers for the litter pick on Good Friday. A further session would be arranged later in the year.</p>	Clerk Cllrs Comerford /Peacock Cllr Draddy Cllr Peacock
<p>CPC23/5/14 The proposed boundary review alterations were not likely to have an effect on Cosgrove parish bounded as it is by Milton Keynes and no response to the consultation was needed.</p>	
<p>CPC23/5/15 Playground</p> <p>a). A quote by Wicksteed Park to resurface the playground and remove the outdated metal climbing frame was awaited. There was some interest in a working party removing the metal climbing frame. Clerk to relist.</p> <p>b). Resolved to meet the cost of £88 plus VAT to send Cllr Peacock on the NCALC Outdoor Play and Gym Workshop and Exhibition on 11 July 2023.</p>	Clerk
<p>CPC23/5/16 Date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 7 June 2023 at 7.30 pm</p>	
<p>CPC23/5/17 Closure of Meeting at 21.45 hours</p>	

Cosgrove Parish Council Report 2023

The past year has been by far the most challenging year in my time as a Parish Councillor. It has also been the only time I recall where Cosgrove PC hasn't had a full council, with a vacancy still remaining. In August we were informed by the former Chair that he had decided to resign from the Parish Council. With Parish Council meetings only permitted with a chairman in place, I was elected to the position of Chair at the September meeting, having previously been Vice Chair. To date a Vice Chair hasn't been elected.

The clerk has been involved with the process of registering the land allocated as allotments and our Playing Field with Land Registry. During DE's 30 years as clerk, he'd always understood that the Playing Field was registered as Parish land. After Gigaclear had been informed by WNC that the land was grass verge and not registered, they located their equipment on the land. It was later established that the land registry could not be traced, leaving the same steps to be taken for both areas of land. The allotments are progressing well with plots dug in preparation for planting in the Spring of this year. A mains water pipe has been laid and connected below the concrete path leading to the allotments from Manor Close and connected to the mains. The connection is to a secured tap on the allotments, which should prevent waste and misuse.

The agreement with GUH to pay for the connection minus the VAT has been held up by the delay in agreeing on the quote and final cost details.

The Planning application for employment sites on Stratford Road and Furtho Pit has been a major concern to the Parish of Cosgrove and Old Stratford. Parishioners joined together to review the application documentation and determine how best to raise objections to the application.

Objections totalled more than 520 along with concerns raised by The Environment Agency and National Highways. Framptons, the developer has since input a 910-page Transport Assessment and Framework Travel document in addition to amended plans that are meant to alleviate runoff water adding to the risk of flooding.

Three Speed Indication Devices are in full operation on Bridge Rd, Stratford Road, and Yardley Road. The data downloaded in February shown that one percent of vehicles driving within the 30 mph area of the village, exceed the speed limit.

Appreciation goes to our volunteers who assisted with installation of the devices and collecting the data.

In November our Remembrance gathering commemorated those who fell during wars involving the Commonwealth. It was nice to see the community coming together and ensuring the sacrifices made will not be forgotten.

That afternoon, Councillor Chris Bird led a small group of volunteers who planted the 121 tees to form a hedge around the New Cemetery. The small trees have taken, and we now watch as they become established.

The Yardley Road/Castlethorpe Road junction has had more accidents, but still WNC have not made improvements to the signage that was identified as necessary, four years back. When asked to review the situation, WNC came back claiming less than three accidents had been reported in the last two years. Records from our Village Facebook site showed that the figures were drastically out, with three known accidents in the last eighteen months. A record is now being compiled and will be passed to WNC to encourage action at the junction. WNC have since committed to review the junction with their engineers and determine achievable improvements.

A new streetlamp has been installed in The Stocks, improving visibility and making it safer for all on the lower side of the crossroads.

The website appears to be being used as the source of information for the village with figures in January reaching an all-time high.

A recent communication from a researcher at the BBC news explained that the website had provided

them with the necessary information to follow up with a request for further details of crime in the area. Thankfully crime levels are very low in the village, so the programme will focus on another area. Derek Everett will retire as clerk to Cosgrove Parish Council after the May Annual PC meeting, after near 30 years of service. Derek initially supported Cosgrove PC for an intended 6 months to enable the Parish Council at the time, to identify and appoint a clerk. That didn't happen and Derek continued as clerk along with his role as clerk to Old Stratford Parish Council. Derek's service has been greatly appreciated, especially by those of us that have relied on his guidance over many matters during his time in office.

Our new clerk Jenny Evans was appointed from 1st January 2023 as Assistant Clerk. This provided time for Jenny to have a handover from Derek and work on projects that benefits the PC for the future.

Jenny Evans will take over as clerk on 5th May 2023. The appointment of JE has now allowed the PC to purchase IT equipment that it has never owned. Previously DE used the equipment owned by OSPC with CPC paying towards the maintenance of the equipment.

I thank Jenny for her assistance, patience, and professionalism in taking over the reins.

As in most voluntary groups, the public can easily assume that it's our responsibility to do the physical work along with the decision making, as it is often the same people who volunteer where they can. On behalf of the community, I thank you.

Not all volunteers that give their time for the benefit of the village are Parish Councillors, so I must give credit and express appreciation to the people who:

- Painted the metal fencing on each side of the bridge
- Repaired and treated public bench seats
- Pick up litter
- Pick up other people's dog's mess
- Contribute reports to the Old Mail and the edit team who prepare for print
- Reported issues using Fix my Street
- Keep our SIDs functioning and download the data
- Look after the flowerbed below the village sign
- Maintain the planters on Bridge Road
- Keep the flag flying at the crossroads
- Sell poppies and join the Remembrance commemoration
- Organise and set up the Christmas lights
- Planted trees in the new Cemetery
- Keep the churchyard and cemeteries tidy
- Cut and tidy the grass verges
- Clear the drainage channels at the Dog's Mouth and along Stratford Road
- Read planning documents and advise on their findings to allow others to express their concerns on applications

Thank you to you all and anyone else that I've unintentionally missed.

David Smith
Chair Cosgrove Parish Council