

Emberton Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting – Tuesday 1st October 2019

Present:

Councillor Victoria McLean (Chairman)
 Councillor Stephen Gibson (Vice Chairman)
 Councillor Paul Flowers
 Councillor Soo Hall
 Councillor Mike Horton
 Councillor Harry White

Ward Councillor David Hosking (part meeting)

Mr D Cobbold – resident (part meeting)
 Mr R Laval – Chairman – Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (part meeting)
 Mr A McGrandle – resident (part meeting)

Mr N Sibbald – Chair of Finance, Staff & Premises Committee, Village School Federation (part meeting)
 Mr S Sims, Strategic Lead, Education Access MKC (part meeting)
 Ms M Younger – Deputy of School Federation (part meeting)

Mrs Karen Goss – Clerk and RFO

Apologies for Absence - Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr Logsdail and Ward Cllrs Peter Geary and Keith McLean.

Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda – There were no Declarations of Interest.

1. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING** held on 3rd September 2019. These were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

- 3.85 **Emberton School** – Mr Sims stated that the consultation was open until 3rd October for people to put forward their comments on the proposal to close Emberton School. The proposal was based on low pupil numbers over the last few years with no pupils on roll at the present time. The birth rate had dropped significantly across the borough and the position was that there were a lot of school places giving parents a choice. The consultation finishes on the 3rd October and would go to a delegated decision and taken by Councillor Nolan in November. A number of consultations had already been undertaken and MKC have been collecting information back from consultations and took it back to delegated decision as to whether to proceed to the present stage. This was the final stage of the process. Would look to close the school at the end of this year. Cllr Horton asked what was the proposal for the building? Mr Sims responded that MKC was keen for it to remain a community asset to support education across the federated schools. There were the liabilities with regards to staff and Ofsted. Cllr Gibson asked for a definition of “low” numbers. Mr Sims responded that it was about the viability of the school. The federation governors were experienced in working around financial viability. Mr Sibbald stated that the previous roll had been 5 pupils over 3 years which was effectively home schooling and not an environment which the school would like children to be in. Newton Blossomville had 25 children on roll and this was financially difficult. Cllr Gibson commented that a number of children had moved into the village. Mr Sims responded that MKC had a duty to ensure that children had access to

school places. In 2018, there were over 70 more places. The governors of Emberton School had a significant marketing campaign to attract more children and this was unsuccessful. Mr Cobbold addressed the meeting and stated that in June 2018 he was advised that he could not send his child to Emberton from September 2018 as there would be no teacher and the school would be closed. No open day was held in October 2018 at Emberton School for prospective parents. Mr Sims responded that numbers had been diminishing. The school had been advertised in the parents guide for people to select Emberton and this was available on the online application. No parents selected Emberton as a first preference for 2019 but people did select it as a second preference. Cllr McLean commented that rightly or wrongly, the earlier phase of the pre consultation strongly put the message out that Emberton School was closed. Parents in this area believed that the school closed in June 2018. The parish council had written twice to put this across. Mr Cobbold stated that he had statements from parents who were told their children could not attend Emberton School. Mr McGrandle asked what the school would be called when it was closed? Mr Sims responded that the school was an organisation rather than a building. Mr McGrandle referred to the Higgins Trust Indenture of 1875 which stated that if the building was no longer a school, it reverted back to the heirs who donated the land. Mr Sibbald responded that this would be the last thing that anyone wanted to happen. The land as far as the school were aware was owned by the local authority. The only alternative would be to leave the school as a ghost building. Cllr McLean commented that the parish council were well aware of the ramifications of the land and the trust. Mr Sibbald stated the school had noted this and understood it. Mr Cobbold asked if there were consultations to close other schools in MK. Mr Sims responded that Emberton was the only one. Mr Cobbold asked when the last school had closed. Mr Sims responded that he did not have that information to hand but it would have been a long time ago although it could be argued that a school had been closed as it had merged. Mr Cobbold asked the number of school age children in Emberton compared to Newton Blossomville. Mr Sibbald commented that a few years ago before the federation, a number of pupils left Emberton School to attend Newton Blossomville. Mr Cobbold asked what the method was for calculating school places. Mr Sims responded that it was 6 pupils per year group per 100 homes. Cllr McLean commented that it would be sad to see the school go so the Neighbourhood Plan was looking at providing low cost housing. Mr Cobbold requested to read out a statement, which he did. Cllr Hall commented that Mr Cobbold had made a statement that people did not know that the school was open so did not put Emberton as a first choice. Cllr Horton asked when the school field grass was going to be cut. Mr Sibbald responded that the grass was cut 2 or 3 weeks ago but some maintenance was required. Cllr McLean commented that if the proposal to close the school went ahead, what involvement did the school anticipate from the community in determining the next stage. Mr Sibbald stated that the school would like to understand what the community would want; would like to keep it as an educational establishment. Cllr McLean commented that child care was in great demand. Cllr McLean stated that the parish council would now discuss the consultation and had received assurance that the school were aware of the School House Fund and the trust and related documents. Mr Cobbold would be submitting a formal complaint regarding the consultation process. Should the proposal to close the school go ahead, the parish council would wish to facilitate any further discussion with the village rather than a formal approach. Mr Sibbald responded that the school were now engaging regarding the school fund.

