

Minutes of the meeting of Fairfield Parish Council held in Fairfield Community Hall on Thursday 16th March 2017 at 7:30 pm

Councillors present: B E Dack (Chairman), P Daffarn, S Foster, N P Hanks and T Milliken

Officer present: Katrina Henshaw (Parish Clerk)

Also present for all or part of the meeting: Ward Member Councillor S Dixon and ten members of the public.

264 Apologies for Absence

264.1 Apologies were received from Councillors C Bidwell (holiday) and S L Jones (prior engagement) and Ward Member Councillor B Saunders.

265 Newly elected parish councillor

265.1 Steve Foster was elected on 23rd February and has signed the Declaration of Office Form and completed the Register of Interest form. He will be attending a BAPTC training session on 23rd May at a cost of £25.00.

266 Disclosures of Interest and Dispensation requests

266.1 Councillor Foster declared an interest on item 13 of the agenda (item 276 in minutes) as he is a Trustee of the school PTA and is organising the run. As this is not a pecuniary interest it was agreed he could make the report but not have a vote in any decision.

266.2 No other disclosures of interest and no requests for dispensation were received.

267 Council Minutes

267.1 Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9th February 2017 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.

268 Public Participation

268.1 No member of the Public requested to speak.

269 Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Members Report

269.1 Allotments, Recreation Space, Football Pitch and Cemetery – Councillor Dixon is expecting a response from CBC shortly.

269.2 Update of Postal Address – The Rt Hon Alistair Burt, MP is still awaiting for an explanation from Royal Mail for the decision. Councillor Dixon has also written to the PCC seeking help with this to demonstrate how the misleading addresses could hinder the police with crime.

- 269.3 Faulty street lighting – Councillor Dixon acknowledged that the current system was not providing good service and is hoping that the new system and change in portfolio will see improvements. He advised that the bollards on Hitchin Road had been repaired and he was still chasing up faulty street lights.
- 269.4 Update on Letchworth Sewage Treatment Works – Two unpleasant pits have been covered and a new electrical bloodhound system should be installed by the end of the week which is hoped will be more reliable than the diesel one that kept running out of diesel. Drains are also being checked for a secondary source of smell. The Rt Hon Alistair Burt has intervened and a meeting has been offered for 24th March. CBC is having a preliminary meeting on 20th March. Anglian Water has until 31st March to submit a plan to CBC which will need to be confirmed by a CBC expert as an acceptable plan. It was agreed for Councillor Dixon to invite representatives (Operational not PR) from Anglian Water to the APM. **Action: SD**
- 269.5 Reserved matters application south of the Former Pig Testing Unit – As FPC has made objections this will be referred to the planning committee and not dealt with by officers. They will make the decision as to whether this is a genuine reserved matters application or should be a full application.
- 269.6 New development at Former Pig Testing Unit – Hitchin Road has been swept but the gullies still need clearing. Councillor Dixon will ask CBC to speak to developers. **Action: SD**
- 269.7 S106 Public Art money – Councillor Dixon suggested FPC meet with Lisa White to discuss allocating the remaining money to the Urban Park project. It was agreed that Councillors Bidwell and Dack will attend this meeting. **Action: CB/BD**

270 Annual Parish Meeting

- 270.1 As The RT Alistair Burt, MP was unavailable to attend the APM on 1st June, it was agreed to change the date to 4th May 2017 so he can attend.

271 Transfer of land from Hotbed Investments

- 271.1 Councillors Bidwell and Dack met with the Hall Directors on 2nd March to hear their proposals. A report of that meeting and the views of Councillors Bidwell and Dack had been distributed to all. Comments to that report from Colin Chatfield (Chairman of FHMC Directors) had also been circulated to all. As FPC had several reservations of the new proposals (in particular areas 5, 6 and 14 as these were areas that link to future potential parking areas so would need lighting – see item 273.1) it was agreed to ask FHMC to reconsider their proposals and it was further agreed that FPC should try and meet with FHMC to discuss these issues. **Action: KH**

272 Damage to grass verges

- 272.1 Winter damage to grass verges has occurred in several places on Fairfield due to inconsiderate and illegal parking. One area is the 'S' bend in Bronte Avenue. This is caused by the perpetual parking on the verge by BT Openreach vehicles plus a cleaning company. It was agreed to write (with photographic evidence) to companies of offending vehicles asking for employees to refrain from parking on the grass. **Action: KH**

273 Parking and safety issues around the school

- 273.1 Councillors Bidwell and Dack Councillor Bidwell met with Fairfield Pak Lower School Headteacher, Mrs Stone, Ward Councillor Dixon and two governors, Kelly McCrow and Linda Caldwell to discuss road safety and other issues.

