

GEDDINGTON, NEWTON AND LITTLE OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8th JANUARY 2024 at 7.30pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Cllrs C Buckseall, T Bailey, B McCreery, D Lomasney, M Rowley, J Padwick (Chair), C Wrighting.

APOLOGIES

Cllr B McCreery

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr Rowley – Car Park Extension (related to Cobley Lodge management).

094/24: PUBLIC SESSION.

a) Questions sent in by the public

One resident had submitted an email request and was also present at the meeting. The request was to work with a small group of residents to clear an allowed amount of weed and other growth in the pond in the meadow. He has obtained approval to do so from the Police and the Wildlife Trust and has forwarded copies of those emails to the Parish Council. He added that the bridge and dog walking area is classed as within the same water area as the pond, therefore subject to the same restrictions if any clearance was being considered for that area. He is happy to include it in the work that will be carried out to the pond, but he wanted to ensure that councillors were aware of the restrictions for clearing this space as well. He was informed that the area considered for cutback was the footpath by the old riverbed that extends to New Road.

Another resident has asked if the pond maintenance is covered by insurance. It was agreed that the pond clearance would be a Fire Brigade event with some of the members attending, and be covered by the Fire Brigade's insurance.

The suggestion was made that the making of a "learning" footpath that followed the old river course through the meadows might be a good idea to consider at a future date.

b) Reports from North Northants Councillors.

Consultation is currently taking place for the NNC budget, which it is proposed will increase by the maximum allowed. No cuts are envisaged for front line staff. Severe weather warnings have been activated for the next few days.

095/24: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

a) Approval of draft minutes for the Monthly Parish Council Meeting held 11th December 2023.

Proposed by Cllr Rowley that one sentence be taken out at 084/24b) that was not relevant, Seconded by Cllr Buckseall, approved by all councillors present.

Cllr Rowley then proposed that the minutes now be accepted as a true record. Seconded by Cllr Buckseall, approved by all councillors present.

b) matters arising; progress on outstanding actions.

11.12.23, action 1: (*Removal of cut tree trunk*). Cllr Rowley will ask the resident if he can use his tractor to move the cut tree trunk in the meadows. He has not managed to see him and ask him yet.

Cllr Rowley has now been able to speak to the resident concerning this matter.

11.12.23, action 2: The clerk to contact NNC - suggested closure of the bridge to traffic. Cllr Rowley will speak to the portfolio holder to check the information that has been given. Cllr Rowley reported that he was seeing the portfolio holder the next day.

ACTION 1: Any updates will be given at the next meeting.

11.12.23, action 3: Cllr Richardson will speak to the vehicle's owner. (Van/mobile home parked immediately in front of the old post office, blocking view of Queen Street when exiting the car park).

The vehicle owner had not been contacted, therefore the clerk had written to her. A reply has been received, stating that when the vehicle can be started she will move it.

11.12.23, action 4: Cut back of ivy in Village Hall car park – The clerk to contact the Chair of the Village Hall Committee to find out if sufficient ivy has been cut back. The clerk will then contact the resident to inform her that the ivy has been cutback and is not currently going over the wall.

The clerk has contacted the caretaker (as there is currently no Chair) who will take the issue to the next Village Hall management committee meeting. Thanks were conveyed for the existing cutback of the ivy, but the ivy has not been removed completely.

11.12.23, action 5, 6 and 7: (Solicitors quotations for Stonepit land leases required).

These items and the updates are discussed 096/24e).

11.12.23, action 8: Trees on front boundary of Stonepit land. A quotation has been received for £3,150.00. This had not been budgeted for in the 2023-4 budget so no decision will be made for authorising the work at the present time. It will be considered again in the next financial year. The clerk to write to Weldon tree and landscapes to inform them of the above information. This had been carried out and an acknowledgement received.

11.12.23, action 9: (Car park project - milestones for payment stages., request for part of Queen Street to be blocked). The clerk to contact the company concerning this.

The information concerning payment – milestones and the company's responsibility if they wished to have part of Queen Street blocked off, to be conveyed to Cobley Lodge.

Actions 9 and other updates are at 096/24f) and 098/24.

11.12.23, action 10: (Cut back of weeds on footpath in the Meadow -two options and quotation). This will not be carried out at the present time as there will be no new growth through the winter months. It will be considered however at a later date. The clerk to inform the resident of this.

The clerk reported that she had not been able to do this as she has no contact details.

