



SIMPSON AND ASHLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on 6th November 2023 at Simpson Village Hall

Councillors present: Cllr Barnes – Vice Chair (PB), Cllr Ezeh (CE), Cllr Tucker (DT), Cllr Dalgarno
Apologies: Cllr Pye
Others present: Katherine Harmsworth - Parish Clerk (KH), Charlotte Hall - Ward Councillor (CH), 3 members of public

67) Introductions and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Pye. In his absence Cllr Barnes chaired the meeting.

68) To consider the nominations received to fill the vacancies in the wards of Simpson and Ashland by co-option

Rachelle Dalgarno was nominated for co-option to the ward of Simpson, she was unanimously voted in and joined the meeting as a Parish Council member.

69) Specific declarations of interest

PB declared an interest in the table tennis club.

70) Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the council held on 2nd October 2023 were received and signed as a correct record.

71) Public Forum

Cllr Hall reported that some lights had not been working around Genesis Green in Ashland. She pursued this with Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) and the developer has now repaired 15 lights. Cllr Hall asks that if there are any further lights that are not working in Ashland, to let her know and she will follow up.

Cllr Hall informed the PC that the Open University is looking into the possibility of moving from the current campus to the city centre. A delegated decision is going to be discussed by MKCC on 8th November, but definitive plans will not be released for another year or two.

72) Finance report and discussion

- a) The payments from 1st August – 30th October 2023 were reviewed and approved.
- b) An update on the CCLA PSDF investment was received from KH. The amount agreed to be invested at the last meeting in October was £130000. It was agreed to pay PSDF in three separate instalments to ensure no fees are charged. The first instalment of £50000 was paid on 20th October. The second instalment of £50000 will be paid on 9th November and the final instalment of £30000 will be paid on 14th November. Subscription forms were signed by the relevant Parish Council members.
- c) The budget for 2023-24 was discussed and it was agreed that the PC will look to decrease the precept and this will be investigated further and agreed at the next PC meeting.

73) Dog waste bins

- a) An update on the removal of the dog waste bins at Bowlers Bridge and Lickorish Bridge was received from DT. He reported that the Canal and River Trust (CRT) removed dog waste bins nationwide due to their funding being cut by 50% and the need to reduce their costs. The CRT have agreed that they will replace the two bins near Bowlers Bridge and Lickorish Bridge dependent on ground surveys and if the PC agrees to cover the cost of having the bins emptied on a weekly basis.

- b) It was agreed to pay for the emptying of the dog waste bins at Bowlers Bridge and Lickorish Bridge, if CRT can replace them.

74) Road Safety – H9 Groveway

- a) PB and Cllr Hall reported that they approached MKCC to discuss the safety of the H9 Groveway between the V8 and V10. MKCC agreed to carry out a road safety survey which took place at various times on 5th and 11th October. Actions from the road safety survey included cutting grass and shrubs back where sightlines were blocked, replacing various signage due to lack of luminosity, and repainting some road surface markings. It also transpired that accidents are only reported to MKCC if occupants are injured, therefore the PC is aware of more accidents than the statistics state.
On 24th October PB, DT and Cllr Hall met with an MKCC Highways Officer to discuss the outcome of the road safety survey and future actions. MKCC recognises the complexity of the Simpson Drive junction and have stated they will set up cameras to monitor the traffic at this point. Due to the upcoming roadworks at the canal bridge, where there will be a temporary 40mph speed limit, it is likely that the cameras won't be installed until after this is completed in February.
- b) It was agreed to continue working with Cllr Hall and to continue monitoring the situation and to feed back any relevant information to MKCC.

75) Winter Funding

- a) The PC has been awarded a grant of £3000 by MKCC to support activities with the cost-of-living challenges. It was agreed to use the funding in the following ways:
 - i) To support the Friends of Simpson Village Hall in hosting several craft or hobby sessions at Simpson Village Hall, that will be free and open to anyone to attend.
 - ii) To run two trial advice sessions in conjunction with the Citizens Advice Bureau, at a cost of £175 per session. If uptake of the sessions is promising, then it was agreed to pursue running similar sessions for a longer period.
 - iii) To run two trial children's crafting sessions at Ashland Lakeside in conjunction with Milton Keynes Play Association, at a cost of £120 per session. If these sessions are successful, then it was agreed to pursue running similar sessions for a longer period.

