

Emberton Parish Council
Minutes of Virtual Meeting
Tuesday 3rd November 2020 at 7pm

Present:

Cllr Steve Gibson - Chairman
 Cllr Melanie Duncan
 Cllr Paul Flowers
 Cllr Richard Logsdail
 Cllr Fred Markland
 Cllr Harry White

Ward Cllr Keith McLean (part meeting)

Ms Zoe Raven – Acorn Early Years Foundation
 Mr David Morris – Governor of the Village Schools Federation

Mr J Cooper - resident
 Mrs D Cooper – resident
 Mrs J Crocker – resident
 Mr C Jamieson – resident
 Mr J Walker - resident

Mrs Karen Goss – Clerk and RFO

Apologies for Absence – It was noted that Councillor Vicki McLean had resigned with effect from the 31st October. Councillor Gibson took the Chair. Apologies for absence were received from Ward Cllrs Peter Geary and David Hosking.

Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda – Cllr Logsdail Declared an Interest in item 4.289.

1. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING** held on the 6th October 2020. These were confirmed and will be signed by the Chairman at the next face to face meeting.
- 1.2 **Public questions** – Mrs Crocker addressed the meeting and stated that she wished to speak regarding her objection to the planning application at Hartoft. A summary of the objections as follows 1) inappropriate development of a residential garden 2) impact on adjoining residential properties, including loss of privacy 3) impact on conservation area 4) impact on landscape and biodiversity 5) other considerations – traffic and impact on West Lane. Cllr Gibson thanked Mrs Crocker for her presentation and stated that the parish council would consider the application under the MKC planning guidelines.
- 3.85 **Emberton School** – Mr Morris introduced himself as one of the governors of the Village Schools Federation who had been given the task at looking at options for Emberton School beyond its closure. The aim of the governing board was to try and understand whether there could be a future purpose for the school that would keep it within the group of schools but the school was not part of the federation in terms of the property. The governing board received a series of interests and Acorn Early Years Foundation was selected for 3 reasons; 1) use for education 2) wanted to use the whole of the school rather than part of it 3) long term

commercial use. The criteria felt very important to the governing body and they had shared the information with MKC and wanted to share the information with the village.

Ms Raven was introduced to the meeting and stated that the aim of Acorn Early Years Foundation was to use Emberton School as a nursery and pre school for up to 37 children which would mostly be used by working parents and it had been shown that there was a need for this in the Emberton and Olney area. Acorn currently had 3 nurseries in school buildings. The school field would be used as a provision for school age children as a holiday club during the school holidays and priority would be given to residents and local families. The intention was to plant lots of trees in the field and it would be able to host Forest Schools for other schools. Outdoor events would be accessed via the entrance off the High Street and the nursery drop off would be at the front of the building.

Cllr Flowers stated that he would be supportive of the nursery. Ms Raven stated that she would like to get the involvement of the parish council and would want to provide updates. Ms Raven stated that discussions were underway with the property department at MKC and the intention was to start tree planting soon; the outdoor area would be started in the New Year and the nursery would be started at Easter with a view to this being opened in September. Cllr Logsdail stated that it seemed to be a long term project. Ms Raven responded that the lease would be 10 or 15 years. Mr Morris stated that he would like to add that one of the things that was extremely attractive was in the investment in the building; new kitchen and toilets that would help with the school building which would be advantageous if the building continued to be used for educational purposes. Ms Raven stated that the nursery could be easily turned back into a school. Cllr Markland asked if there were any plans relating to parking or traffic management and asked what would happen if the nursery was not a success. Cllr Markland stated that he did not think the village would be happy with Acorn just using the field. Mr Morris stated that the governing body were fairly confident that the school could be filled as a nursery and the plans allowed for a school to be a viable option in the future. Cllr Logsdail stated that the school had not made use of the field previously and he would like to see some kind of documents that the parish council could review. There was a campaign to keep the school open, with a resident, Mr Handler taking the lead and it would be good to pass these documents on. Mr Raven stated that she could circulate the documents to the parish council which could be used for wider circulation to the village. Cllr Logsdail asked if the federation were supportive of the plans. Mr Morris responded that they were as were MKC but with the clear direction that this would be part of a consultation process with the community.

