

Minutes of the meeting of Fairfield Parish Council held in Fairfield Community Hall on Thursday 12th February 2015 at 7:30 pm

Councillors present: B E Dack (Chairman), V C Batten, C Bidwell, P Daffarn and N Hanks.

Officer present: Katrina Henshaw (Parish Clerk)

Also present for all or part of the meeting: Councillors B Saunders and I Dalgarno, David Leverington, CBC Rights of Way Team Leader, Chris Nicol, CBC Contracts Officer and twelve members of the public.

297 **Apologies for Absence**

297.1 Apologies received from Councillor G Smith (Holiday), Councillor P Mitchinson (family bereavement) and Ward Member Councillor G Clarke.

298 **Disclosures of Interest**

298.1 No disclosures of interest were received.

298.2 Councillor Dack had been asked since the last meeting why he and Councillor Smith did not declare an interest on item 282 (Transferring Community Hall to FPC). Councillor Dack explained both he and Councillor Smith had declared they were Trustees of the Community Hall Trust of their 'Declaration of Interest' form. Neither of them felt that they needed to declare on interest in this particular item as the discussions were between FPC and the developers and the Trust was not involved at this stage. This has been confirmed acceptable by the CBC lawyer. They will both declare an interest when the discussions are between FPC and the Trust and will not participate in those discussions.

299 **Council Minutes**

299.1 Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8th January 2015 had been circulated to all councillors and it was

RESOLVED

That these minutes be agreed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be duly signed by the Chairman.

300 **Standing Orders**

300.1 Amended Standing Orders had been circulated to all councillors and it was

RESOLVED

That these Standing Orders be adopted by FPC.

The clerk to distribute and put on website. **Action: KH**

301 **Public Participation**

301.1 Two members of the Public requested to speak about a school bus to Etonbury Academy agenda item 11 (minute item 303). It was agreed for them to be allowed to speak prior to that item being discussed.

302 West Drive Update

302.1 Councillor Dalgarno gave a brief history of West Drive and how it was used to deliver coal to the old hospital. The original s106 agreement was to run a bus route along it but the cost was prohibitive so an alternative route was agreed. PJ Livesey closed off one end of West Drive and the route fell into disrepair before the land was transferred to CBC two years ago.

Chris Nicol, CBC Contracts Officer advised he was looking into lighting and surfacing.

1. Lighting – Higher standard of lighting will be required from Arlesey to the Home for people with learning difficulties and then another form of lighting will be required to Fairfield. He is currently obtaining prices for high level lights on one side only, waist height lights and low studs.
2. Surfacing – Only 2/3 spots in need of patching between Arlesey and the Home for people with learning difficulties. However, from the Home to Fairfield a lot more work is needed and CBC is looking to either patch all the problems or dig out scar that was created from putting in a utility and repairing the whole surface.

The 20+ redundant light columns will be removed next week.

Councillor Dack reminded CBC of a meeting that was held for Arlesey and Fairfield residents before FPC was formed. At this meeting residents wanted lighting for safety reasons and favoured low level lighting. Also, although the surface needs to be upgraded it does not need to be too good as cyclists need to be discouraged from going too fast.

CBC advised it is not be looking to remove any of the vegetation and will be leaving the blackberry bushes.

CBC has not drawn up a maintenance plan yet but it will only be when it needs to be done and the road will not be adopted.

CBC will email a draft proposal to FPC for comments when it is ready. If FPC has extra questions at that stage, CBC will attend a future FPC meeting.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Dalgarno, David Leverington and Chris Nicol for attending the meeting.

303 Parish Crime Update

303.1 PCSO Lisa Antoine advised that between 7th January and 8th February there was one new recorded crime; unknown offenders had entered a property in Dickens Boulevard with keys and demanded drugs and money. They have then searched the property and removed various items.

304 Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Members Report

304.1 Councillor Saunders reported that following consultations, the Executive Committee had agreed no increase to the budget.

Councillor Saunders also reported that CBC had changed the way main meetings were held and these will now be exactly eight weeks apart.