A Road Crossing Officer was discussed and Councillors Bidwell and Dack advised that FPC was happy to fund the first year and possibly look for a sponsor to part finance it from year two onwards. It was stressed that this could not be a one year only project and this was agreed.

The recent accident and how road safety could be improved was discussed. It was agreed that FPC would look into white/yellow lines around Fairfield and a school zig-zag marks immediately outside the school.

The on-going parking problems were discussed in particular FPC aspirations of being able to add parking to the disused road that led from Hardy Way down to the school edge. Mrs Stone expressed reservations about this and said she would be unhappy to recommend to her staff to park there on safety grounds. It was explained that FPC intended to light the road to make it safe and Mrs Stone said that could make a difference to her views however a full health and safety assessment would be needed and any final decision still needs to be discussed and this was supported by the two governors.

On Wednesday 10th May the school is holding a road safety 'Beep Beep' day and requested FPC is involved with this day. **Action: All**

Discussions also took place on the new school and, in particular, the football pitch and changing areas that were being proposed for dual use. Mrs Stone expressed severe misgivings as to the workability of this and also its cost effectiveness. Among her concerns would be the need to carry out a risk assessment the day after the area was used by the public. Councillors Bidwell and Dack said that FPC shared her concerns, and that, while saying that there was growing need for such facilities on Fairfield, FPC had never supported the shared use as we feel it is not workable. Councillor Dixon agreed that he and Mrs Stone would take the matter up again with the Education department at CBC, noting both side's comments and views.

273.2 Following a discussion it was

RESOLVED

That FPC would sponsor a Road Crossing Officer at a cost of £4,000 pa. CBC will employ the person and will arrange all training but it was noted that this is a long term agreement as CBC would not wish to make someone redundant after 12months. The FPC logo will be on the back of coat.

REASON

To increase road safety around the school.

The clerk to arrange with CBC and assist with advertising for the job. **Action: KH**

273.3 Traffic orders for parking restrictions have a 4-6 month process with a cost of £5,000 approximately. It was agreed that a working group (Councillors Bidwell, Foster and Hanks) would draft a proposal for parking restrictions around Fairfield and present it at the April meeting. **Action: CB/SF/NH**

274 CBC Leisure Engagement Strategy

274.1 CBC want to understand Fairfield priorities for new or improved recreational open spaces and outdoor sport facilities. This information will help CBC secure developer contributions toward these priorities from any relevant new housing developments in Fairfield. It was agreed to form a working party (Councillors Dack, Daffarn and Foster) to clarify what information CBC required (due to FPC not owning land) and supply it by 2nd May 2017 as required. **Action: BD/PD/SF.**

275 The Etonbury Green Wheel

275.1 All councillors had received the Etonbury Green Wheel Greenspace Masterplan 2017 Stakeholder Consultation Draft Version 1. The only inaccuracy FPC spotted was Eliot Way being incorrectly named. The clerk to advise CBC by 31st March 2017. **Action: KH**

The walk should be launched end of 2017/start of 2018 but the launch of the rest is unknown due to disputes with landowners. Councillor Dack expressed his disappointment that it didn't include a cycle path from Dickens Boulevard to Letchworth but was advised that this was outside the Etonbury Green Wheel. The whole project was however highly commended.

276 Fairfield School 5km Run and 1km Family Fun Run

276.1 Councillor Foster supplied all councillors with a report, two proposals and four quotations. In summary Fairfield Park Lower School PTA is hosting a Family Fun Run and 5k event on Saturday 13th May. There is an entrance fee and they have received sponsorship from several local businesses but still need an inflatable arch at the start and finish line. This arch could be used at future events for the school and other organisations. Following a discussion it was

RESOLVED

That FPC would purchase a plain white arch with the FPC logo printed on the top and sides and the addition of six interchangeable banners and signs to be changed for different events and organisations. It was agreed to purchase this from Instant Promotion at a cost of £875.00 + vat.

REASON

To support activities arranged by organisations for the benefit of Fairfield.

The clerk to purchase the arch. **Action: KH**

277 Orchards

277.1 All tree work for this year has been completed and the deadwood will be removed next week. Similarly the clearance of the new area near West Orchard has been completed and will be grass seeded next weekend with a special general purpose mix. Later this year fruit trees will be planted.

277.2 Comments made by Geoff Smith were noted and it was agreed that no screening had been removed, the area had been cleared of overgrowth and young self-seeding sycamores removed along the treeline at West Drive. The area does look barren but this was only temporary as additional trees will be planted. This area was part of the West Orchard according to historic maps and the area will look better once grass starts growing. The area where the builders pile was had been taken out of the protected area as a County Wildlife site and the CBC Ecologist had also requested opening up the area to establish what was actually there. The first skip had 12 tonnes of rubble and assorted rubbish and the second skip is estimated to have a further 3 tonnes. The clerk to advise Geoff Smith that his comments have been noted and FPC hopes he will appreciate how pleasant the area looks in the future. **Action: KH**

278 Neighbourhood Plan

278.1 The CBC consultation finished on 20th January 2017. The plan and comments are now to be passed to an examiner and FPC is waiting to be advised of a date for examination.

