

SAMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

www.sambourne.org.uk

Chairman: Cllr Chris Clews

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Clerk: Teresa Murphy

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held via Zoom on Monday 11th January 2021

Present:

Cllr Chris Clews	Chairman
Cllr Phil Jones	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Peter Taaffe	
Cllr Clive Rickhards	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Neil Eddon	SDC (Studley with Sambourne)
Cllr Peter Hencher-Serafin	SDC (Studley with Mappleborough Green)
Teresa Murphy	Clerk

There were 18 parishioners present

The Clerk welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded them that the meeting would be recorded, for minuting purposes only.

The Chairman then opened the meeting and wished everybody a Happy New Year.

1. Apologies

Apology received and accepted from Cllr David Shaw

2. Changes to Disclosure of Interest - None

3. To approve the Minutes of:

- 1) Parish Council meeting held on 28th September 2020**
- 2) Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd December 2020.**

The minutes were formally agreed and recorded as being virtually signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the meeting held on 28th September 2020

Speeding Action Group: Cllr Bond had been asked to make contact with an officer at Alcester Police and invite him to attend a Zoom meeting of the Parish Council. As Cllr Bond is no longer a member of the Parish Councillor the Clerk was asked to revert this action to the Chairman.

Action: Chairman

Public Participation:

The Chairman responded to comments made by Roland White with reference to two letters that he had sent to the Parish Council alleging inappropriate behaviour by members of the Council.

The Chairman stated:

- These accusations were based on a series of historic personal emails, between myself and Mr Bond. No one else was involved in any of the exchanges and on no occasion did Mr Bond ever reproach me. Neither did he complain to Sambourne Parish Council; he actually stored them (some for over two years).
- The comments I made were in relation to various political and news topics – ranging from Extinction Rebellion to Black Lives Matter. Under these topics I expressed frustration and indignation over what had started as justifiable causes for protest but had progressed into unreal expectations. I believe in fairness in all things and I believe that problems arise when fairness is distorted.
- The other occasion on which I expressed my strong views was directly caused by the unthinking and untrue statements made on the Sambourne and Middletown Matters Face Book page. Information was distorted and, as it worsened, I became frustrated and expressed these views to Mr Bond – often in exaggerated terms. Again, no-one else was involved in any of these exchanges and he made no objections to my comments.
- In September 2020 Mr Bond decided to release these emails to people he knew would be affronted and react. This was to deliberately mislead people as to my character.
- Sambourne Parish Council received two letters (as email attachments) – one on 15th September from Mr and Mrs Bond in ‘Conjunction with Middletown Residents’ and a second on 26th September from Mr White. Each contained threats to blackmail me to resign from SPC.
- **The first letter included the statement:**
‘If no resignation is actioned, or formal response is received within 5 working days of the date of this letter, we will be forced to start formal proceedings to share this information with the Parish of Sambourne residents via media outlets and forthcoming meetings.’
- **The second letter included the following extracts:**
‘... and step down as Chair, and Councillor, for this parish. If this is not resolved by the end of the (September) meeting, then we will have no option but to proceed with taking more formal steps; including ...
 - 1) *Sharing of full details of your correspondence regarding residents to the parish*
 - 2) *Disclosing the views of the Chair to the residents of the parish and Council, including your racist, homophobic, sexist and classist statements. This will also be shared via the media’.*
- What the two letters signify is a scurrilous attempt to mislead and incite residents by referring to emails sent by me to Mr Bond, but not showing context. The process has included blackmail, defamation and breaches of GDPR (disclosing to Mr White the email addresses of members of SPC, which he then made inappropriate use of).

To summarise:

- As a member of SPC I have never let anyone's religion, sexuality or race affect any decision or communication.
- I have never addressed anyone in offensive terms related to these characteristics.
- I have never received – directly or indirectly – any complaints about my conduct or actions including decisions and communications.
- My interactions with the residents have always been polite; possibly direct and to the point if circumstances necessitate. As I have said before, I believe in fairness.
- I intend to pursue blackmail, defamation of character and breaches of GDPR. These are not covered by the Code of Conduct but are legal or semi legal matters and will be processed accordingly.

Allocation of funding for the next round of tree maintenance:

Cllr Jones reported that WCC Forestry has agreed that the cost of maintenance work on the 4 trees that had been identified can be carried over to the next financial year. This work will therefore be carried out before the end of March.

