

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 7th May 2024 at 7:00 pm.

Present

Cllr Adam Quinney	Chairman
Cllr Peter Taaffe	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Rob Clarke	
Cllr Nick Moon	
Cllr Peter Hencher-Serafin	Studley North
Teresa Murphy	Clerk

Also in attendance:

Manuela Perteghella Parish Champion – Stratford District

There were 27 parishioners present.

1. **Apologies:** Received from Cllr Justin Kerridge and Cllr Edden
2. **Disclosures of interest:** None
3. **To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 19th March 2024**

The minutes were approved, with one amendment, and signed by the Chairman.

The amendment referred to is under Public Participation and concerns the lay-by and catchment drain in Middletown Lane. As reported by Charles Farran, the item should read:

- The lay-by near Middletown Farm is in a poor state as it was not resurfaced at the time when the rest of Middletown was done, from the Jubilee to the Brook by the pumping station.
- There is a catchment drain that is damaged adjacent to Five Trees as you approach Middletown along Middletown Lane from the Studley direction.

4. Code of Conduct Complaint

The chairman stated that the Monitoring Officer had received a Code of Conduct Complaint against Cllr Nick Moon. This investigation is now complete and Cllr Moon read out the following statement:

I would like to put some context to the situation and read out an apology.

On 23rd August 2023, out of frustration with Mr Philip Bond's repeated attacks on members of the parish council and others and also dealing with a personal matter for me, my dear sister had just been diagnosed with terminal cancer, I posted on Sambourne and Middletown Facebook page the following post:

Speaking only as an individual and not in capacity as a Parish Councillor. Please note, Mr Bond.

Following the posting of Mr Bond's sexist comments (shake your tits it's Friday) on his Facebook site shared recently on Matters site.

This is the person who for his own personal gain has tried to bring down the village to be a laughing stock. All because he wants to follow in his father's footsteps and become Chairman of Sambourne Parish Council. And in him you would get a sexist pervert who puts up messages like this and carries on his personal Facebook page at least 30 images, which I'm happy to share, of scantily clad women who he is actively following.

I think everyone but the blinded few can see through all of his posturing and attacking of individuals who work so hard for the village and do so much for our village community.

I feel so sorry for his wife Mandy who has to live with this 'day to day' anxiety of what he will do next and who he will go for next. She has suffered so much and deserves better.

As a community we must draw the line and say no more Mr Bond enough is enough. The village matters to us all and nobody is going to bring us down for their own personal gain.

Mr Bond subsequently made a complaint to Warwickshire Police and there was a police investigation into the Facebook post by me. This was dealt with by way of a Community Resolution where I was asked to send a letter of apology to Mr Bond, which I duly did on 15th October 2023, which stated:

Dear Phil

I am writing to express my apology for any distress caused to you or your wife regarding my comments made on social media. I was at the time under considerable emotional stress, due to a very personal matter, but nevertheless this does not excuse my choice of words and for that I apologise.

I hope our village can return to the harmony our village has enjoyed for many years and that we will once again have a chance to speak on good terms.

Despite this apology having been given, Mr Bond advised the Monitoring Officer of Stratford District Council, the Principal Authority, that he wished to pursue his complaint under the Code of Conduct process.

Consequently, at the request of the Monitoring Officer, an external investigation was conducted. This produced a weighty report at a significant cost (tax payers money), which essentially focused on whether I was acting in capacity when I posted the original post, for which I had already apologised. The external investigator's report was passed to the Monitoring Officer at Stratford District Council for judgement.

The Monitoring Officer decided that there had been a breach of the Code of Conduct, whilst acting in capacity as a councillor. The Code of Conduct was found regarding Bullying/Harassment, Bringing the Council into Disrepute and Failing to Treat Others with Respect, relating only to the post of 23rd August 2023.

I have now been asked – and agreed – to apologise to Mr Bond at the Parish Council meeting (recognising that the apology previously was in my personal capacity).

Once again, I offer my apology to Mr Bond, but this time in my capacity as a Councillor, for any distress caused to you and your family regarding my comments made on social media and hopefully we can now draw a line under this matter, move on and avoid any further costs being incurred by taxpayers.

The chairman thanked Cllr Moon and stated that a number of emails had recently been received by Mr Bond, stating that he does not accept the apology. The chairman has also been asked, by Mr Bond, to suspend Cllr Moon. For clarification, any Code of Complaint goes to the Monitoring Officer and a judgement is made on that complaint. The chairman has no powers to reprimand or suspend any councillor, only to give words of advice. As far as the Parish Council is concerned, this matter is now closed and we can move on.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th March 2024

Parishes working together: The chairman is engaging with neighbouring parishes.