279 Neighbourhood Watch / Street Watch / Speed Watch

279.1 In recent weeks there have been several incidents of antisocial behaviour around Fairfield. Councillor Dack, as acting Chairman, wrote to PC Sally Bonham to make her aware of all that he was aware of so she could link them all together and he asked the police to take action to stop future incidents. Neighbourhood Watch, Street Watch and Speed watch were discussed. In summary

- Neighbourhood Watch is a community-led initiative supported by the police. It aims to reduce the opportunity for crime and improve community safety by the reporting of suspicious incidents to the police and to each other.
- Bedfordshire Street Watch was a national initiative, but schemes now operate independently in some parts of the country. Street Watch in Bedfordshire is supported by Bedfordshire Police who are committed to helping residents make a positive difference in their community. The purpose of Street Watch is

- To prevent crime by increasing visibility and maintaining a caring and cohesive community.
- To assist the police by promoting effective communication and the prompt reporting of activity.
- To increase feelings of safety by promoting a sense of security and community spirit.
- By being proactive, Street Watch has been supporting vulnerable members of the community and vulnerable areas, making sure that people take pride in their communities.

Volunteers are asked to commit 2 hours every month to patrol, at timings of their choosing.

Councillor Dack reported that there is mixed opinion about Street Watch as it can result in a vigilantly attitude. That doesn't mean it should be discounted but people need to be aware that this is not its purpose.

- Community Speed Watch is a scheme to help people reduce traffic speeding through their neighbourhood. The scheme enables volunteers to work within their community to raise awareness of the dangers of speeding and to help control the problem locally. Volunteers are offered a training course run by Bedfordshire Police. The course covers the use of the equipment, training in conflict resolution and an option for basic first aid. The training comprises of three modules and if all the modules are taken it will last for approximately six hours.

Police will be invited to the APM to discuss these schemes and hopefully sign up volunteers.

Action: KH

Councillor Foster volunteered to lead these projects and prepare publicity details to be submitted to the council for discussion. **Action: SF**

280 No through signs

280.1 The signs were installed 12th March. If these are successful it was agreed that FPC would look at having similar installed on Eliot Way.

281 Bench

281.1 CBC has agreed to level the bench. A rubbish bin has been install.

282 Emergency Plan Meeting

282.1 Councillors Jones and Milliken attended a CBC session to encourage councils to have an Emergency Plan. CBC showed a template to facilitate risks (magnitude and possibility) and the plan on how to deal with them. If local residents know of a particular area that is a risk FPC should encourage the people who would be affected to be involved in the plan on how to deal with that particular problem should arise. The plan should detail where equipment can be sourced locally and a list of important contact details. FPC already has a very detailed Emergency Plan but this needs to be updated with the new risk section. The Hall was considered the highest risk in Fairfield. Councillors Bidwell, Jones and Milliken to update the Emergency Plan. **Action: CB/SJ/TM**

283 Out of hours doctors services

283.1 From 30th March 2017 when the GP surgery is closed patients will need to call 111 instead of MDoc. The patient will be accessed and a decision will be taken if the patient needs to be seen at home or at a location (Biggleswade Hospital or Lister Hospital). Full details will be in the next edition of Fairfield Matters.

284 Planning Applications

284.1 CB/17/00367/FULL 6 Nightingale Way

Single storey rear/side extension.

FPC had no objections to the basic principle of the application other than conditions are that all materials are to match existing bricks and windows.

284.2 CB/17/00302/FULL 1 Franklin Place

Two storey side (west) extension including additional single storey extension (east) for installation of bi folding doors. Enlargement of existing first floor bedroom window (east elevation) and bricking up of first floor bedroom window on west elevation.

FPC had no objections to the basic principle of the application other than conditions are that all materials are to match existing bricks and windows.

284.3 CB/17/00358/RM Land East of Hitchin Road and south of the Former Pig Testing Unit.

Reserved Matters: erection of 180 dwellings with landscaping, open space and associated works pursuant to outline planning permission CB/16/01455/OUT dated 30th June 2016.

FPC object to the application on the grounds that the proposals, having been materially changed from that approved at the Outline planning stage, will result in severe cumulative highway impacts, particularly with regard to highway safety on Dickens Boulevard and at the Dickens Boulevard / Kipling Crescent junction. The Outline planning permission was granted on the basis of a Transport Assessment which considered the impacts of a development which included commercial and community land uses. That Transport Assessment becomes null & void with the removal of these aspects of the scheme, as further analysis / mitigation will be necessary, therefore to suggest that this application can rely upon the Outline permission is considered irrational and unreasonable.

