

FAIRFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of **FAIRFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held in Fairfield Community Hall, Kipling Crescent, Fairfield on Thursday, 11 July 2013 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor B E Dack (Chairman)
P Daffarn (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs C Bidwell
N P Hanks

Cllrs G H Smith

Ward Members in Attendance:	Cllr G Clarke	– Ward Member (Central Bedfordshire Council)
Officers in Attendance:	Mr L Manning	– Interim Parish Clerk (Central Bedfordshire Council)
Others in Attendance:	Ms J Milne	– Manager, Red Bear Children's Centre
	Mr C Phelps	– Strategic Lead and Head Teacher, St Marys CE Academy

FPC/13/36 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor V C Batten and Councillor P Mitchinson and Ward Member Councillor B Saunders.

FPC/13/37 Disclosures of Interest**Item 5 – Red Bear Children's Centre**

Disclosures of interest were received from Councillors Dack and Smith as a Trustees of the Community Centre who had met with the Manager of the Red Bear Children's Centre on a previous occasion and who had visited the Children's Centre to see it in operation.

FPC/13/38 **Council Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of Fairfield Parish Council held on 13 June 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

Minute FPC/13/28: Fairfield Community Centre – Meeting With Heating Engineer

On line six of the preamble delete ‘Vice-Chairman’ and insert ‘Councillor Smith’.

FPC/13/39 **Public Participation**

No members of the public present indicated that they wished to speak.

FPC/13/40 **Red Bear Children’s Centre**

Members had before them a letter and other documents submitted by Jess Milne, the Manager of the Red Bear Children’s Centre. The letter set out the role of the Centre, which was a Surestart Children’s Centre, the range of services provided and proposed service provision in Fairfield Park.

Colin Phelps of St Mary’s CE Academy, the lead body for the Children’s Centre, and Ms Milne provided further background information including the positive Ofsted outcome following its inspection. They emphasised their wish to see the Children’s Centre provide its services to families in the Fairfield area but made clear that they required assistance to do so especially following a recent reduction in Government grant. Ms Milne therefore suggested that Red Bear be allowed to use the Community Centre in order to provide a range of services on either Tuesday or Friday mornings between 9.00 – 1.00 a.m. for 48 weeks of the year. She explained, however, that as Red Bear did not have the funds required, she was asking that the Parish Council meet the cost. The meeting noted that the annual hire charge was estimated to be £1,920.00.

The meeting was reminded that the Centre was run by a Trust and that Red Bear would have to negotiate with the Centre’s administrator for access.

Ms Milne and Mr Phelps undertook to report back to the Council on the progress made.

RESOLVED

- 1 that Fairfield Parish Council meet the letting charge on behalf of the Red Bear Children's Centre for the use of the Community Centre one morning a week;**
- 2 that Councillor Batten be appointed as the Parish Council's representative on the Red Bear Children's Centre Advisory Board for 2013/14.**

FPC/13/41 Police Report

Members had before them the Parish Crime Report for the period 13 June to 11 July 2013. The Chairman referred to a crime recorded in the report involving the theft of a motor vehicle from Bronte Avenue and outlined the possible circumstances leading to the incident.

NOTED

the Bedfordshire Police report.

FPC/13/42 Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Member Report

The Chairman invited the Central Bedfordshire Council ward Member to speak. In response Councillor Clarke referred to a leaflet produced by Central Bedfordshire Council to explain the changes to benefits as a result of the Government's welfare reforms. Although the leaflet was primarily intended for residents it was felt that it would also prove useful for others who needed to respond to queries about the welfare changes. She then gave a copy of the leaflet to the Chairman so that the Parish Council was aware of the changes and could assist if required.

NOTED

the Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Member's report.

FPC/13/43 Appointment of Clerk to the Council/Responsible Financial Officer

The Chairman reported that six enquiries had been received regarding the appointment of a Clerk to the Council/Responsible Financial Officer. Four applications had been submitted and all had been invited for interview. One applicant had been interviewed immediately prior to the meeting that evening because he was on holiday at the time selected for interviews to take place. The remaining applicants would be interviewed next week

Members considered the timetabling of a meeting to ratify an appointment.

RESOLVED

that the meeting of the Parish Council on 8 August 2013 proceed only if an appointment to the post of Clerk to the Council/Responsible Financial Officer has been made and the appointment requires ratification or if other business is of such urgency that consideration cannot be delayed until the following meeting on 12 September 2013.

(Note: Minute FPC/13/55 below also refers).

FPC/13/44 Financial Matters

a. Banking Arrangements and Payments

The Chairman reported that the Parish Council's current account with the Unity Trust Bank was now open. The Parish Council's banking details had been passed to Central Bedfordshire Council and the payment of the first tranche of the precept/CTS grant payment into the Parish Council's account had been requested. Payment was expected to take place within the next week.