305 Speed limit in Fairfield

305.1 CBC had suspended discussing its results from its online survey until FPC had the Parish Plan questionnaire results. 84% residents who answered the question supported a 20mph in Fairfield. (10% did not support it and 6% had no opinion). Councillor Dalgarno advised that the easiest route would be to apply for matched funding from the Local Area Transport Scheme. The timescale is approximately 1 year and will be only for adopted roads. The clerk to ask to send CBC the results and apply for matched funding. **Action: KH**

306 Pedestrian Crossing across Hitchin Road

- 306.1 FPC has received a request to investigate a safer solution such as a zebra crossing at the south side of the roundabout with a short pavement leading to the garden centre. Unfortunately, the area does not meet the criteria for a pedestrian crossing and the road is too narrow for bollards. There was a question in the Parish Plan questionnaire about the speed limit on Hitchin Road and 75% of residents who answered this question felt that the speed limit was correct. FPC agreed to ask HCC to put up some pedestrian crossing warning signs.
Actions: KH

307 School Bus

- 307.1 In a closed meeting, prior to this item being discussed two members of public were given the opportunity to speak. One resident explained that there was great concern from parents about their children using a public bus to get to Etonbury Academy and are more than happy to pay for a private bus. Another resident added that there had been incidents of children being left behind in the past. He acknowledged that it was important to let children develop independence but also had concerns about a public bus service.

Councillor Dalgarno advised that CBC had no legal requirement to provide a bus service due to the distance but the timetables for bus services 96, 96A and 97 have been drawn up to meet the needs of Etonbury Academy.

CBC can assist in investigating and sourcing a private bus service for pupils attending the school. CBC could prepare a contract on behalf of Etonbury Academy or other parties. CBC would not be able to provide any funding.

In 2012/2013 Central Bedfordshire paid £240.00 a day for a double deck public bus service (690) provided by Herberts Travel. Although there was heavy anticipated demand, in reality about 30 pupils used the service each day. This equated to an average price of £8 per head. Prices for peak buses have generally increased since then.

Councillor Saunders and Councillor Dalgarno supplied the resident with contacts to help them look into arranging a private bus service and both offered to speak to the Etonbury Academy, Fairfield Lower School and CBC if there was a need for them to.

308 Town and Parish Council Conference

- 308.1 Councillor Daffarn attended the Town and Parish Council Conference on 20th January.

Paul Mason, CBC Head of Highways gave a presentation and advised that the contract was due for renewal in March 2016 and CBC would be looking to change the contract from a Management Agent Contract to a Team Maintenance Contract which will give CBC greater control. The new contract will run from 2016-2023.

Brian Dunleavy, CBC Deputy Returning Officer advised the timescales for the local elections to be held on 7th May 2015. Nominations papers must be submitted by 4.00 pm on 9th April and a statement of persons nominated will be issued on 10th April. The last date to register to vote is 20th April. The count for Parish Council elections will not start until 3.00 pm on 8th May 2015.

Olly Martins, Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner is proposing a 15.8% rise in the police element of the Council Tax. This is 48p per household and will give Bedfordshire an extra 100 police. Due to the proposed increase a referendum is required and this will also be held on 7th May 2015.

Steve Barrett, CBC Community Safety Operations Manager gave a presentation on the new Dog Control Orders; these can be found on the CBC website.

309 Defibrillator in Fairfield

- 309.1 Tesco has signed the Hosting agreement and will install the defibrillator shortly. FPC has insured it and will arrange training after installation.

310 Maps

310.1 FPC has raised the outstanding issues with OS and is waiting for a response.

311 Grass verges

311.1 MBS has repaired verges in Bronte Avenue at a cost of £40.

311.2 Following a discussion it was

RESOLVED

That FPC would replace the tree in Hardy Way at a cost of £192.00 for an Acer Campestre Elsrijk 12-14 girth (potted) and £26.00 for costs for labour, planting, post, tree tie.

REASON

To keep the area looking attractive.

The clerk to ask MBS to replace this tree. **Action: KH**

312 Grass cutting

312.1 MBS has quoted £650 pa to cut grass to the rear of the Community Hall and strim around trees and fence lines (20 visits) and £325 pa to cut grass by the entrance to Salisbury Close (20 visits) and spray the grass for weeks once Following a discussion it was

RESOLVED

To award MBS both the contracts until 30th June 2015. These contracts may be terminated once the ownership of the land is resolved as the landowner will then take responsibility for the maintenance.

REASON

MBS has not increased its prices and offered an excellent service for the past twelve months so FPC was satisfied best value was still being given. A four month contract was agreed so FPC is in line with the Scanlans contract so the whole contract can be put to tender at the same time.

The clerk to send a contract. **Action: KH**

313 Road Gritting

313.1 All Councillors had been circulated a draft 'Winter Maintenance Plan'. Following a discussion it was

RESOLVED

That FPC would adopt the 'Winter Maintenance Plan'

REASON

To allow FPC to grit roads within Fairfield.