Most importantly, the removal of the commercial unit (or space for such a unit) will have the effect of increasing the potential traffic distribution on the local highway network, meaning that vehicles associated with new houses will now make 'diverted' trips into Fairfield Park, in order to visit the Tesco Express store. This may not be material in terms of road junction capacity however it will be material in terms of parking capacity in the vicinity of the Tesco Express and associated highway safety impacts, including Dickens Boulevard, where significant parking and highway safety issues already exist.

Similarly, the removal of the potential doctor's surgery (or space for such a unit) means that whereas those occupying the new dwellings would have been likely to walk to the surgery, they will now be required to drive to other facilities outside of the immediate area. This again may not add up to a large volume of vehicle trips such that junction capacity is impacted, however no analysis has been provided to quantify such impacts and there would also be impacts upon parking capacity and patient capacity at and around existing doctor's surgeries.

Further to the concerns above, we note that the internal road layout may not be suitable for CBC refuse vehicle access. Vehicle tracking included on the site plan appears to be for a smaller vehicle than CBC utilise and even that appears to show overrun of kerbs and conflicts with landscaping areas, plus a need in some locations for private driveways to be utilised for turning. Vehicle tracking should be provided for the entire site, illustrating that refuse vehicle access is possible, in a manner compliant with the relevant standards.

Prior to sending this response FPC challenged CBC regarding the authenticity of this application stating that as it had materially changed from that submitted as an outline application, it was no longer "a reserved matters" application, and should be dealt with as a full application. This is because changes from the outline application will cause material changes to the traffic flow outside the development area for which no study or figures have been supplied by the developer. To date this letter has been acknowledged only.

Letters have also been exchanged between Lochailort Fairfield Limited and FPC with the most recent one from Lochailort Fairfield Limited advising that revised plans will be submitted in the next few days and will include a new shop, with some apartments above. The total number of homes will still be as per the outline planning permission for 180 dwellings. To allow flexibility it will include a commercial unit that will also be suitable for a surgery.

- 284.4 **CB/1700503/FULL 5 Charlotte Avenue**
Loft conversion with insertion of pitched roof dormers and roof lights.
FPC had no objections to the basic principle of the application other than conditions are that all materials are to match existing bricks and windows.
- 284.5 **CB/17/00398/FULL 19 Brunel Walk**
Proposed loft conversion with pitched roof dormers and skylights following approval of flat roof dormer to application CB/15/03912/FULL.
FPC has no objections to the basic principle of the application other than conditions are that all materials are to match existing bricks and windows.
- 284.6 **CB/17/00831/FULL 2 Brunel Walk**
Proposed single storey rear extension with velux windows and a part garage conversion.
FPC objects to this application as the loss of the garage as a parking space reduces the available parking for the property to one space, as confirmed in the application form. This takes the level of provision below CBC's minimum standards and given the parking issues locally.

285 Planning Decisions

- 285.1 **CB/16/04272/FULL**
Former Pig Unit. Hitchin Road
Erection of a care home (Use Class C2) with access, car parking, amenity space, landscaping and other associated works.
CBC granted full planning permission 22nd February 2017

286 Finance

286.1 Payments

To whom	Description	Total
Katrina Henshaw	February salary	£340.40
HMRC	February tax	£85.20
EE	Mobile Phone	£44.98
Prontaprint	Printing letters to residents	£192.00
MBS	Grass verges - February	£706.00
MBS	Dog bins - February	£38.40
MBS	Grass outside Community Hall - February	£64.99
MBS	Fleming Drive - February	£38.00
MBS	Salisbury Close - February	£32.50
MBS	Rubbish Clearance	£144.00
BAPTC	Training (Chairmanship 1 2 and 3 - C.Bidwell)	£90.00
BAPTC	Training (New councillor induction - S. Foster)	£25.00
HCC	Stationery	£9.54
Chris Brown (NOW)	Signature artwork	£30.00
Colin Carpenter	1/2 payment for works to orchards	£2,500.00
Total		£4,341.01

It was

RESOLVED

That payments of £4,341.01 be paid.

287 Correspondence

287.1 Resident - concerns about the debris and building rubble left for many years in front of Palmerston Way to the edge of the cricket pitch. The clerk has advised that this is on areas of land under the control of the Cricket Club and Fairfield Hall Management Company (FHMC). The clerk to advise FHMC and the Cricket Club of these concerns. **Action: KH**

The resident was also advised that the parish council is hoping to arrange a residents clean up Fairfield day during the summer at which time, subject to landowners permission, these areas may be look at by those helping to clear rubbish.

288 Date of next meeting

288.1 The next Parish Council meeting will be held on 20th April 2017 at 7.30 pm

Meeting closed at 8.50 pm