In connection with the above the Chairman sought Members' approval to make payments for the following:

- £159.00 for parish council insurance 2013/14 provided by Aviva Insurance Ltd via Came and Company
- £31.20 for the printing of the Fairfield Parish Council and Fairfield Park Residents Association Joint Submission on the proposed local Gypsy and Traveller site
- £554.44 for advertising the vacant post of Clerk to the Council
- £2,788.40 for election expenses (Parish Council election on 2 May 2013)
- £482.00 for membership of the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils 2013/14

RESOLVED

that the payment of the sums listed in the preamble above be approved.

b. Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2013/14

The Chairman reported that he had approached Gill Wiggs to establish whether she would be willing to act as the Parish Council's internal auditor for 2013/14. He reported that Mrs Wiggs already carried out this function for a number of town and parish councils including Stotfold Town Council. Her fee was £135.00 a year.

RESOLVED

that Gill Wiggs be appointed as the Parish Council's internal auditor for 2013/14.

c. Insurance

NOTED

that Came & Company has incepted the Parish Council's insurance policy for 12 months with effect from 15 May 2013.

FPC/13/45 Central Bedfordshire's Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan

The Chairman reported that the consultation period for Central Bedfordshire Council's Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan had closed at 5.00 p.m. on 1 July.

The Chairman referred to the work undertaken by Councillor Hanks and Silke Gruner in producing the Fairfield Parish Council and Fairfield Park Resident's Association Joint Submission. He commented on the strength of the case against the proposed Gypsy and Traveller site to the south of Fairfield that the Joint Submission contained.

RESOLVED

that the Council record its thanks to Councillor Hanks and Silke Gruner for their work in the producing the Fairfield Parish Council and Fairfield Park Resident's Association Joint Submission against the proposed local Gypsy and Traveller site.

FPC/13/46 'Walkabout'

The Chairman suggested that all Councillors meet on a Saturday or Sunday morning to undertake a 'walkabout', lasting approximately one hour, so that they could all be made fully aware of the land ownership problems and disputes that existed in Fairfield.

RESOLVED

that the Chairman email possible weekend dates to all Councillors for a 'walkabout' in Fairfield to learn where and why land ownership problems and disputes existed.

FPC/13/47 Parish Council Website

RESOLVED

that further consideration of this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Council.

FPC/13/48 **Traffic Issues**

a. 20 mph Speed Limit Throughout Fairfield

Councillor Hanks stated that he had contacted Central Bedfordshire Council regarding this matter but was still awaiting a response.

RESOLVED

that further consideration of this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Council.

b. Nuisance Parking on Roads

RESOLVED

that further consideration of this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Council.

FPC/13/49 **Section 106 Agreement**

Arising from the decision at the last meeting of the Council to contact Hotbed Investments and the PJ Livesey Group regarding the possible transfer of land to the Parish Council the Chairman reported that a letter had been drafted to this effect. The draft letter had been sent to officers at Central Bedfordshire Council for comment before despatch. He added that comments had been received late that afternoon. The letter would therefore require amendment before being sent.

The Chairman advised that in addition to the letter from the Parish Council a letter from Central Bedfordshire Council was also due to be sent to Hotbed Investments and the PJ Livesey Group within the near future on aspects of their land holdings in Fairfield.

NOTED

the report by the Chairman.

FPC/13/50 **Allotments and Recreation Open Space**

The Chairman reminded the meeting that Ward Member Councillor Clarke had been asked to contact Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the provision of allotments and other recreational open space. It was understood that a response from Central Bedfordshire Council officers to her enquiries would be forthcoming within the near future.

RESOLVED

that further consideration of this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Council.

FPC/13/51 **Grass Cutting and Gritting**

The Council noted that Councillor Hanks had approached Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the provision of grass cutting and gritting in Fairfield. A reply from officers was still awaited.

RESOLVED

that further consideration of this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Council.

FPC/13/52 **Maps and Notice Boards**

Councillor Daffarn introduced her report on the provision of large scale maps for display in the Parish. She first referred to the Ordnance Survey's Public Sector Mapping Agreement (PSMA) and stated that the Council had joined the PSMA which was free, although data delivery and software to run the data required the purchase of a licence. Councillor Daffarn commented on the complicated nature of the product and how its use by other local parish councils (Silsoe and Shefford) appeared to have been limited. In addition the PSMA had stated that providing large scale maps would be difficult and had referred her to Parish Online which specialised in providing maps to parish and town councils. The membership cost was £20 with a yearly fee dependent on population size. Councillor Daffarn stated that this company did not normally provide maps to the size required but was willing to do so.