Cllr Duncan commented that there was a problem with parking in the centre of the village and she would like to know where access would be. Ms Raven stated that the access could be revised and she would be guided by highways. Cars for staff could be at the front of the school. Cllr Duncan stated that the school field was a site under consideration for the Neighbourhood Plan for residential development; the Housing Needs Assessment had identified that 10 properties were required for the village. Cllr Duncan asked whether the plans for the nursery took up the whole of the field. Ms Raven stated that she would like the whole of the field which meant that any houses would need to be closer to the road and she could not see how this would work as there would also need to be serviced toilets, a couple of huts and shelters. Cllr Duncan asked whether there would be any parking for residents. Ms Raven responded that only if vehicles were parked overnight and moved the next morning. Cllr Gibson asked what Acorn were looking for in terms of support from the parish council. Ms Raven responded that she would like to advise MKC that the parish council were supportive of the scheme. It was proposed by Cllr White and seconded by Cllr Flowers that they were in agreement in

principal of the scheme subject to further information being received and the proper consultation process being followed.

- 1.3 **Risk – Covid 19 update** – Cllr Logsdail reported that the pavilion would be closing on the 4th November for any future bookings for the time being. Cllr Markland asked about Emberton Cares. Cllr Logsdail responded that the volunteers had been discussing things amongst themselves and it would be more low key in terms of approach. Cllr Markland asked about the contingency fund for Emberton Cares. Cllr Gibson responded that a contingency had been set aside. Ward Cllr McLean commented that there would be a leaflet drop to every house in Emberton and Petsoe End.

2. **TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND AGREE ANY DECISIONS/ACTIONS**

Ward Cllrs' Report – Ward Councillor Keith McLean

HIF – The HIF contract was signed on the 8th October. MKC have agreed to the £94.5m for building and infrastructure to support the new homes proposal for Moulsoe. The next stage would be a full application for infrastructure, bridge for the M1 to V11 and outline proposal for 5000 homes and a community centre and a commercial enterprise on the flood plain between the A509 and M1.

Waste trial – The waste trial was on week 2 and he was not aware of any problems being raised. The consultation on the waste trial was on the MKC website.

Mount's House – The report on Mount's House was heard at the DCC meeting on the 8th October and had been referred to the Scrutiny Committee for review.

Emberton Park – It was now free to enter the park; the idea was to encourage people into the park and use the café to keep it going over the winter.

Footpath at Petsoe – Nothing to update.

Gravel Walk leylandii trees – MKC housing department agreed that the trees could be taken down and the landscape officer would raise the works order and the trees would be taken down in the next two months. The replacement and planting of new trees probably needed to be discussed with the householder.

Emberton School – The Ward Councillors had not been made aware of the approach by Acorn Early Years Foundation to MKC and they would require more information. It was interesting to see that the federation had chosen Acorn as the Ward Councillors were not aware that there was a tendering process.

Cllr Logsdail asked if Emberton Park was being publicised. Ward Cllr McLean stated that he was not aware. Cllr Flowers stated that publicity was not mentioned as the park did not want to encourage everyone. Cllr Gibson commented that some people had paid for a pass to get into the park. Ward Cllr McLean responded that this was discussed and season ticket holders could still get into the park when the gatehouse was unmanned. Cllr Markland asked if this could be reverted back quite easily. Ward Cllr McLean responded that the barrier would be down and lifted when the gatehouse was manned.

Dates for Diaries – These were noted.