Dark Skies Policy: Information gathered on a Dark Skies Policy will be incorporated into the review of the Parish Plan.

Ongoing

Flood resources: The chairman is continuing to talk to neighbouring parish councils to see what resources could be shared in times of emergencies when flooding occurs.

Policies for signature: Taken under Item 9

Risk Assessments: Taken under Item 8

Draft Interim Auditor's Report: The Final Report from the Auditor has now been received and is taken under Item 10

6. Community Speedwatch Update

Cllr Taaffe reported that he had been made aware of some negative comments on social media by one parishioner, regarding CSW and the lack of sessions during the winter months.

- Three sessions were arranged during the winter months but were abandoned due to exceptional weather conditions. The speed gun cannot be used during dark and/or wet conditions.
- Three sessions have been completed during April and May this year, with further sessions planned. The parish council website will be updated to show the results.
- In 2023 1,889 vehicles were checked, across four locations. 99 speeding vehicles were caught, with speeds recorded between 36 to 51 mph in a 30 mph area.
- The CSW team is committed to completing as many sessions as possible during 2024.
- Cllr Taaffe was pleased to announce that another volunteer has recently joined the team. He added that anyone who had made negative comments are also more than welcome to join. Cllr Taaffe thanked the two Garys, Ken, John and Pat for their efforts during 2023.

Action: Cllr Taaffe

7. Improved Access to Footpaths Project

- Discussions have taken place with local landowners concerning the routes and the suggested improvements to gates and stiles. The extremely wet weather has caused problems in accessing the land but it is anticipated that in the next few months progress will be made. One of the first actions will be the widening of some bridges by WCC, to make them level and more accessible.
- Cllr Clarke has done a walk through of all the routes and has prepared a comprehensive plan. This plan will be shared with the Ramblers Association and will then be put on the website.

Action: Cllr Moon, Cllr Clarke

8. Risk Assessments

RA7.1 Cast Iron Finger posts and Signs. Cllr Clarke carried out the Risk Assessment and will action as required.

Action: Cllr Clarke

RA10.1 Gateways, Road Markings, Speed Signs. Cllr Taaffe carried out the Risk Assessment and will action as required.

Action: Cllr Taaffe

Financial & Management Risk Assessment: The clerk has reviewed and updated the Risk Assessment for 2024-2025.

9. Policies to be Adopted

- Equality and Diversity Policy.** This Policy was reviewed and agreed at the meeting held on 19th March 2024.
- Data Protection Policy.** This Policy was reviewed and agreed at the meeting held on 19th March 2024.

The chairman proposed that these two Policies are adopted. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Clarke and the documents signed by the chairman. The website will be updated.

Action: Clerk

10. Accounts

Budget Update – 7th May 2024: The budget update had been circulated to councillors and all were in agreement.

Bank Reconciliations for March/April 2024: The bank reconciliations were agreed and signed by Cllr Moon.

Bank balances as at 30th April 2024:

Current Account:	26,414.41
Deposit Account:	18,995.88

List of Financial Transactions from 19th March – 7th May 2024

PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Clerk	Salary/HMRC/Expenses - March	585.20
Clerk	Zoom payment – March	15.59
BG Lite	Electricity on the Green	16.08
GS Adams	Electrical Inspection	108.00
Unity Bank	Service Charge	18.00
Hugo Fox	Website	23.99
WALC	Fees 2024-2025	323.20
Clear Insurance	Fees 2024-2025	672.05
SLCC	Membership Fee 2024-2025	112.00
BG Lite	Electricity on the Green	16.94
Clerk	Salary/HMRC/Expenses - April	585.20
Clerk	Zoom Payment – April	15.59
E Choudry	Internal Audit Fee	340.00

Final Report from Auditor: The clerk reported that a favourable Final Audit Report for 2023-24 had been received. There were four Recommendations, one of which has been actioned. The remaining three Recommendations will be discussed as Agenda items in subsequent meetings.

Action: Clerk

Additional transaction to agree: Cllr Taaffe reported that an anonymous person, or persons, has replaced the Middletown cart wheel at their own cost. The parish council would like to make a donation and the following proposal was made by Cllr Taaffe:

- A garden centre gift voucher to the value of £75 should be purchased and given to those who look after the flower trough.
- Cllr Taaffe would purchase the card and present it to the appropriate person.
- The proposal was agreed and seconded by the chairman.