The clerk to send to CBC. **Action: KH**

313.2 FPC and FPRA need to agree how to split the invoice from MBS for road gritting. **Action: BD**

314 The Parish Plan / The Neighbourhood Plan

314.1 Councillor Mitchinson to give an update at the March meeting.

315 Section 106 Agreement – Disputed ownership and possible transfer of land.

315.1 Councillor Dack advised that following the meeting with The Rt Hon Alistair Burt MP, none of agreements and timescales have been met. CBC is keen to reach a conclusion and is working closely with FPC and the Directors of FHMC. FPC had a very good meeting with the Directors of FHMC. Hotbed has given notice to sell the freehold.

The areas of land that FPC is happy to take ownership of are:-

- East Orchard (Areas 2 and 2a)
- Tennis courts (Area 3)
- Area behind Community Hall (Area 4)
- Disused roadway to Hardy Way (Area 6)
- West Orchard (Areas 7 and 8)
- Area outside East Lodge and adjacent to the balancing pond (Areas 12 and 13)
- Fairfield Bowls Club
- Fairfield Cricket Club
- Part of footpath from School to Kingsley Avenue

The areas listed above may be viewed on the map in Appendix A

316 Orchard Plan

- 316.1 In the Parish Plan questionnaire 96% of the residents who expressed an opinion wanted to have the West Orchard restored and 95% wanted to have the East Orchard restored. 96% did not want either to be developed.
- 316.2 BRCC is drafting a Maintenance Plan.

317 Public Art Money (S106)

- 317.1 FPRA is very disappointed with the initial designs for Urban Park. The design is one dimensional and relied too much on annuals. FPC to have further conversations with CBC regarding the design and who should be drawing up the next plans. **Action: BD**

318 Transferring Community Hall to FPC

- 318.1 Linden Homes has acknowledged receipt of the surveyors report and are working their way through the items of concern with a view to providing additional information where required. They propose to visit the hall and assess the onsite issues raised, some of which they believe they may have previously dealt with. They will update the H&S file while they are there if it is available, with any further information they currently have. They will then provide FPC with a list of their proposals to deal with other matters.

319 Subsidence on the land at the rear of the Community Hall.

- 319.1 The report has been sent to Hotbed who claim it is the responsibility of the Hall Maintenance Company to repair.

320 Fairfield Hall

- 320.1 CBC has now arranged an inspection of the drainage system. Phase 1 completion certificates are nearly ready to be issued and just have a couple of minor issues to resolve.

321 Disaster Plan

- 321.1 Mark Conway, CBC Emergency Planning Officer will deliver an Assistance Centre Training Course on Thursday 5th March between 6.30 pm and 9.00 pm. A maximum of 30 residents can also attend. Details will be featured in Fairfield Matters and on the website. **Action: KH**

322 Welcome to Fairfield' booklet

- 322.1 It was agreed to put this booklet on hold until some issues in Fairfield have been resolved.

323 Tesco roof at Beeton Court

- 323.1 Tesco and Aylwick are disputing who is responsible for the repairs. NHBC say they are not liable as Tesco has done some repair work previously. The residents are entitled to free legal aid so are going to ask a solicitor to write to Tesco. The residents will advise FPC on the response from Tesco.

324 Annual Parish Meeting

- 324.1 It was agreed to hold the APM on 26th March at 7.45 pm. FPRA AGM will be held between 7.30 pm and 7.45 pm on the same night. It was agreed to invite the Police, BRCC Ecologist (Orchards), Councillor Ian Dalgarno (Green Wheel, West Drive and the Blue Lagoon) and a representative from FPRA, FHMC, FHRA, Middlemarch Residents Company to explain their roles. **Action: KH**

325 'Bogus' for sale signs around Fairfield (on Facebook)

- 325.1 Unfortunately, the PTA for Fairfield Lower School was drawn into a commercial advertising war between estate agents. Neither FPC nor FPRA has an issue with the School advertising fundraising events. However, estate agents cannot advertise themselves around Fairfield as aggressively as they have been. All community organisations are invited to apply to FPC for grants for advertising. The clerk to send application forms to the school. **Action: KH**

326 Planning Applications

- 326.1 CB/14/01185/FULL 5 Salisbury Close
FPC has received a complaint that the extension has been built in red brick and the resident is concerned that CBC is contemplating accepting an inferior brick to the Arlesey brick. FPC to consider what action to take.

It was agreed that FPC will write to Central Bedfordshire Council and state that this brick work does not meet the condition 'All external works hereby permitted shall be carried out in materials to match as closely as possible in colour, type and texture, those of the existing building' and request CBC takes the necessary action. **Action: KH**

FPC to supply CBC with results from the PP questionnaire re planning. **Action: BD**

- 326.2 CB/14/03997/FULL Former Pig Unit, Hitchin Road
Demolition of all existing buildings and dwellings. Mixed use development comprising 1400sqm B1 offices, children's nursery, 70 bedroom care home, 96 dwellings, access, parking, open space and ancillary works.

