

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting
Wednesday, 9 October 2024 at 19:30
The Elmdon Lounge, Parish Hall, Elmdon Road, Marston Green

Present:

Cllr Mike Kay (Chairman)
Cllr Anne Clarke
Cllr Carole Pearce
Cllr Claire Kelly
Cllr Clive Hill
Cllr Mark Noblet
Cllr Paul Powell
Cllr Philip Clover

Clerk: Julie Brennan
Public: 2

C 24 - 0189 Chairman's welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

C 24 - 0190 The Public

A member of the public asked if Gorse Farm had closed. None of the Councillors were aware of a closure which it was felt was unlikely given a recent planning application to extend the car park at the site. Cllr Hill agreed to look into the matter.

Action item: *Cllr Clive Hill to make enquiries to establish if Gorse Farm has been closed.*

C 24 - 0191 Apologies

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllr Leigh Trevis.

C 24 - 0192 Declaration of Interest and Dispensations

None.

C 24 - 0193 Minutes

The Chairman asked those members present at the 11 September 2024 meeting if they had read the minutes and if they could confirm these as a true and accurate record.

Resolved: *that the minutes were a true and accurate record.*

C 24 - 0194 Actions update

C24 – 0160 The Clerk confirmed that the order had been placed for the sleepers which would be used to construct the benches.

C24 – 0166 The Clerk confirmed that the quarterly budget report would be provided to the next F&GP Committee meeting for review and would then be included on the agenda for the November 2024 Parish Council meeting.

C24 – 0178 The Clerk advised that Kingshurst Automotive could service the new Ford Ranger without voiding the warranty and that Ford recommended servicing the vehicle every 18,000 miles or

two years and changing the oil every year.

C24 – 0179 The Clerk confirmed that the invoice had been raised for the sale of the old Ford Ranger to M&BG at a cost of £700 including VAT.

C24 – 0195 Events Committee

Cllr Paul Powell let members know that approximately 280 people had attended the Community Day and feedback had been good. He advised that an online survey had been set up for stallholders and attendees to complete. He also noted that leaflet drops in particular areas such as Bickenhill would be undertaken to publicise future events. Cllr Powell asked for volunteers to help with the Remembrance Sunday event on 10 November 2024 and proposed working with the Parish Hall and St Leonard's Church to hold an event to mark the 80th anniversary of VE day on 8 May 2025. Members discussed the potential VE Day event and agreed that the Events Committee should contact the Parish Hall and St Leonard's Church to see if a joint event could be set up.

Resolved: *that the Events Committee should work with the Parish Hall and St Leonard's Church to arrange an event to mark the 80th anniversary of VE day on 8 May 2025.*

C 24 - 0196 Recreation Committee

- a) The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2024 were noted.
- b) The budget/expenditure report was noted and the income position discussed.
- c) Members discussed the benefits of joining the National Allotment Society at a cost of £55 per year and this was approved.

Resolved: *that the Parish Council should become members of the National Allotment Society at a cost of £55 per annum.*

- d) Members discussed the recommendation to increase the allotment fees by 5p per square metre to 50p per square metre with effect from 1 January 2026 which was approved.

Resolved: *that the allotment fees would be increased by 5p per square metre to 50p per square metre with effect from 1 January 2026*

- e) As a result of requests received for a recent interment, members discussed whether to allow music to be played at interments, to allow metal or plastic handles on caskets and the safety implications of mourners backfilling or lowering. It was agreed:

- that requests for music to be played at an interment should be put in writing to the Clerk/Deputy Clerk in the first instance and, if they had any concerns, the request should be referred to the Parish Council for a decision.
- that metal handles were accepted but plastic handles should be biodegradable.
- that requests from mourners to backfill or lower should be made in advance of the interment and a risk assessment and indemnity form supplied.

It was also agreed that, given the advice from Birmingham Airport, birds may not be released at the Burial Ground and neither should balloons or other inflatables.

Resolved: *that the Clerk should draft the Guidance for Funeral Directors document in line with the recommendations above.*

C24 – 0197 Staffing Committee

- a) The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2024 were noted.
- b) The Grievance, Sickness and Absence and Disciplinary policies were reviewed. The Clerk was asked to add a line to the policies to note who she was required to report to. Members noted that it was necessary to consult the staff in relation to the policies before they could be implemented.

Resolved: *that the Grievance, Sickness and Absence and Disciplinary policies were approved subject to an amendment to note who the Clerk should report to and subject to the necessary consultation with staff.*

- c) Cllr Mike Kay outlined the reasons why a job evaluation for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk should be undertaken which included the need to establish the correct salary banding. It was noted that the job evaluation could be undertaken by Ja'Neen Day of WALC at a cost of £220 per person.

Resolved: *that Ja'Neen Day should be asked to undertake a job evaluation for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk*

at a cost of £220 per person.

- d) Cllr Mike Kay advised that currently any TOIL which staff have built up but not taken before the end of the financial year is lost. Members discussed the suggestion that an assessment should be made each February to identify the amount of TOIL due and decide on how much would be payable before the end of year.

