



SIMPSON AND ASHLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on 4th March 2024 at Simpson Village Hall

Councillors present: Cllr Pye – Chair (DP), Cllr Barnes – Vice Chair (PB), Cllr Dalgarno (RD), Cllr Ezeh (CE), Cllr Tucker (DT)

Apologies: None

Others present: Katherine Harmsworth - Parish Clerk (KH), Charlotte Hall - Ward Councillor (CH)
6 members of the public

108) Introductions and apologies for absence

None received.

109) Specific declarations of interest

None received.

110) Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the council held on 8th January 2024 were received and signed as a correct record.

111) Public forum

- a) Several members of the public discussed traffic issues within Simpson including speeding, volume of traffic and cars parking in a hazardous location on the corner in front of the Plough. They requested traffic calming measures to be investigated in order to reduce the flow of traffic and help improve noise, pollution and safety. Possible traffic calming measures that were discussed included introducing a 20mph zone, installing chicanes or traffic cameras and requesting double yellow lines on the corner in front of the Plough.

The PC advised that there are specific processes to follow to request a 20mph zone or to request double yellow lines, this includes having a public consultation and both require the majority of residents to support. Other traffic calming measures would involve a long process of consultations, data collecting and support from Ward Councillors as well as assessments from Highways. CH confirmed that this was correct and also added that there were long waiting lists and limited budgets for these sorts of works.

It was noted that Simpson does already have some traffic calming measures in place, including a speed indicator device on Simpson Drive, speed bumps on Simpson Road and an entry gateway between Simpson and Fenny Stratford.

The PC will investigate the processes further and discuss the possibility of running a public consultation.

This will be added to the agenda of the next public meeting where a course of action will be agreed.

- b) The issue of the recent flooding within Simpson was raised and a resident pointed out that there is some erosion to the banks of the stream beside Simpson Road and was concerned that in the future this could undermine the road surface.
- c) The delayed mowing of the long grass/wildflower areas in Simpson last summer was discussed. KH confirmed that these areas should be mown in July/August, once the areas have died off. However, last year this was missed and it took a lot of repeat communication with MKCC to have these finally completed in September/October. There is a new contractor, Glendale, in place this year and the PC is hopeful that there will be significant improvements in the service received.
- d) A member of the public advised that there had been an increase in the amount of road sweeping within Simpson, which was positive. However, the area of Lissel Road that is block work isn't being done as standard. The PC advised that they would look into this.

- e) A member of the public enquired as to why the parliamentary constituency boundary changes for the general election hadn't been advertised widely. The PC confirmed that this was not the responsibility of the PC but expected more information to be made available prior to the next general election.

112) Finance report and discussion

- a) The payments from 30th December 2023 – 29th February 2024 were reviewed and approved.
- b) An application from Charles Warren Academy (CWA) was reviewed and discussed. It was agreed to give a grant of £500 to CWA to put towards the purchase of three tents for the school to use on residential trips.
- c) The future payments list for the 2024-25 financial year was reviewed and approved.
- d) The asset register was reviewed and approved.

113) Dog waste bins

- a) The PC has not received an update from the Canal and River Trust, it was agreed that DT will continue to pursue the re-installation of dog waste bins at Lickorish Bridge and Bowlers Bridge.

114) Road Safety

- a) PB reported that repairs to the H9 Groveway bridge supports have been completed and the cones and speed restrictions have been removed. There have been extensive repainting of white lines and new reflective bollards have replaced defective illuminated columns. The streetlight opposite Simpson Drive, which was demolished following an accident on 24th January, has yet to be replaced. MKCC have confirmed that they are in the process of installing a camera for a traffic survey, but they have experienced connection issues with the column where this will be placed and repairs are needed first. The PC is hopeful that the survey will provide much needed information on driver behaviours and speeds at the junction of Simpson Drive and Groveway.

115) Winter Funding

- a) Two trial Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) sessions were held in Simpson Village Hall on 25th January and 29th February. The sessions were attended by a number of residents who were pleased with the advice they received and overall, the feedback was positive.
- b) It was agreed that there is a need for CAB sessions within Simpson and Ashland. There is the possibility of working together with Old Woughton Parish Council to jointly fund sessions that would benefit both Parishes. It was agreed that PB would investigate this further.
- c) The first trial craft session was run by Milton Keynes Play Association (MKPA) on 10th February and 8 children attended with their parents. The feedback was positive and the families attending hoped there would be more sessions in the future. There is another trial session being run on 9th March, however not as many people have signed up for this. This will be reviewed at the next PC meeting where decisions will be made about what youth provision will look like in the future.
- d) The first skill sharing session took place in Simpson Village Hall on Saturday 24th February. The skills shared included jewellery making, crochet and wood turning. The event proved popular with around 40 people attending, mainly from Simpson. The next session will be held on Saturday 6th April and will be focused on singing. The Parish Council would like to thank the Friends of Simpson Village Hall for their efforts in organising a successful first event.