Mr Cobbold, Mr Sibbald, Mr Sims and Ms Younger left the meeting at 8.10pm

Cllr McLean suggested that the response should include the comment made regarding the Neighbourhood Plan in the response. Councillors agreed that the school should remain as an educational establishment. Cllr Flowers commented that when he was a governor, there was always the problem of wrap around care. One of things to ask the federation was if they

wanted to limit the age within schools to spread the year groups over two schools. Cllr McLean commented that this would be part of the post decision. It was noted that only one person came to the meeting to speak regarding the consultation. It was agreed to respond to the consultation as follows: 1) The comments made to Mr Sims in a letter dated 15th July 2019 still stood. 2) The parish council was in the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan to cover the period 2019 – 2031; within the plan was an allocation site for x houses. 3) Officers should satisfy themselves that the necessary legal advice had been sought in relation to the documents that have come to light relating to the building itself and the School House Fund. 4) Should the proposal to close the organisation that is Emberton School go ahead, EPC wishes for the school to remain as an educational establishment and would wish to be included in any discussions regarding the future of the premises. **Action: KG**

1.2 **Public questions, comments or representations** – Mr Cobbold and Mr McGrandle had made previous comments.

1.3 **Dates for Commitment** – These were noted.

1.4 **Risk – to identify and action where necessary** – Nothing to report. Working on the risks that have been identified.

3.74 Emberton Neighbourhood Plan – Confidential item

Mr Laval, Mr McGrandle and Cllr Hosking left the meeting at 9pm

2. TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND AGREE ANY DECISIONS/ACTIONS

Olney Ward Forum (25/9/19) – Cllr White reported that there were no negative comments regarding the closure of the A422. The site at Sherington at the top of Chicheley Hill was no longer going to be used by MK Dons and it was not designated for development. The dip on the A509 at the Sherington bridge was going to be investigated.

Parishes Forum (26/9/19) – Apologies sent. Nothing to report.

Ward Councillors – Nothing to report.

Clerk's Report

2.1.94 **Dog bin (West Lane)** – The dog waste bin was on order - £104.00 plus vat and £10 delivery. Installation cost £30.00 plus vat.

2.1.95 **Milestone (A509 north)** – awaiting painting.

2.1.103 **WW1 commemorative bench** – Grant from Supplementary Fund was awarded on 24.9.19 in the sum of £1088.00. Costings - £695 + vat, fixing kit £9.50 + vat, engraving £49 + vat, £105 + vat delivery (total cost £858.50 + vat) plus installation cost. Initially MKC stated that only Ringway was the approved contractor (at a cost of £1000 - £1500 to install the bin and bench) but having spoken to highways, they were happy for the parish council to use their own contractor. Permission had been required from MKC to site the bench on the highway. It was proposed by Cllr Gibson, seconded by Cllr Hall and unanimously agreed that the bench be purchased. **Action KG**

