

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 5th November 2024 at 7:00 pm.

Present

Cllr Adam Quinney	Chairman
Cllr Peter Taaffe	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Rob Clarke	
Cllr Nick Moon	
Cllr Caroline Jackson	
Cllr Justin Kerridge	Warwickshire County Councillor
Cllr Neil Edden	SDC Studley South
Cllr Peter Hencher-Serafin	SDC Studley North
Teresa Murphy	Clerk

There were 8 parishioners present.

1. **Apologies:** None
2. **Disclosures of interest:** Agenda Item 12: DOI from Cllr Quinney and Cllr Jackson re Planning Applications 24/02289/FUL/FUL and 24/02307/FUL
3. **To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 10th September 2024**

The minutes were agreed and signed by the chairman.

4. **Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2024:**

Highways Schedule: Cllr Taaffe reported that he had forwarded a plan of the locations of all road markings in Sambourne Parish to Warwickshire County Council. WCC thanked Cllr Taaffe for this information and confirmed that white line road markings would commence in May 2025. Cllr Taaffe also reported that:

- 1) The drain damage in Middletown Lane has been repaired
- 2) It was confirmed that the dotted lines on the lay-by in Middletown Lane and Whitemoor Lane would be re-marked.
- 3) The damage to the Oak Tree Lane sign has been reported, inspected by WCC and will be replaced.

Parish Plan: Ongoing

Clearing of footpaths: Taken under Agenda Item 6

Complete EDF paperwork: The clerk confirmed that all documentation has been completed and the new contract will commence on 8th December 2024.

Risk Register: The clerk confirmed that the IT and Data Management Risk Assessment had been added to the Risk Register.

External Audit Report/Conclusion Notice: The clerk confirmed that these documents had been uploaded to the website.

Submission of document to Unity Bank: Completed.

Renewal of defibrillator: Cllr Clarke reported that he has investigated options for the purchase of an updated defibrillator. He would be able to purchase a more compact semi-automatic unit, with cpr alert at a discounted price of just below £1,000.

- The chairman proposed that we move to purchase the defibrillator, whilst at the discounted price.
- Cllr Moon seconded the proposal and there was unanimous agreement.

Action: Cllr Clarke

Planning applications: There have been some instances whereby the parish council is not contacted with relation to certain planning applications. Following an email from Cllr Clarke outlining the problem, Cllr Edden contacted a named planning manager and he is awaiting a response. This concern is likely to affect other parishes as well as Sambourne and it was agreed that changes need to be made to the consultation process.

Action: Cllr Edden

Proposed joint public meeting: To be taken under Chairman's Business.

5. Maintenance of Recreation Ground

The chairman reported that work has been carried out in the recreation ground to clear brambles back and open the footpaths, which should make it easier for the grass contractors to keep the area clear in future.

Other points for discussion:

At present the goal posts are lying on the floor – should these be replaced or tidied up and dealt with at a later date?

- The chairman suggested the question could be incorporated in the updated Parish Plan, to gather opinions and ideas from parishioners.
- Cllr Moon reported that the question of the provision of permanent football goal posts had been discussed a number of years ago, but no action had been taken at that time. Subsequently plastic goal posts have been introduced, courtesy of various people, which have now gone into disrepair and need to be removed. The question now is do we want to put goal posts on the recreation ground and, if so, should they be a permanent structure.

- There was general agreement that the provision of permanent goal posts would be a welcome asset on the recreation ground. From a health and safety perspective these would be preferable to unstable plastic posts.
- Cllr Moon was asked to research costs of installing permanent 5-a-side goal posts.

Action: Cllr Moon

6. Update on Improved Access to Footpaths Project

Cllr Moon reported that for the past two years the parish council has been working on improving access to public footpaths in Sambourne and the surrounding area. This has been made possible by a grant from the Rambler's Association, which was match funded by WCC. Footpaths that need improvement have been identified and the next stage of action has now commenced. There have been several reparations of bridges along various routes and the clearing and widening of footpaths has taken place.

We are now at the stage of installing self-closing gates to replace the kissing gates and stiles, which are difficult to access. A local contractor has installed the first gate and the remainder will be installed over the next couple of weekends. The Project will then be nearly completed, after which further discussion can take place concerning any other footpaths in the area that need addressing. In total 6 routes have been identified. Focus has been put on the two major routes, with the aim of bringing communities together. The first route is the one linking Sambourne to Astwood Bank and the second is from Sambourne to Coughton Court.