Action: Cllr Taaffe

11. Planning

Five planning applications have been received and discussed since the last meeting:

Ref No	Property	Details	SPC Comments	Decision
24/00403/FUL	Early Birds, Perrymill Lane	Remodelling of an existing dormer bungalow with front and rear extensions	Objection. Increase in size; impact on neighbouring properties; impact on root structure of mature oak.	Refusal 30/04/2024

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24/00521/FUL	Tudor House, Middletown Lane	2 storey rear and side extension	No objection	Pending
24/00634/FUL	Eastern Hill Farm	Replacement dwelling	Support DOI – AQ	Pending
24/00720/FUL	Marona, The Slough	Extension to existing bungalow	Support	Pending
24/00928/FUL	Aberdour, Oak Tree Lane	Single storey rear extension		Pending

The chairman reminded parishioners to visit the sambourne parish council website www.sambourneparish.org.uk and register for planning alerts.

12. Correspondence

The chairman reported that he had heard a rumour that the clerk would receive a number of emails calling for the resignation of the entire parish council. The clerk confirmed that no such emails had been received.

Correspondence 19th March – 7th May 2024				
Complaint or Procedural query and follow up	FOI or GDPR Request	WCC/SDC/WALC/SNT information or Request for Information	General correspondence, accounts/admin	Planning
18		55	32	19
Total: 124				

The clerk clarified that of the 18 emails in the first column, 11 emails were from the same person and 7 were follow up emails from the Monitoring Office.

13. Public Participation

There had been no items for public participation received and the chairman welcomed any relevant comments from the floor.

Charles Farran raised a comment concerning the jetting of the drains around the Green and asked if the cul de sac in Middletown could be added to the schedule.

The chairman asked Mr Farran to draw up a map of the drains in the area, which would prove very helpful in locating the manholes etc. Cllr Clarke offered to print a map for him to work with.

Action: Cllr Clarke

14. Chairman's Business

The chairman commented how lovely and tidy it looked around the memorial on the Green. This is all down to Phil and Sue Jones and he thanked them both for their years of service maintaining the memorial garden so beautifully, in memory of those who lost their lives in the First World War. Everyone in the room showed their appreciation with a round of applause.

The chairman introduced Cllr Manuela Perteghella, Parish Champion for Stratford on Avon District, and thanked her for attending the meetings this evening.

Manuela introduced herself and outlined her role as a Parish Champion.

- Manuela was appointed in May 2020 as a Parish Champion and from the outset wanted to highlight the incredibly important role parish councils play in the 1st tier of Local Government. She would like to see the relationship between parish councils and Stratford District become stronger.
- She thanked parish councils for all the work they do, on a voluntary basis, surrounding issues of planning, flooding, traffic calming, footpaths maintenance, supporting community groups etc. She also thanked the clerks for looking after the administration of the councils.
- A new Council was elected in 2023 and new strategies and missions were introduced. Manuela was very pleased that one of the missions on the new Council Plan is to support parish councils for the benefit of the people.
- The role of the Parish Champion is to be aware of the issues that affect parish councils, so they can be taken back to the District Council to see how they can be resolved.
- The Parish Champion attends parish council meetings, when invited, and ensures that the views of parish councils are taken into consideration in SDC consultations, ranging from changes of policies on waste collection to the South Warwickshire Local Plan. There will be a new SWLP consultation on 24th October 2024 and the engagement of parish councils is important, particularly with regard to infrastructure and the impact on established residents.
- She also encourages training between SDC and parish councils and is liaising with WALC about the possibility of joint training.
- Manuela attends the WALC Stratford Area meetings, which are open to parish and town councils. It is a forum for parish councils and town councils to compare their relationship with the principal authority on issues that affect them, for example planning, cutting of verges, traffic calming etc. At the next meeting, which will be held on 13th June, the guest will be the Portfolio Holder for Planning.
- Manuela is vice-chair of the Climate Change Panel. There is a Climate Change Conference on 5th July at Elizabeth House and there will be a session relating to Parish and Town Councils. This is an important Conference and Manuela will forward the invitation to the chairman and clerk.

The chairman again thanked Manuela for giving her time to attend the meetings and for outlining her role.

15. Dates of next meetings:

Tuesday 9th July at 7:00 pm

Tuesday 10th September at 7:00 pm

The meeting closed at 7:40 pm

Review of Actions from the meeting:

Minute	Name(s)	Action
5	Cllr Clarke	Dark Skies Policy – Ongoing
6	Cllr Taaffe	CSW data on website
7	Cllrs Moon and Clarke	Footpaths Plan
8	Cllrs Clarke and Taaffe	Action re RA7.1/RA10.1
9	Clerk	Prepare Policies for website
10	Clerk	Recommendations on Audit Report
10	Cllr Taaffe	Purchase of gift voucher
13	Cllr Clarke	Map of Middletown for Charles Farran
8 (Parish Assembly)	Chairman	Slabs by the grit bin in Brickyard Lane

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