- 2.1.104 **WW1 commemorative litter bin** – the bin was installed on the 23rd September. It was agreed to remove this item from the agenda.
- 2.1.105 **Newport Road (speed limit)** – email received from MKC on 19th September stating that the officer had spoken to Thames Valley Police and agreed to reduce the speed limit in Newport Road in Emberton off the A509 to 30mph. This would be done in the next two months.
- 3.6.15 **Rat running and restricted access** – Nothing to report. MKC have advised that TVP need to undertake a risk assessment of the sites selected for SpeedWatch and that either the PCSOs or MKC could provide additional training for use of the equipment. MKC were looking at parishes sharing equipment, similar to that for the SIDS. Emberton would fit into the area covered by PCSO Patricia Flynn (Eakley, Filgrave & Tyringham, Gayhurst, Lathbury, Ravenstone, Sherington and Weston Underwood). The clerk suggested that a training day was set up with TVP, perhaps a Saturday and that TVP also undertake a site assessment of suitable locations.
- 3.6.28 **Parking restrictions (Olney Road)** – Nothing to report. The clerk to revisit with MKC (contacted Paul Harrison, MKC on 28/8/19).
- 3.6.68 **Well at Petsoe End** – The clerk reported that advice had been sought regarding the tree behind the well at Petsoe End. It appeared that the tree was growing into the top of the well and its removal would cause damage to the well. The historic nature of the well was discussed. Cllr McLean suggested that the clerk speak to Mr Markland. **Action: KG**
- 3.6.106 **Farm traffic sign for junction of Petsoe End** – Nothing to report.
- 3.6.107 **Street lighting – Prospect Place (column 1)** – There was only 1 street light in Emberton that had not been replaced by the new LED system and this was 1 Prospect Place. Reported to MKC on 29/8/19.
- 3.6.108 **Damaged gate at end of Prospect Place** – Gate at the end of Prospect Place was falling down. The clerk reported this to MKC on 29/8/19. Response received on 3.9.19 stating that Ringway had been instructed to make the gate safe, replace the damaged post and secure it. No timescale given as it was not a priority but would be programmed into their schedule.
- 3.1 **Emberton Park** – Cllr Flowers reported that a plan to restrict bbqs next season was being looked at and staff would be trained to enforce this. A security person will start on the 31st October, mainly to cover weekends. There will be an environmental audit of the park and subject to that there would be long a term vision for the park. There would be far more emphasis on the park being a country park. Cllr White reported that the entrance fee would drop from £2.50 to £2.00 for the winter season. A litter pick with volunteers would be organised by the park. The toilets would be upgraded over the winter season.
- 3.23 **Bell & Bear Public House** – A letter was sent on the 17th September to Gosschalks Solicitors who were acting on behalf of the Wellington Pub Company stating that EPC would like to be treated as a potential bidder in the disposal of the Bell & Bear on behalf of the community. The clerk confirmed that the letter had been received within the six week deadline of the 24th September.
- 3.97 **Emberton Playing Field Committee** – Cllr Hall reported that there would be an EPFC meeting next week at which the Deed of Surrender would be signed by one of the committee. To ensure that the Deed of Surrender was signed without any problems, it could be signed by

a trustee and committee member. The correspondence secretary would complete the closure of the charity. There was a possibility that they would be asked for a copy of the Deed of Surrender. The transfer of funds to the parish council would also be agreed in the process following it being proposed and seconded. This should be done by the end of October. Cllr McLean reported that a request had been received from the family of Don O'Dell for a bench in the playing field. This was agreed in principle.

3. SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS

- 3.93 **Milton Keynes East Local Stakeholder Group** – Cllr McLean proposed that this item was removed from the agenda as the action was with the Ward Councillors. This was agreed. Cllr Flowers commented that he was attending a meeting on Thursday to discuss expansion east of the M1.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 **Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund** – Cllr Horton reported that no applications had been received so the group did not meet in September. The next meeting would be held in December.
- 4.2 **Solar Farm Community Benefit Fund** – Cllr Hall reported that there had not been any applications but the £7,500.00 had been received, taking the account to £12565.29. Cllr Hall thanked the clerk for the work that she had done to secure this.