The chairman thanked Cllr Moon for the tremendous amount of work he has put into the Project and, also, for obtaining the two grants, which meant that the cost would not fall on the parish, which does not have the budget for such a project.

The chairman also said that next step would be to contact certain landowners to remind them, regarding crops etc, where the footpaths are. The owner of the section of the bridleway in Middletown has been identified and the chairman will make contact to remind him of his responsibility to clear overgrown branches etc that are causing an obstruction.

Cllr Moon said that the response of the community has been fantastic, so it is clearly something that was wanted and where the parish council has added value.

Charles Farran thanked the parish council on behalf of the parishioners, the improvement to the footpaths is very much appreciated.

Action: Chairman

7. Concerns re Junction at Whitemoor Lane/Alcester Heath

Councillor Kerridge had raised concerns with WCC Highways about this junction and requested that the parish council also consider ways in which the junction could be improved.

The accident history at the location is low – with one reported injury in 2019. Because of this, the only improvement that WCC is prepared to make is to renew the carriageway markings, signage and chevrons. Also to cut back the line of hedges at the side of the road.

In discussion, the chairman stated that in the past, coming down the hill from Alcester Heath, there were chevrons on the side of the road, warning of the bend in the road. These were removed and have never been replaced. It was felt there should be more warning signs to make motorists aware of the junction. A possible solution would be for WCC to install low-cost white markers, which would be less costly to replace than fixed signs.

The parish council gave Cllr Kerridge their support on this matter and asked for a report at the next meeting in January 2025.

Action: Cllr Kerridge

8. Renewal of grass cutting contract

Our current contractors have submitted a quote for 2025/26 of £4461.27. This is a rise of 10% from the current year, but is considered good value for money. These contractors have worked for the parish council for many years and are reliable, efficient and provide an excellent service.

Two years ago, Cllr Taaffe and Cllr Jones carried out a tendering process. Of the three contractors contacted at that time, two submitted far higher quotes and the third did not reply. The parish council is, therefore, confident that JR Gibbs will continue to provide best value and it was proposed that their quote should be accepted.

Proposed: Cllr Quinney

Seconded: Cllr Clarke

There was unanimous agreement and the Clerk was asked to write to Mr Gibbs to confirm the renewal of the grass cutting contract for 2025/2026.

Action: Clerk

9. Contribution to the upkeep of Coughton Cemetery

Historically, Sambourne Parish Council made a donation of £200 per annum towards the upkeep of Coughton cemetery. Following the advice of the National Association of Local Councils, this donation ceased in 2021. However, following new legislation and further advice

from NALC (L02-23), parish councils are now permitted to contribute towards the care and maintenance of churches.

The chairman proposed the following:

An annual donation of £200 would be made towards the upkeep of Coughton cemetery, commencing in April 2025.

Seconded: Cllr Caroline Jackson

There was unanimous agreement and the Clerk was asked to write to Mr McTavish to inform him of the decision.

Action: Clerk

10. Reserves Policy

A Reserves Policy has been prepared by the clerk and circulated to the councillors for agreement. The parish council is required to maintain adequate financial reserves to meet foreseeable needs and commitments and, also, to have money available in the event of an emergency. The guidance states that the reserve should be between 3 - 12 months of the precept and, because SPC has few outgoing commitments, it was considered the reserve should be nearer to the 3 months than the 12.

There was unanimous agreement and the Reserves Policy was signed by the chairman. It will now be uploaded to the website.

Action: Clerk

11. Accounts

Budget update – 5th November 2024: The budget update had been circulated to all councillors. The clerk reported that the budget was on track and all were in agreement.

Bank reconciliations September/October 2024: The bank reconciliations were agreed and signed.