Flooding on Middletown Lane:

- The Chairman stated that Sambourne Parish Council has done everything they can to expedite a solution. He reported that a contract has been agreed by WCC to install, on the left hand side of Middletown Lane, from Five Trees towards Sambourne, forty metres of piping which will include three new drains.
- Cllr Rickhards confirmed these details and also stated that there were still ongoing issues about the cattle grid drain by the gateway and he intends to pursue these in the next few days,
- The Chairman also stated that he has reported the blocked drain by the entrance to the public footpath by the stables at the end of Middletown Lane.

Warwickshire County Council Gateway Scheme:

Cllr Taaffe stated that people at the meeting may not be aware that Cllr Rickhards has agreed to pay for Phase 2 of the Scheme out of his delegated budget, for which we are very grateful.

- Scheme 1 is almost complete. The HGV signs have not been installed on all roads leading to the parish but that will happen in the next few weeks.
- Cllr Taaffe has had further communication with WCC concerning the installation of Scheme 2. Due to lockdown and emergency problems caused by the bad weather, it has been difficult to put a definite date on completion. However, as the budget is now in place, WCC have informed us that installation work will commence in the next few weeks.

Middletown Residents Group:

- A question had been raised concerning Community Speed Watch. Cllr Taaffe reported that the teams are in place but, due to the lockdown, training has been delayed. As soon as it is allowed the process will be started.
- The Chairman reported that, as agreed at the last meeting, he ensures that residents in Middletown are kept informed of events in Sambourne by contacting Mrs Wharrad by email to alert her to an item on the website or notice boards.
- A request had been made for extra signage in Middletown. The Parish Council would be willing to support this but are awaiting communication from Lucy Wharrad, giving more details. Cllr Rickhards said he would be willing to put this forward, if it had been agreed by the Parish Council.

Allocation of Training Budget

It was confirmed that a sum for training has been included in the Budget for 2021-2022.

Donation towards upkeep of Coughton Cemetery

The Clerk confirmed that the annual donation of £200 had been made and a reply, expressing thanks, had been received.

5. Resignation from Sambourne Parish Council and resulting vacancy

- On 3rd December 2020 the Chairman received a letter of resignation from Cllr Philip Bond.
- Following advice from Stratford District Council, the process of filling the ensuing vacancy was started.
- As an election was not called for by 10 members of Sambourne North Ward, the vacancy will now be filled by co-option.
- Applications are being invited and a Notice will be displayed on the notice boards and the parish website giving details.

6. Public Participation

Two items had been received.

Philip Bond had raised the following questions, which were taken by Cllr Taaffe:

- 1) When might we expect the two additional gates to be inserted in support the Gateway Scheme?
 - 2) When might we expect the date to be released which will show traffic flow etc before and after insertion of the gates?
- Cllr Taaffe had answered the first question under Matters Arising. He reiterated that, as the budget is in place, WCC have confirmed that installation of Scheme 2 will commence in the next few weeks, dependant on lockdown restrictions.

- Cllr Taaffe reported that 3 out of the 6 sets of traffic data had been received. When we receive the remaining 3 sets it will be possible to make an evaluation. Once Scheme 2 is installed, data pipes will again be put in place to enable the impact to be measured.
- Cllr Rickhards agreed to contact Graham Stanley and ask for progress on traffic data sets.

Action: Cllr Taaffe, Cllr Rickhards

Charles Farran requested to speak on issues relating to the Gateway Scheme

- Mr Farran wished to make observations on the Gateway installations, with a view to maximising their effect.
- He commented on signage, road marking and speed restriction levels at various points in Sambourne.
- The Clerk has sent a copy of the transcript of Mr Farran’s observations to the Parish Councillors and Cllr Rickhards. Cllr Taaffe agreed to take the points raised by Mr Farran to WCC and will make a response at the next meeting of the Parish Council.
- With regard to Mr Farran’s comment about the error on the speed rondel at Oak Tree Lane and also the question of the tree which obscures the view of the rondel, Cllr Taaffe stated that he was aware of these issues and has reported them to WCC. It has been confirmed that the incorrect sign will be taken down and the tree removed (which was in the plan for Scheme 1) in the next few weeks.

Action: Cllr Taaffe

Wayne Bates said that he has a 3’ horse chestnut tree that has been grown from a conker from the tree that used to be on the Green. He would like to plant it on the Middletown Green and, as he believes the ground is owned by the Parish Council, he requested permission to do so.

The Chairman replied that he had recently found out that the area of the green in Middletown does not belong to the Parish Council but to Warwickshire County Council. He offered to make further contact with the person he has been talking to with regard to Mrs Jackson’s bench and gauge their reaction to Wayne’s suggestion. As the sapling has local history, the Chairman thought it was a great idea.