11.12.23, action 12: (email from CP Placement Co-Ordinator – Community Payback Team Northamptonshire Service, East of England, 30.11.23). The clerk to write to the co-ordinator to say that the Parish Council is interested in the scheme and will be in touch in the New Year.

Action 12 is updated at Minute ref.101/24.

11.12.23, action 13:(The shallow tree stump in front of the three benches concealed by grass}. Boughton Estates have some equipment that will grind the top of tree stumps. The Clerk to contact Boughton Estates to see if they would be able to use this on the tree stump, as the Parish Council lease the field from them.

The clerk reported that the Boughton Estates Manager has been on holiday so she will contact him again later this week.

ACTION 2: This item to be carried forward to the February agenda.

ACTION 3: The clerk to inform the resident of what action has been taken.

11.12.23, action 16:(removal from storage of two traffic mirrors that a resident has been storing). There does not seem to be any other area or organisation who could make use of the two mirrors. A suggestion was made therefore to sell them on eBay or Facebook Market Place. The clerk to find out the dimensions of the two mirrors.
The clerk now has the dimensions.

ACTION 4: Cllr Bailey will make some enquiries as to a possibility of taking the mirrors to an Auction. The clerk will also enquire as to another parish council may find a use for them

11.12.23, action 17: (timing on the radiators in the lounge). The clerk will contact the caretaker.

The clerk had contacted the caretaker who apologised if he had accidentally not put the heating on or up.

VILLAGE SHOP UPDATES.

Cllr Wrighting is gathering information ahead of the meeting on 27th January, 10.00 – 2.00pm in the Church. Possibly a small group of three to five people would be needed to take it to the next stage. The Blunkett Foundation may be worth while exploring by the small group as they give help and support for projects such as this, but a monetary contribution is expected in the early stages of involvement with them, of £500.

LITTLE OAKLEY

a) Defibrillators (Little Oakley and Newton)- update and decision.

The Newton defibrillator and (locked) cabinet – a conditional order has been placed, pending the rest of the electrical questions being addressed and the terms of the lease being satisfactory. These will be forwarded to the electrician.

The BHF have got back to the Parish Council to say that a defibrillator and (unlocked) cabinet has been awarded to Little Oakley, as per the grant funding application. This will be sited in the former BT kiosk as will the Newton defibrillator.

NEWTON

Dogs have been running along the footpath (by the manor house) out of control. A wire fence has now been installed by the owners of the manor house.

096/24: FINANCE

a) Bank balances –

Community account statement	18 Nov 23 – 15 Dec 23	£68,188.47
Business Saver account	18 Nov 23 – 15 Dec 23	£10,894.16

b) Accounts received

None.

c) Accounts for payment : -

Anita Curtis	Expenses Oct – Dec 2023 . Printer ink £31.47, Sticky notes £1.00.	32.47
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Weldon Tree and Landscapes Ltd	Tree safety works – Cat B as per Tree safety risk assessment.	5796.00
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It was proposed by Cllr Lomasney that the above payments be approved. Seconded by Cllr Buckseall, approved by all councillors present.

d) Clerk's salary increase Apr 2023 to Mar 2024 as per national agreement – decision required.

Closed agenda item 7d) - Motion to exclude the Public and Press: In accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Administration of Meetings) Act 1960, in that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

Anita Curtis	Back pay - salary increase Apr – Dec 2023	360.07
Anita Curtis	Additional PAYE pd by AC if salary increase approved – Apr – Dec 2023	72.01

It was proposed by Cllr Lomasney that the above payments be approved. Seconded by Cllr Buckseall, approved by all councillors present. The clerk was also informed that a parish clerk review would be carried out.

e) Solicitors' quotes for Stonepit land tenants.

Quotations had been received, from Lamb and Holmes, Friday Legal (Wilson Browne) and Tollers Solicitors. After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that Tollers had given a detailed quotation and the Parish Council would know exactly what work would be carried out. A standard business lease that one of the other two quotations had based their quote on will not cover the situation for the two leases required.

Cllr Rowley proposed that the clerk contact Tollers solicitors to ask them if they would consider reducing their quotation by £150.00 to match the nearest quotation. If this is refused, Tollers to still be used as all councillors present agreed that it was the most thorough and detailed quote. Seconded by Cllr Buckseall, approved by all councillors present.

ACTION 5: the clerk to contact the preferred solicitors as above.

ACTION 6: The clerk to write to the two clubs to inform them that quotations from solicitors have been received and that the Parish Council hoped to submit draft leases shortly

f) Car park project - milestones for payment stages. Further discussion and decision.