Additional information relating to transport assessment.

CB/14/04048/FULL Former Pig Unit, Hitchin Road
Demolition of all existing buildings and dwellings. Erection of 116 dwellings and a 70 bedroom care home with access, parking, open space and ancillary works.

Additional information relating to transport assessment.

The full response from FPC to the applications can be seen in item 258.1 in minutes from the meeting held on 4th December 2014. FPC sent the following comments to the additional information to CBC on 19th January 2015:-

Further to email from CBC of 5th January and to the Technical Note which was attached, FPC was disappointed that rather than offering mitigation measures, the applicant appeared to be seeking to avoid further costs by relying upon the extant permission, which their own consultants have very clearly stated in planning submissions is not viable and would never be implemented. They have clearly gone to great lengths to illustrate that the development option secured by the extant consent is not viable, thus we were surprised that they were seeking to suggest that its implementation is a realistic proposition.

The 'fallback' position is clearly one which exists only in theory and we have therefore asked the applicant directly to review their position and offer to undertake remedial works to the A507 roundabout, in order to mitigate the impact of the development.

The applicant has now issued details to FPC of highway improvements to the A507 junction and FPC are minded that the development is acceptable, subject to those works being secured via a suitably worded planning condition or legal agreement. For ease of reference those works are set out on the attached plan. We understand from the applicant that details of the updated capacity analysis and highway works have also been submitted to CBC

326.3 CB/14/04777/FULL 3 Beeton Court
Change of use of half the premises from A1 use to A3 at 3 Beeton Court.
FPC has no objections to the basic principle of the application but does has concerns on two issues that hopefully can be covered by conditions imposed on any approval.

1. **Waste management.**

Namely that a rubbish bin is located outside of the premises which is under the control of the occupier, and that a litter collection is made by the occupier of that business at least twice a day during operating hours.

2. **Opening hours.**

The application notes the opening hours are 9.00am to 6.00pm Mon to Fri and 9.00am to 5.00pm on Saturday and Sundays. Can we be sure that any approval is limited to those opening hours?

326.4 CB/15/00104/FULL 9 Charlotte Avenue
Loft conversion with windows to side gable walls and roof windows to front and rear.
FPC has no objection to this application other than conditions are that all materials are to match existing bricks and windows.

326.5 CB/15/0144/FULL Bannatyne's Health Club
Proposed retrospective bin store enclosure.
FPC has no objection but does request than all waste is to be kept within the storage are and a pest control system to be in place at all times to protect the homes from infestation.

326.6 CB/15/00246/FULL 4 Burton Close
First floor rear extension and addition of sun pipes.
FPC has no objection to this application other than conditions are that all materials are to match existing bricks and windows.

327 Planning Decisions

327.1 CB/14/04825/FULL 6 Heathcliff Avenue
Loft conversion with 3 rear skylights.
CBC granted full planning permission 29th January 2015

328 Finance

328.1 Councillors were provided with details of payments totally £3,470.53 and it was

RESOLVED

That all monies on the payments list be paid.

328.2 Councillors agreed to transfer £200.00 onto the Alto card.

328.3 FPC has received a grant application from Fairfield Scout Group for renting the Community Hall for 39 weeks of at £42.50 per week = £1,657.50. Following a discussion it was

RESOLVED

To award Fairfield Scout Group £1,657.50 to rent the Community Hall for one year.

REASON

To offer opportunities for young people in Fairfield.

The clerk to advise Fairfield Scout Group. **Action: KH**

329 Correspondence

- 329.1 CBC – Tree works on Hitchin Road. Unfortunately during recent winds the large Turkey Oak located on the west side of Hitchin Road between Stotfold and Fairfield Park has dropped a very large branch from the central stem. This has revealed further decay which is increasingly causing the remaining branches and stem to become unstable, due to its position on the stem and the unbalanced shape of the remaining tree. With regret CBC has concluded that removal of this tree is the safest option.
- 329.2 CBC – Lower Wilbury Farm. Unfortunately the Horse Chestnut and other trees located in the area of Lower Wilbury Farm on Central Bedfordshire County farm land to the west side of Hitchin Road between Fairfield Park and Letchworth are reaching the end of their life cycle and over the years have suffered from wind damage, decay and disease. Unfortunately four out of thirty two trees will be lost and the remaining trees will have their canopies pruned and dead wood cleared.

330 Date of next meetings

- 330.1 The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 12th March 2015 at 7.30 pm.
- 330.2 The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Thursday 26th March 2015 at 7.45 pm.

Meeting closed at 9.30 pm