Resolved: that TOIL should be assessed in February each year and a decision made on how much would be payable prior to the year end.

- e) Members reviewed the draft Long Service Award policy which would provide for a £50 voucher to be awarded after 5 and 10 years' service and a £250 voucher awarded after 20 years with an additional £50 voucher awarded every 5 years thereafter. Members suggested adding a £50 voucher to be awarded after 15 years and agreed that the awards should be backdated by two years. It was agreed that the vouchers should not be purchased using the Chairman's allowance.
- Resolved:** that a £50 voucher would be awarded after 5, 10 and 15 years service and a £250 voucher after 20 years. Thereafter, a £50 voucher would be awarded at 5 yearly intervals. The policy is to be backdated by two years.

C 24 - 0198 Finance & General Purpose Committee

- a) The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2024 were noted.
- b) Cllr Mike Kay provided an overview of the current budget position. The budget/expenditure report was noted.
- c) Members discussed the quote of £2,555 to install additional fencing at the Elmdon Lane and Amenity Land Allotments and this was approved.
- Resolved:** that the quote of £2,555 for fencing at the allotments was approved.
- d) Cllr Mike Kay confirmed that further issues had arisen with the issue of the faulty earth on lamppost 4 at the Recreation Ground and the matter would therefore be referred back to the Recreation Committee.

C 24 - 0199 Planning Committee

- a) The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2024 and the decisions submitted under delegated authority were noted.
- b) Planning application PL/2024/01668/MINFHO (137 Elmdon Lane) was discussed and the observations submitted by the Committee were noted.

C 24 - 0200 To approve the Finance Approval List and list of urgent payment made

The payments detailed on the expenditure report were considered and approved. The list of urgent payments made was noted.

Resolved: that the expenditure payments detailed in the report were approved.

C 24 - 0201 Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Clerk advised that following several recommendations from other Clerks, she had obtained a quote of £350 (maximum) from Bill Robinson for next year's internal audit. Members discussed the quote which was approved.

Resolved: that the quote of £350 from Bill Robinson to carry out the internal audit in 2025 was approved

C 24 - 0202 Events Committee

Cllr Mike Kay let members know that Cllr Anne Clarke had requested to join the Events Committee. The request was approved.

Resolved: that Cllr Anne Clarke should join the Events Committee.

C 24 - 0203 To approve the architect's fee

The quote of £1,750 from On Time Design to provide a feasibility layout scheme in relation to the extension of the lounge in the Pavilion was approved.

Resolved: that the quote of £1,750 from On Time Design to provide a feasibility layout scheme for the Pavilion extension was approved.

C 24 - 0204 Request for Parish Council support

Members reviewed the request for Parish Council from a resident seeking compensation due to the impact of the M42 junction 6 works. It was noted that Development Consent Order had been issued which had indicated that no compensation would be payable but some residents had been given to understand that they may be compensated. Members agreed that, if the resident applied for compensation, then a letter should be sent on behalf of the Parish Council supporting the application.

Resolved: that, if the resident made an application for compensation, then a letter would be sent on behalf of the Parish Council supporting that application

C 24 - 0205 Correspondence

The thank you note from the 1st Marston Green Scouts following their recent trip to Croatia was noted.

C 24 - 0206 External Committee Reports

- a) **Parish Hall Trustees** – Cllr Clive Hill confirmed that there was no update to share at this time, but a Parish Hall Trustee meeting was due to take place shortly.
- b) **Marston Green Village Charitable Trust** – Cllr Clive Hill confirmed that the next Trustee meeting was due to take place on 15 October 2024
- c) **Airport Matters** – Cllr Mike Kay confirmed that the focus was currently on the section 106 application relating to night flights, details of which had been shared with Members. It was noted that Cllr Bob Sleight had attended various meetings to discuss the application and Alison Rolfe was expected to attend SMBC's Planning Meeting when a decision would be made.
- d) **HS2 Update** – There were no updates to share but it was noted that Cllr Mike Kay, Cllr Clive Hill, Cllr Leigh Trevis and Cllr Philip Clover were due to attend a site visit with HS2 on 24 October 2024.
- e) **M42 J6 update** – Cllr Mike Kay advised that villagers were now required to enter/exit the village to the east and that issues had arisen with visitors getting lost. This had impacted on businesses in the village but, following a review of signage with Skanska, new signs had been put in place to deal with the problem. Further changes to access were anticipated in October but there were still likely to be restrictions in place. A meeting had taken place with SMBC to identify a location for the Christmas tree, but this is unlikely to be resolved in time for a tree to be installed this year. It was also noted that, following a meeting which had been attended by representatives of the village, the vicar, National Highways, Skanska and Saqib Bhatti MBE MP an offer of £4k had been made towards the Church Hall. The amount offered was felt to be insufficient to allow works to be undertaken at the Hall, so consideration was currently being given to installing benches at various sites in the village instead.

C 24 - 0207 Date of the next meeting: 13 November 2024 at 19:30

Venue: The Elmdon Lounge, Parish Hall, Elmdon Road, Marston Green

The meeting closed at 20:52