The Finance Committee had put forward the suggestion of the first stage of Groundworks 1 and the second stage of Groundworks 2 be paid at the same time if Parish Councillors were happy with the work that had been completed at Groundworks stage 1. This would enable a large amount of VAT to be reclaimed earlier than would otherwise happen.

Proposed by Cllr Wrighting that if Cobley Lodge can commence in latter half of February rather than early March it would be helpful, and if the two invoices for Groundworks 1 and Groundworks 2 could be issued therefore by the end of February (and therefore dated February) that would then allow the Council to reclaim a large amount of VAT before the end of the financial year. Seconded by Cllr Lomasney, approved by all councillors present except for two abstentions.

ACTION 7: The clerk to contact Cobley Lodge to request the above variation to the contract.

g) Parish Council budget for 2024-2025 – for decision.

h) Parish Council precept for 2024 – 2025 – decision.

The two agenda items above were considered together.

The draft budget was checked again. The recommendation was put forward from the Finance Committee for the budget for 2024-5, with a proposed precept of £30,000. The total spend for 2024-5 in the draft budget is £27,395.

It was proposed by Cllr Rowley that the precept be set at £30,000 for 2024-5, seconded by Cllr Bailey, approved by all councillors present.

ACTION 8: The clerk to complete and send the precept form to NNC.

i) Parish Council indemnity Insurance – for information, discussion and decision.

The clerk had contacted Zurich Insurance for an insurance quote as the three year “lock-in” with Gallagher had now expired. A Zurich “DIY” online insurance that is designed specifically for small parish councils with a precept of between £20,000 to £30,000 or less would cost £396; this allows for a blanket cover of assets up to £50000, and indemnity insurance of £12million.

It was decided that this did not give enough cover. The playground equipment had cost £76,000 when it was purchased in 2012.

Cllr Rowley proposed that the insurance issue be delegated to the Finance Committee to make as further information is needed for alternative cover and renewal is due before the next monthly Parish Council meeting. Seconded by Cllr Buckseall, approved by all councillors present.

ACTION 9 The clerk to obtain a further detailed quotation (for insurance cover of over £50,000 of assets) with Zurich.

097/24:) STONEPIT LAND -update.

Matters relating to Stonepit land were discussed at 096/24e). There were no other issues raised.

PLANNING.

a) NNC Decision notices

Noted that tree works for the Council at both the recreation ground and Church Hill had been passed.

The former Newton field centre has been approved for change of use, to a residential property.

NK/2023/0277: J Prentice, Weldon House, Corby Road, Little Oakley.. Detached garage

Full Application. This was refused and has now gone to Appeal.

**098/24: CAR PARK EXTENSION UPDATE –
Parking for Cobley Lodge vehicles.**

A plan had been provided by Cobley Lodge asking if they would be able to park their vehicles whilst the work is in progress, in the area facing on to the recreation ground, between the fence at the end of the car park and the path leading up to the Cricket Club pavilion.

Councillors agreed that they should park close to where the work was being carried out.

ACTION 10: The clerk to let Cobley Lodge know that the allocated parking area is acceptable.

Cllr Rowley wished to point out that the area was flooded with water where the car park extension will be constructed. It was thought however that the agreed construction holds the gravel in place. Additionally, at planning application stage, the council were advised that a gravel surface would be better than a grass surface.

099/24: FLOODING.

- a) Flooding and surface water run-off in the villages on 2.1.24 - update and issues arising.**
- b) Flood risk assessment**
- c) Flood risk plan**
- d) Any other issues.**

(Items a,b,c &d were discussed collectively).

Cllr Rowley pointed out that three years after the last floods in December 2020, nothing seemed to have happened. He had written a report in 2021 but there seemed to be no progress after that at all. There had been flooding in the villages on Tuesday 2nd January but it appeared that there were no sandbags to help protect the village. The Environment Agency is the responsible agency, and at a local level the GVFB has helped in the villages where it can.

Cllr Buckseall circulated a booklet that she had worked on and it had been adopted, but it appeared to have not been used at all. Further flood information included a flood plan with the details of who to call. The GVFB have offered assistance in the village previously, but they do not have sandbags any more.

It was thought that there was confusion about who is responsible for what, and what householders themselves needed to do to protect their properties from flood water or surface water run-off.

Cllr Padwick informed councillors that there had been a meeting two days ago with the flood warden who locks the berm and blocks off the ford, the flood working group, a member of GVFB and himself, to review Tuesday's events. One action from that meeting was to liaise with Boughton Estates to find out what they can do to help prevent flooding from The Chase.