Bank balances as at 31st October 2024:

Current a/c: 29,249.33
Deposit a/c: 19,258.69

List of Financial Transactions from 10/09/2024 – 05/11/2024

PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
SDC	Emptying of litter and dog waste bins	342.00
Cllr Taaffe	Expenses	22.18
Moore	External Audit	252.00
BG Lite	Electricity on the Green	26.56
Unity Bank	Service charge	18.00
Clerk	Salary/HMRC/Expenses – September	602.25
Clerk	Zoom payment – September	15.59
Cllr Clarke	Clerk's laptop and accessories	653.73

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Hugo fox	Website – October	23.99
WALC	Councillor Training – CJ	42.00
IJN Home and Gardens	Memorial Garden maintenance	20.00
BG Lite	Electricity on the Green	14.42
Clerk	Zoom payment – October	15.59
Clerk	Salary/HMRC/Expenses – October	589.39
Leo Clarke	Maintenance of footpaths and Recreation Ground	1,350.00
Unity Bank	Service charge	5.40

Draft Budget 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026

- i. A zoom meeting with councillors has been held and the Draft Budget for 2025-2026 has been agreed. A new line in the Proposed Receipts 2025/26 column has been added, to read Surplus Brought Forward, this line will include the likely carry forward, plus CIL monies.
- ii. There was unanimous agreement to accept the Draft Budget as presented and it will now be updated on the website.
- iii. There is a possibility that the Precept may need to rise in future years, dependant on circumstances and expenditure, but the chairman proposed that the Precept for 2025/2026 should remain at £17,500. There was unanimous agreement.

Action: Clerk

Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2024/25

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services has agreed the new pay scales for 2024-2025, to be implemented from 1st April 2024. There was unanimous agreement that these new pay scales would be applied as from 30th November 2024, backdated to 1st April 2024.

12. Planning

Three planning applications had been received and discussed since the last meeting.

Ref No	Property	Details	SPC Comments	Decision
24/02235/FUL	Tudor House, Middletown Lane	Proposed 2 storey rear and side extension	No objection. Subject to confirmation of compliance to green belt policy	Permission with conditions 24/10/2024
24/02289/FUL	Land of Bromsgrove Road, Studley. Allelys	Infilling of land depression within existing field	DOI Cllr Quinney, Cllr Jackson Support	Withdrawn 22/10/2024

24/02307/FUL	Land adjacent to the Slough. Allelys	Infilling of land depression within existing field	DOI Cllr Quinney, Cllr Jackson Support, with provisions	Withdrawn 01/11/2024
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13. Correspondence

Correspondence 10th September – 5th November 2024				
Complaint or Procedural query and follow up	FOI or GDPR Request	WCC/SDC/WALC/SNT information or Request for Information	General correspondence, accounts and administration	Planning
2	0	47	38	13
Total: 100				

For information

Column 1

2 x emails from Monitoring Officer:

- 1) Acknowledgement re Vexatious Complaints Policy
- 2) Email stating that the Code of Conduct Complaint against Cllr Taaffe has not been upheld.

Column 4

Correspondence including:

- Improved Access to Footpaths Project
- Maintenance of Coughton cemetery
- Maintenance of Recreation ground
- Energy quotes x 5
- WCC re Whitemoor Road/Alcester Heath

14. Public Participation

Gail Smith raised the question of a tree that has been cut down opposite Brookside Farm in Middletown Lane. The chairman replied that he had removed the tree because the tree was leaning towards the road and was a danger to oncoming vehicles.

15. Chairman's Business

The chairman has spoken to Cllr Kerridge and David McMullen about the Village Association and the Sambourne Trust being involved in the joint public meeting. It is proposed that the informal meeting will be held in the church room on **Saturday 11th January 2025 at 11:00 am**. The clerk was asked to check availability of the church room.

Action: Clerk

16. Dates of next meetings

Tuesday 14th January 2025 at 7:00 pm

Tuesday 11th March 2025 at 7:00 pm

The meeting closed at 7:45 pm

Review of Actions from the meeting:

Minute	Name(s)	Action
4	Cllr Clarke	Purchase of defibrillaor
4	Cllr Edden	Report re contact with Planning Manger
5	Cllr Moon	Cost of installation of goal posts
6	Chairman	Contact landowners
7	Cllr Kerridge	Report on Whitemor Lane junction
8	Clerk	Contact JR Gibbs
9	Clerk	Contact John McTavish
10	Clerk	Reserves Policy for website
11	Clerk	Precept paperwork. Draft Budget for website
15	Clerk	Book parish room

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