76) Defibrillators

- a) It was agreed to fund two defibrillators, one at Ashland Lakeside and one at Simpson Village Hall, if the application for match funding is approved. The cost of each defibrillator is £750 + installation costs. It was also agreed that if the funding bid is unsuccessful then the PC will still go ahead and purchase and install. It was noted that once defibrillators were installed, training would need to be offered.

77) Planning applications

- a) 22/01585/FUL Five Acres – Building work progresses and there are currently no issues.
- b) 23/02096/PRIOR Simpson Day Care Centre– Notification of demolition of buildings 1 and 5.
This is an application allowed under General Permitted Development and as such the PC was only informed as a matter of courtesy. Despite this, the PC responded to express concerns about the planning process, the reasons for demolition and the health and safety aspects of demolition.
The PC asked Cllr Hall to engage with MKCC with a view to finding out the long-term plans for the Simpson Day Care Centre site.
23/00398/ENF White Cottage 456 Simpson – The PC submitted a comment to the planning enforcement officer to state that it supports the installation of a blue plaque as long as the information on it is historically accurate.

78) Open space

- a) A report on Open Space was received by KH and the following points were noted:
 - i) despite numerous contacts with MKCC, there was difficulty in getting the wildflower areas mown in the summer once the plants had died off. All areas have now been mown.

- ii) MKCC have taken responsibility for the trees and hedges between 105 and 105a Simpson and have now cut this area back.
 - iii) the hedge blocking the pavement outside 20 Hanmer Road has been reported to MKCC.
 - iv) the bi-monthly landscape meetings have increased in frequency and will now be monthly.
 - v) the PC is still waiting to receive a quote from the new contractor Glendale, in relation to possible top-up services for increased grass cutting and the maintenance of the Village Hall.
- b) An update on the Ashland Serpent was received from the Parks Trust. It has now been removed and the footprint of the serpent has been planted with wildflowers. The left-over wood has been distributed around Ashland Lake to provide a home for wildlife. Thanks were given to Julia Dawes and the team at the Parks Trust who have completed the works.
 - c) To note that the Parks Trust have also installed a new heritage board in Simpson Warren Field.

79) Ashland Lakeside

- a) Payments and hire income for Ashland Lakeside (AL) was reviewed and approved.
- b) It was noted that most AL hires are from residents of Ashland. There has been a complaint about the noise during one hire and this will be monitored going forward.
- c) The AL Open Day on 16th September was reviewed, and the PC agreed that it was a success and that similar future events should be supported.
- d) The purchase of a floor cleaner for AL was agreed at a cost of £1600 + VAT.
- e) It was agreed to research and get quotes for the redecoration of AL and the possibility of the installation of protective plastic wall covering or similar.

80) Simpson Village Hall

- a) Payments and hire income for Simpson Village Hall were reviewed and approved.
- b) Landscaping works around the back and side of Simpson Village Hall were agreed at a cost of £2877.50. Works on the roof were agreed at a cost of £1450 + VAT.
- c) The purchase of a table tennis table for Simpson Village Hall was discussed and agreed. It was previously agreed that the PC would purchase a new table tennis table at a cost of £300 + VAT. However, when further research was carried out, it was discovered that this was not enough to purchase a table that would be robust enough to withstand the amount of usage in the Village Hall. It was agreed that a suitable table (with protective cover) would be purchased at a cost of up to £500 + VAT.

81) Young people

- a) It was agreed to run one holiday club session during the Christmas holidays.

82) Community engagement

- a) An update on the street champions was received from CE. The last meeting was held on 10th October. It was reported that due to the unseasonable weather this summer some litter picking events were cancelled and the next one will take place in the new year.

83) East West Rail

PB reported that he is monitoring the situation but that there is little to report currently.

84) Matters arising

The people sleeping rough between Simpson and Ashland have been reported to Streetlink and they are now receiving help.

85) Review of Delegated Decisions

The following delegated decisions were reviewed and approved:

1. An application was submitted for a grant to purchase defibrillators at Simpson Village Hall and Ashland Lakeside.
2. 3 quotes were received and 1 was agreed to clean the exterior of Simpson Village Hall. The entrance ramp and steps and fire exit ramp were jet washed to remove moss, which was causing the paths to become slippery when wet. The gutters were cleaned out, as they were clogged with leaves and the windows were cleaned. The total cost was £300.

86) HR

- a) It was agreed to increase the Facilities Managers hours to 30 per month.
- b) The NJC pay scale increases were noted.

87) To note that the next meeting of the Full Council will be held on Monday 8th January at 8pm at Ashland Lakeside.

The meeting closed at 22:00

Signed (Chair)

Date

Signed (Clerk)

Date