The pathfinder document that was produced by NCC is not held by any councillor, it may be with a member of the Flood working group.

The original flood working party identified some of the areas where flooding originates from, but there needs to be communication and input from Boughton Estates. The run off from the Chase, coming via a pipe to the opposite side of the road, down the main road, through the ditches, adding to the water levels in an area where the water levels are very high (in Newton Road), lack of maintenance of the ditches along the main road, pipe is too narrow on its approach to the berm, are all reasons leading to flooding in some of the areas. Householders in Stamford Road were advised in 2021 of their responsibility for keeping the ditches that are outside their property unblocked.

Little Oakley appears to have minimized most of their flood problems now, but maintenance work still needs to be carried out to keep the ditches clear, on an ongoing basis.

Cllr Padwick proposed that the working party reconvene in February together with the people who met two days ago, seconded by Cllr Wrighting, agreed by five councillors, one against and one abstention.

100/24: OUTDOOR GYM - Update.

The working group is close to submitting a bid to FCC at the end of February for approximately £30,000 for the outdoor gym. Cllr Padwick stated the information still needed:

- Written third party confirmation is needed that the Parish Council will contribute 10.75% of the bid should it be successful. Proposed by Cllr Padwick, seconded by Cllr Buckseall, approved by all councillors with one abstention.
- Primary and secondary contact details – to be the Parish Clerk and Cllr Padwick. Agreed.
- Signature – The clerk has authority to sign on behalf of the Parish Council as the Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer. She will therefore be the only person who can sign the documents. Agreed.
- The lease of the recreation field needs to be seen.
- A quote is needed for the hornbeam and cherry tree for crown work, although Cllr Lomasney believes that they may already be listed in the tree maintenance programme.
- Insurance details needed to be provided.
- Letters of support and possible voluntary contributions to be sent by the Parish Council to village organisations.
- A maintenance agreement needs to be in place.
- **ACTION 11: Cllr Rowley will check tomorrow whether NNC would be happy to take over the maintenance of the outdoor gym.**

101/24: COMMUNITY PAYBACK TEAM.

a) Discussion of suggested work to put forward to the CP Placement Co-ordinator.

The following work was suggested:-

- Repair of both the fence and removal of the tree at the far end of the recreation field (in the copse).
- The edges of the footpath on the main road.
- The edges of the footpath in the dog walking area (tarmacked area).
- Tidying up of all the footpath edges in the playground.
- Cut back of grass on the footpaths in Skeffington Close.
- Removal of ivy in one area of the Village Hall carpark (more details can be provided for the area concerned).

b) Any other related issues

None.

ACTION 12: The clerk will email the Community Payback Team Co-ordinator with this list.

102/24: CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AND CIRCULATED - to note, comment upon or consider.

a) Email from Deputy Clerk, Kettering Town Council 4.12.23 regarding private invitation as guest of honour to the Boxing Day Geddington squirt.

Confirmed that this was a private invitation, and the mayor did not wear the chains.

b) Email from Ncalc 12.12.23: electrical equipment emergencies. Response required on form provided by 31.1.24.

Ncalc are working with the unitary council to establish if there are any electrical equipment items in the highway such as streetlights, vehicle activated speeding devices and other similar equipment.

Noted that this Parish Council does not have any electrical equipment items.

ACTION 13: The clerk will complete and return the form.

103/24: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

a) Fence broken in copse in recreation ground – discussion and decision.

Noted that the area at the end of the recreation field is not covered by the tree maintenance plan. The work to repair both the fence and removal of the tree to be added to the Community Payback team list of jobs.

b) Email from resident 30.12.23 requesting permission to carry out yearly maintenance work to the pond in the meadow.

Verbal permission was given within the public session to the resident.

c) Email from resident 30.12.23 regarding old river bed and the bridge into the dog walking field next to the pond – confirmation needed from the PC that work on the pond can cover this area as much as possible.

Verbal permission was given within the public session to the resident as he was present at the meeting. The resident is aware of the area that can be covered.

d)Village Hall Committee – Parish Council representative required.

It was suggested that Cllr McCreery may be interested in this role.

ACTION 14: The clerk to contact Cllr McCreery before the next meeting to see if he is interested in this role. If he is not, the clerk to add it to the February agenda.

AOB.

Cllr Bailey is happy to attend the “Off to a Flying Start” course that (former) Cllr Richardson was booked onto.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.56pm.