Clerk's Report

- 2.1.17 **Bridleway claim at Petsoe End** – Email received from Rosie Armstrong, Rights of Way Officer at MKC regarding public notices to be put on display in the coming weeks relating to the public bridleway claims at Petsoe Manor Farm. In the light of Covid-19, MKC were reviewing the way they displayed the notices to make sure the public had a chance to see them. They would be displayed on the relevant public footpath/bridleway, in the newspaper and at the Civic Offices main window, as well as on the relevant parish council noticeboard.
- 2.1.82 **Residents parking – Hulton Drive** – The clerk emailed Karen Creed at MKC on the 28th October for an update.
- 2.1.95 **Milestone (A509 north)** – the clerk contacted the contractor on the 17th September. Awaiting response.
- 2.1.105 **Newport Road (speed limit)** – awaiting speed limit signs – clerk chased MKC on the 2/9/20 and 1/10/20.
- 3.6.15 **Rat running and restricted access** – nothing to report. SID questionnaire put together by Ward Cllr Ward K McLean completed and returned to parish liaison at MKC.
- 3.6.28 **Parking restrictions (Olney Road)** – email sent on 21st October to Paul Harrison at MKC stating that the parish council would like to proceed with the proposal put forward in May 2019 to stagger the yellow lines in Olney Road (north).
- 3.6.68 **Well at Petsoe End** – Response received from Martin Ellison at MKC as follows: ‘non designated asset’ by virtue of having some heritage merit sufficient to warrant consideration in planning decisions should it be affected either now or in the future by development proposals but not as yet deemed of sufficient interest to warrant any formal protection. The records I have access to confirm that It is not listed, it is not in a conservation area, nor does it appear to lie within the boundary of a registered park or garden, or a scheduled ancient monument.

For some assurance that the well has a degree of recognition for planning purposes I advise you to contact Nick Crank our Senior Archaeological Officer to check whether or not it is recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER) and whether the information from the local history society would be a useful enhancement of the record. Inclusion on the HER would be means by which the well would be detected and draw comment from the Conservation and Archaeology team should proposals come forward that have implications for its ongoing care /stewardship. Nick will be able to clarify further.

If you think there is a case for listing the well because it has significance at a national level then the council should approach Historic England having first noted the relevant web pages about listing on their website.

Conservation area designation is conventionally reserved for places comprising groups of buildings and spaces in the historic centres of towns and villages so the sparsity of settlement pattern in Petsoe End strongly suggests to me that a conservation area designation would not be an appropriate means of asset management.

I do not know what constraints the asset is subject to under present planning provisions and is a question for the planning officers to answer. I suppose the concern is that an owner, whoever that might be, could be minded to dismantle the asset and remove it without notice or prior approval rather than pay for upkeep.

I suggest contacting Nick and speaking to the planning office to raise awareness and confirm any constraints that might apply. If there is some means by which an appropriate barrier to loss of the asset (which is not already present) without prior notification can be established we can explore those options, if they exist, subsequently.”

The clerk contacted Nick Crank on the 12th October and received a subsequent response on the 15th October requesting a location and further details of the well.