The meeting then turned to consider Councillor Mitchinson's report on signboards and notice boards which covered such issues as their purpose, number, siting and appearance. Members noted the traffic problems which could arise if the sign boards were not located in suitable locations and it was suggested that this issue be considered further when the Council undertook its 'walkabout'.

Reference was made to the existing notice boards at the Urban Park and Tesco's.

RESOLVED

- 1 that the possible location of sign boards and notice boards be considered on the forthcoming 'walkabout';**
- 2 that Councillor Mitchinson establish possible costs for sign boards and notice boards;**
- 3 that Councillor Daffarn ask Ordnance Survey to supply a digital map of Fairfield to the Parish Council and the Council then have it annotated and printed.**

FPC/13/53 **Fairfield Community Centre – Meeting With Heating Engineer**

Councillor Bidwell reported on the recent meeting to discuss the findings of the heating engineer's report on the Community Centre's heating system. The report had revealed areas of concern and required that the temperature output of the heaters be measured. Councillor Bidwell stated that the installation of the heaters conformed to the required code.

It was noted that the Chairman of the Centre's Trustees had written to the Centre's developer, Linden Homes, and invited representatives from the company to a meeting to discuss the report. A response was awaited.

NOTED

the report of Councillor Bidwell.

FPC/13/54 **Correspondence and Other Matters**

a Library Facility

Councillor Smith reported that Central Bedfordshire Councillor Dalgarno had enquired as to whether the Parish Council would wish to see a public library facility provided within the Community Centre. The meeting was aware that a similar library facility existed in the Community Hall in Gamlingay, Cambridgeshire. Councillor Dalgarno had indicated that he would provide the Parish Council with details of the proposal.

The possible costs involved together with the need for storage within the Centre were briefly discussed.

The meeting noted that the provision of a mobile library service to the area did not appear to be likely.

Councillor Smith advised that he had agreed in principle to the possibility of a library facility within the Centre but that any final decision was subject to the Centre's Trustees first considering and approving a detailed proposal.

RESOLVED

- 1 that the action taken by Councillor Smith in approving in principle the provision of a library facility in the Fairfield Community Centre be confirmed;**
- 2 that the Parish Council await advice from the Community Centre's Trustees on this proposal before making a final decision to either support or oppose it.**

b Fairfield Park Master Plan

The Chairman referred to the discussion which had arisen at the last meeting of the Parish Council regarding the status of the Fairfield Park Master Plan (minute FPC/13/20 refers). The planning officers from Central Bedfordshire Council, who had been present at the meeting, had made clear that the Plan, because of its age, was now regarded as out of date and could not be expected to carry any influence on current or future local development. Given the important role previously played by this document the Chairman suggested that consideration be given to the production of a contemporary equivalent in the form of a Town Plan. The Chairman explained the advantages of adopting such a Plan.

As an illustration of the need for action the Chairman reported that both he and Councillor Bidwell had attended a meeting of Central Bedfordshire Council's Development Management Committee to object to a planning application at 6 Shaftesbury Drive, Stotfold. He reported that whilst their comments on the application had been well received by the Committee there were, unfortunately, no legal grounds to refuse it.

It was noted that some cost would be involved in the preparation of a Town Plan but it should not be high. In addition officers from Central Bedfordshire Council would assist in the Plan's preparation.

Some concern was expressed regarding the possible timescale involved for the adoption of a Town Plan given the number of planning applications currently being submitted and the immediate need to protect the unique character of the area. The lack of sufficient time to examine the applications was also raised.

RESOLVED

- 1 that further consideration be given to the preparation and adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan for Fairfield at the September meeting of the Parish Council;**
- 2 that an officer from Central Bedfordshire Council be requested to attend a meeting to explain the process involved in the preparation of the document;**
- 3 that the original Master Plan be used as the basis for a Town Plan subject to 4 below;**
- 4 that a questionnaire be drawn up and circulated to all properties and that the document include support for seeking a 20 mph speed limit throughout Fairfield;**
- 5 that the Planning Committee consider the difficulties arising from the number of planning applications being submitted for Fairfield.**

c Training Courses for Councillors

Councillor Daffarn raised the matter of induction courses for individual councillors. In response the Chairman stated that both he and

Councillor Smith had already undertaken this training. The course lasted approximately one and a half hours, cost £15 a person and was highly recommended.

RESOLVED

that Councillor Daffarn contact the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils regarding arrangements for induction training for those members of the Council who had not yet received it.

FPC/13/55 **Date of Next Meeting**

NOTED

that the next meeting of Fairfield Parish Council will be held on 8 August 2013 subject to requirement.

(Note: Minute FPC/13/43 above also refers).

Meeting finished at 8.30 p.m.