previous applications status

- 4.206 **17/03386/FUL** – public airsoft events scheduled for once every two weeks throughout the year (with a break in Winter of variable length according to weather conditions). Occasional private bookings (retrospective) at Hollington Wood, Newport Road for Mr C Williams – **appeal in progress**
- 4.210 **18/00643/FUL** – conversion and extension of an existing stone barn to a two bedroom residential property at barn set back from West Farm Way. A response had been received from planning enforcement on 1st October stating that MKC had been in touch with the property owner and requested further information regarding the rebuilding of the barn and the materials to be used and it was likely that Mr Dunne and the conservation team would visit the site to further evaluate the position. However the position was that MKC were expecting the owner to rebuild the barn in a like for like fashion or risk potential enforcement action. Cllr McLean commented that Mr Bracey was doing a ward tour tomorrow and this issue and the airsoft issue were on the agenda.
- 4.225 Airsoft site at West Farm Way, Mr Carlos Williams – Cllr McLean reported that correspondence had been sent to Mr Bracey detailing the parish council's and resident's concerns regarding this issue.
- 4.241 **19/01828/FUL** – Proposed two storey side extension, first floor side and two storey rear extension, new front entrance, new replacement pool enclosure with link to house, introduction of dormer windows to front elevation, new replacement windows and internal alterations at Springside Pasture, Petsoe End for Mr & Mrs MacGregor – **withdrawn**

- 4.242 **19/01847/TCA** – Tree in conservation area notification for trimming T2 Lyme tree, Acacia tree reduction by 2m, No 2 Silver birch trees trimming by 3m, removal of 2 self seeded trees at Chaff House, Church Lane for Mrs T Colgan-Facey – **permitted**
- 4.243 **19/01841/FUL** – The existing mortared stone boundary wall to the side of the property is only 1m in height and therefore does not screen out the rear garden from the road. The client is looking to raise the level of the wall, along a dog-leg approx. 3m long to 1.8m, which then matches the wall to the rear of the property. The wall will be built of Weston Underwood limestone and follow the existing line and style at 5 West Farm Way for Mr J Gardner - **permitted**
- 4.244 **19/01960/FUL** – Remove pair of timber gate posts (gates previously removed due to poor condition) and install a pair of galvanised metal churchyard entrance gates at the top of Church Lane, Emberton (secondary entrance to churchyard). The new gates will be painted matt black with a curved top, dropping in the centre at All Saints Church, Church Lane – **pending**

new applications

- 4.245 **19/02132/FUL** – Single storey conservatory to the rear of the property at Ekeney House, Wood Farm, Newport Road. There were no objections to this application.
- 4.246 **19/02242/TCA** – Notification of intention to reduce limbs back to regrowth, thin out any crossing branches on 1 x Apple tree – Reduce & crown lift 1 x Western Red Cedar (Thuja) to 4-5m removing secondary branches only at High Trees, West Lane. The clerk to respond that the parish council would be in agreement with the recommendations made by MKC's tree officer.
- 4.247 **19/02302/TPO** – 1 x mature oak to the front of the property adjacent to the primary school. Cut back to clear building and house by approximately 1.5m, lift the low branches over the driveway to 3m above ground level at 16 Olney Road. The clerk to respond that the parish council would be in agreement with the recommendations made by MKC's tree officer.

5. ACCOUNTS

- 5.1 **To receive the RFO's Report for the 1st October 2019 and approve payments.** The RFO's Report was received. It was proposed by Cllr Gibson and seconded by Cllr White that the payments be approved as per the RFO's Report. It was agreed to request written application for grants from community groups this year rather than attendance at the parish council meeting. The clerk to draft an application form for approval. It was agreed that the application form needed to be received two weeks prior to the 5th November meeting. **Action: KG**
- 5.2 **Co-operative account – change of signatories.** The clerk reported that the application was made using the old forms on the Cooperative Bank's website. The clerk to complete for the next meeting. **Action: KG**

6. **CORRESPONDENCE** – Cllr McLean read out an email from Mrs Gibson regarding ownership of a ransom strip at the rear of properties in Olney Road and 10 Hulton Drive. The clerk to speak to the History Society. **Action: KG**

7. PARISH RELATED MATTERS

7.1 **Village publicity – Action: KG**

7.2 **Councillors’ concerns**

Cllr White stated that the road at Westpits had dropped on the allotment side and that the wooden posts in the parking areas of Westpits were rotten. Cllr White to take some photos and send to the clerk. **Action: HW/KG**

Cllr Gibson stated that the milestone had been painted white but the black lettering had not been completed. The clerk commented that it was a work in progress.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – confirmed as Tuesday 5th November 2019

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.