116) Defibrillators

- a) Two defibrillators have now been successfully installed at both Simpson Village Hall and Ashland Lakeside. They have both been registered and are now active. It was agreed to investigate running some training sessions on the use of defibrillators.

117) Planning applications

- a) 22/01585/FUL Five Acres – building works are ongoing but expected to be completed within the next few weeks. The latest changes to the plans for the parking area have not yet been given permission and the PC is awaiting updates from MKCC.
- b) 23/02096/PRIOR Simpson Day Care Centre– Earlier communications indicated that demolition works would begin on 16th March. However, there has been no further confirmation of this.
- c) 23/00398/ENF White Cottage 456 Simpson – There has been no further update.

- d) 24/00272/COU 7 Genesis Green – The application is for the change of use from dwellinghouse to family supported living. The PC expressed concerns about the suitability of the location for the planned purpose and will submit comments by the deadline of 13th March.

118) Review of Policies

- a) Standing Orders were reviewed and approved.
- b) Financial Regulations were reviewed and approved.
- c) Statement of Internal Controls was reviewed and approved.
- d) Risk Register was reviewed and approved.

119) Open space

- a) KH reported that the monthly meetings with MKCC are still going well. MKCC have asked that we allow Glendale this first year and see how they perform, before deciding if the PC would like further top-up services such as increased frequency of grass cutting. They emphasised that any issues should be reported on the MKCC website via 'report it' then they can monitor any trends. MKCC reported that there should be 4 weed sprays on highways and paths this year, with one full round having already been completed. Previously this was removed from the landscape contract, so over time there should be a marked improvement in the roadside landscape.

120) Ashland Lakeside

- a) Payments and hire income for Ashland Lakeside were reviewed and approved. It was noted that hire income from Ashland Lakeside was better than expected in its first year.
- b) KH reported that getting the water account for Ashland Lakeside to be transferred into the PC name is an ongoing process with Wave and currently they are awaiting the setup of a new account for the PC.

121) Simpson Village Hall

- a) Payments and hire income for Simpson Village Hall were reviewed and approved. It was noted that hire income has exceeded expectations this year.

122) Young people

- a) It was agreed that Treetop Childcare will run two play sessions at Ashland Lakeside during the school Easter holidays, on 2nd and 9th April 10:00 – 12:00. The sessions will include toys, games, Easter arts and crafts and refreshments. The total cost for both sessions is £170.

123) Community engagement

- a) The last meeting of the community champions was on 13th February. Issues discussed included:
 - i. A resident offered some benches free of charge for use within the play park in Ashland. The PC will contact MKCC and find out whether this is possible.
 - ii. A house within the Parish was discussed due to an ongoing police presence. It was advised that residents impacted by this should contact the local PCSO for further guidance.
 - iii. It was noted that three lights are not working on Simpson Road, despite these being reported they have not been fixed. CH said that she would look into this further.

The next meeting of the street champions is on 10th June.

124) Matters arising

- a) It was noted that Reverend Nicola Vidamour will be leaving St Thomas' Church in Simpson and the PC wishes her well and thanks her for her service to the community.
- b) The use of the PC Facebook page during the pre-election period was discussed and it was agreed that there should not be any posts of a political nature from 25th March, when the pre-election period begins. It was agreed that Ward Councillor membership of the PC Facebook page should be suspended from 25th March – 3rd May inclusive and furthermore, any other posts of a political nature would be removed. During this period the PC will ensure that residents are informed of how and where to vote.

125) Review of Delegated Decisions

The following delegated decisions were reviewed and approved:

1. Payment to Handyman for repairs to Simpson Village Hall, including replacing taps, fixing skirting and mending holes in door and wall for £237.65.
2. Purchase of antivirus protection for the Clerk and Facilities Managers laptops at a cost of £54.99 for the year.
3. Fire alarm, emergency lighting and fire extinguisher service at Ashland Lakeside at a cost of £222.
4. Carpet clean at Simpson Village Hall at a cost of £240.
5. Toilet rolls and paper towels purchased for AL and SVH at a cost of £74.16.

126) HR

- a) To note the increase of SVH cleaner's wage in line with the real living wage from 1st April 2024.

127) The next meeting of the Full Council will be held on Monday 13th May at 8pm at Ashland Lakeside.

The meeting closed at 22:00

Signed (Chair)

Date

Signed (Clerk)

Date