



SIMPSON AND ASHLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on 4th September 2023 at Ashland Lakeside

Councillors present: Cllr Pye - Chair (DP), Cllr Barnes – Vice Chair (PB), Cllr Ezeh (CE),
Apologies: Cllr Tucker (DT)
Others present: Katherine Harmsworth (Parish Clerk), Charlotte Hall (Ward Cllr), 1 member of public

42) Introductions and apologies for absence

Apologies received from DT.

43) Specific declarations of interest

No change to current declarations in place.

44) Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the council held on 10th July 2023 were received and signed as a correct record.

45) Public forum

No questions raised.

46) Finance report and discussion

a) Payments from 1st July – 31st July 2023 were reviewed and approved.

47) Investment of PC reserve funds

a) It was agreed that investing PC reserve funds is the right thing to do to get the best return on public funds. It was agreed, subject to satisfactory references from other local parish and town councils within Milton Keynes, that the PC would agree to invest £130,000 in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

48) Audit

- a) The following finding from the external audit was noted; the previous year's asset figure should have been restated in line with the current year after the removal of SVH and AL inventory.
- b) To note the conclusion of audit notice was displayed on the noticeboard and website from 27th July 2023.

49) Review of policies

- a) The Code of Conduct was reviewed and approved with no changes.
- b) The Health and Safety Policy was reviewed and approved with minor changes to include the new Facilities Manager role.

50) Planning applications

- a) 22/01585/FUL Five Acres – Work has begun at pace and there doesn't seem, as yet, to be much disturbance to the local area.
- b) 23/01552/HOU 380 Simpson – The PC has no comment to make.
- c) 23/01606/FUL – The PC only became aware of this application late on 4th September and will need to further research the details, although it is not within the Parish boundaries.

51) Open space

- a) A report on Open Space was given by KH:
The new contractor Glendale starts work today, Monday 4th September. MKCC have been asked to quote for additional grass mowing in 2024 onwards and for the maintenance of SVH.
There have been some enquiries from residents asking for areas of long grass, particularly in Lissel Road, to be cut back. This should have been completed by SERCO in August and has been requested again.
- b) The Ashland Serpent will be removed in Autumn/Winter 2023 by the Parks Trust. It will be replaced with a wildflower planting zone in the same shape.

52) Ashland Lakeside

- a) The payments and hire income for Ashland Lakeside were reviewed and approved.
- b) The plans for Ashland Lakeside Open Day on 16th September were discussed and agreed.

53) Simpson Village Hall

- a) The payments and hire income for Simpson Village Hall were reviewed and approved.
- b) The landscaping works for Simpson Village Hall were reviewed and agreed as follows:
 - i) To get three quotes to jetwash the entrance ramp and steps to remove the moss and to clean out the gutters.
 - ii) To get three quotes to fix the roof tiles, where the ivy has displaced them. Due to the urgency of this action, it was agreed that it will be completed as a delegated decision.
 - iii) Work will continue around the side and rear of the Village Hall by installing a new weed membrane and spreading shingle around the area, this will prevent the regrowth of the weeds and brambles. The cost was agreed at £1400 + VAT.

54) Young people

- a) CE provided a review of the summer holiday activity sessions as follows:
 - i) There were lots of new families attending and the club was busy at every session. Unfortunately, due to the unseasonable weather all but one session had to be held indoors at Ashland Lakeside Community Centre. Feedback from attendees was generally positive. Some feedback from Facebook asked if more activities could be provided for children and families.
 - ii) The PC asked CE to provide a more detailed review of the summer holiday club, including attendance numbers and where the families came from as this will feed back into further discussions about next steps regarding PC involvement in local provisions for children and young people.
 - iii) Families also fed back that there is currently no after school care provision at Charles Warren Academy and this is preventing them from working. CE will investigate this further.
- b) It was agreed not to run a session in October half-term due to it being only one week and previous half term sessions had little or no attendees. It was agreed to investigate running a few sessions over the Christmas period with festive activities.

55) Community engagement

- a) There was a Street Champion meeting on 13th June. There was feedback about the hedge whips that were planted behind Warren Bank and along the canal that did not grow due to the heatwave and lack of watering.
- b) The next Street Champion meeting will be on 10th October.

56) East West Rail

- a) The current plan for the crossing gates at Fenny Stratford is that they will be retained. There is no further information that affects the Parish directly.

57) HR

- a) It was agreed to increase the contracted hours of the Parish Clerk to 40 hours per month from 1st September.
- b) It was agreed to increase the pay scale of the Parish Clerk to SCP25 from 1st September.
- c) It was agreed for the Parish Clerk to complete the ILCA qualification, at a cost of £120.

58) Matters arising

- a) On 16th October MK Food Bank is attempting to break the Guinness world record for the amount of single cans in a line. St Thomas Church will be collecting donations for this and the PC will help to publicise the event.
- b) The PC is concerned about the amount of accidents that are occurring on the H9 junction with Simpson Drive. Ward Councillor Charlotte Hall is due to have a meeting with Highways soon and will follow up further.
- c) A resident enquired about having a defibrillator in the Parish. The PC has registered its interest in a Government grant for defibrillators.
- d) There is the possibility of preserving some of the globe streetlights. PB will follow this up.
- e) Ward Councillor Charlotte Hall informed the PC that the lights not working around Genesis Green should be fixed soon. The Chief Engineer for MKCC is now pursuing this with the developers due to the safety concerns.
- f) The Canal and River Trust removed some of the dog waste bins along the canal towpath, including the one at Bowlers Bridge that the PC maintained. It was agreed to investigate the cost of replacing this bin.

59) Review of Delegated Decisions

The following delegated decisions were reviewed and approved:

- 1. To engage a handyman to complete some small jobs at Ashland Lakeside. Total cost £185.
- 2. To engage a locksmith to replace a door handle at Ashland Lakeside. Total cost £114.
- 3. Three quotes were received for landscaping around Simpson Village Hall. Loftus Landscapes were chosen for their comprehensive quote and work was carried out at a cost of £760 + VAT.
- 4. Three quotes were received for the removal of the ivy at Simpson Village Hall. Rose Tree Surgeons were chosen because of their method of removal and preventing regrowth at a cost of £275 + VAT.

60) To note that the next meeting of the Full Council will be held on Monday 6th November at 8pm at Simpson Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 21:45

Signed (Chair)

Date

Signed (Clerk)

Date