Action: Chairman

Neil Snape asked to speak about matters concerning flooding on Middletown Lane. The Chairman asked him to raise his points under Item 7.

7. Flooding on Middletown Lane

The Chairman reported that there has been progress.

- The field has been ploughed in a different manner from previous years and it seems likely that will help with drainage.
- Even after a recent period of exceptional rain the only problem was near the stables where the public footpath emerges from the field; where the drain appears to be blocked. An appeal has been made to the Flood Risk Management team to get this

work done. In conjunction with the forty metres of piping which will include three new drains, this will help to alleviate the problem outside Mr Snape's house.

Neil Snape made the following comments:

- 1) He agreed that the plan to put forty metres of piping and three new drains in will go towards solving the problem.
- 2) He still has outstanding issues and demanded to know when actions would be taken by WCC.
- 3) He feels he has been denied a meeting with Cllr Rickhards – even though Cllr Rickhards is not aware of receiving a request for any such meeting.

The Chairman responded:

The Action Plan must come from WCC. As has been said earlier, the Parish Council has done all it can. We cannot do any more. We have appealed to the people concerned, via our County Councillor, and all parties are aware of the problem. I reiterate, Sambourne Parish Council can do nothing further.

8. Warwickshire County Council Gateway Scheme

All items covered under Items 4 and 5.

9. Tree Maintenance

Cllr Jones reported that the tree maintenance agreed by WCC Forestry will take place by the end of January 2021.

The other point raised by Cllr Jones was concerning the oak tree on the recreation ground that is causing concern for some residents. He reported as follows:

On November 9th the Operations Manager visited to inspect the recreation ground oak tree that has been causing concern to some residents. We have had this tree checked regularly since 2008. He inspected it at close quarters, from within the adjacent brook, and from the neighbouring garden. His opinion is that it is a mature tree in reasonable health and is stable. The residents of the neighbouring property stated that they intended to engage an independent tree surgeon to conduct a survey. The Operations Manager said he would be very interested to see the report. We await any outcome of this survey. We have no specialist tree knowledge ourselves and would only seek to take action as guided by the professionals.

- No report has been forthcoming to date. However the Parish Council is looking to carry out some maintenance to the tree and to reduce its size.
- Mrs Lodge asked when this work would be done. Cllr Jones replied that no date had been given as yet. Like all WCC Departments, Forestry has been under great pressure due to working under Covid restrictions.
- Cllr Rickhards offered to contact Forestry on our behalf.

Action: Cllr Rickhards

10. Accounts

The Clerk reported that the current spend is in line with the budget and that he precept agreed at the meeting held on 2nd December 2020 has been requested.

Payments made from 1st October 2020 – 8th January 2021

WALC Training Fee	Cllr Taaffe/Clerk	33.00
Coughton PCC	Donation to upkeep of cemetery	200.00
Cllr Bond	Expenses	30.00
British Gas	Electricity on the Green	4.03
J R Gibbs	Grass cutting	1,719.40
Clerk	Zoom payment	14.39
WALC Training Fee	Cllr Taaffe	15.00
C Clews	Poppy Wreath	30.00
British Gas	Electricity on the Green	10.54
Clerk	Salary	610.35
Clerk	Expenses	81.82
HMRC	Clerk's Tax	152.40
Flagpole Express	Union Jack	132.00
Clerk	Zoom payment	14.39
Peco Studios	Flagpole components	91.56

11. Planning

New Applications

20/02684/FUL	Ye Old Barn, The Green	Erection of 1-bed granny annexe	Support
20/02812/FUL	Agricultural Building, Whitemoor Lane	Change of use of agricultural building to light industry	Object
20/03208/FUL	Rough Hill Farm Shop	Change of use of barns to farm shop	Support

Decisions

20/02168/FUL	Dinwoodie, Middletown Lane	Construction of boundary fence (retrospective)	Refusal
20/01658/FUL	Reinswood Court	Side and Rear extensions	Granted
20/02624/LBC	Chestnut Farm, Jill Lane	New underground LPG tank	Granted
20/01413/LBC	Chestnut Farm, Jill Lane	Retrospective conversion of farmhouse	Granted

20/01412/FUL	Chestnut Farm, Jill Lane	Retrospective conversion of farmhouse to single dwelling.	Granted
20/03208/FUL	Rough Hill Farm Shop	Change of use of agricultural barns to farm shop	Granted

12. Correspondence

None

13. Chairman's Business

Green Waste Scheme: The subscription, which gives £5 discount if you apply in advance, is available from Stratford District Council. The website opened today 11th January 2021.

14. Date of next meeting

Monday 15th March 2021 at 7.45 pm