- 3.6.88 **Leylandii trees (13/15 Gravel Walk)** – Update under Ward Cllr’s report.
- 3.6.106 **Farm traffic sign for junction of Petsoe End** – clerk chased MKC on 2/9/20 and 1/10/20.
- 3.6.109 **Newton Road** – Nothing to report.
- 3.1 **Emberton Park** – Cllr White reported that the temporary ban on bbqs looked likely that it would be carried on. MKC would then be looking at utilising the special bins and changing them into standard ones. The idea of opening the barrier was met with a bit of scepticism in relation to control but it was noted that there was security that could handle any issues. Cllr Flowers added that the security would be there for when the gatehouse staff left at 5pm. Cllr Flowers stated that the banning of bbqs would be written into the byelaws. Cllr White reported that the black poplars on the A509 would be taken down for safety reasons. Cllr Flowers added that MKC realised that there would be quite an adverse reaction to the trees as there would be a clear view across to the lakes but there would be further replanting.
- 3.6.1 **Emberton Parish Council website** – WCAG compliance. The clerk had previously circulated information regarding this. It was agreed that the clerk liaise with the website provider.
Action: KG
- 3.23 **Bell & Bear Public House** – Cllr Logsdail reported that the group were trying to re-engage with the Wellington Pub Company.
- 3.45 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme – 2020 consultation** – It was noted that this was for information rather than for comment.
- 3.74 **Emberton Neighbourhood Plan** – Cllr M Duncan reported that the steering group had met on the 20th October and were looking at sites using the same criteria. The field 13 site was considered unsuitable by the group due to access onto Hulton Drive and the change in character of the landscape in terms of trees and hedges. The Institute was put back into the plan for possible development. Cllr Duncan commented that having heard about the plans from Acorn Early Years Foundation for the school field, it did not seem suitable for development but might help the village with overnight parking. The site at Acorn Nursery was still in the mix although there had not been a planning application and the application would need to reflect the Housing Needs Assessment identified at 10 properties. Cllr Gibson asked about the timescales for the village plan. Cllr Duncan responded that it would take about 9 months which would start with the formal consultation recommencing. Cllr Logsdail asked if the proposal by Acorn Early Years Foundation affected the neighbourhood plan. Cllr Duncan responded that the school

field was the preferred site and it would be interesting to hear the proposals for the field. Cllr Gibson asked if the owners of the school field agreed with it being put forward. Cllr Duncan responded that MKC were the owners; they were happy in principal but were sensitive about the school closing and thought there might be a judicial review. The property team at MKC were meeting regarding the school. Cllr Flowers added that governors had quite strong powers in terms of dealing with schools and stated that this carried some weight with the village schools federation.

3.97 **Sports & Recreation Committee** – Cllr Logsdail reported that there had been several football teams interested in playing at Emberton and there was a lot more interest than in the past. Cllr Gibson reported that the marquee had been blown over and damaged in the storm.

3.99 **Conservation area – review of 1997 Conservation Area Statement by MKC** – Cllr Markland reported that the clerk had been chasing this to see if it was still a SPD to be used to respond to planning applications in the conservation area. It was known that MKC had been out to conduct a survey of the village but nothing had been published. Cllr Markland stated that it was not known if this document provided cover for the conservation area. Ward Cllr McLean responded that there was a big backlog of work to be done on this and the clerk could ask for timescales. Cllr Marland responded that the clerk had done this but had not received an answer.

3.100 **MK Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document Consultation** – Cllrs Flowers asked that a response be sent to this. The clerk to email Cllr Flowers. **Action: KG/PF**

3. SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

4.1 **Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund** – Cllr White commented that the fund was now at £26,000. Cllr White had made the WFCBFC aware that the fund needed to be advertised in the community. There were no current applications. A discussion took place regarding the criteria for applying to the fund. It was noted that the criteria were “energy efficiency and energy education”.

4.2 **Solar Farm Community Benefit Fund** – Cllr White reported that the committee had met and agreed an application for All Saints Church Emberton for pew runners which would be sewn by volunteers. Cllr White stated that the grant application form had been changed and there would be a report in the Well & Towers to reflect this.

4.3 **Planning White Paper** – It was noted that the consultation period had now expired.

previous applications status

4.280 **20/01728/FUL** – Single storey ground floor extension, replacement roof, skylights, new cladding materials and associated alterations at Hollington Wood Cottage, Newport Road – **permitted**

4.281 **20/02050/TCA** – Notification of intention to fell a semi mature prunus tree of 30 years to ground level and poison the stump to prevent further structural damage at 1 West Farm Way – **no objections**

- 4.282 **22/02262/DISCON** – Details submitted for discharge of conditions 4 (sample stonework panel) and 5 (window & door details) related to application 20/01585/FUL at 7 Church Lane - **permitted**
- 4.283 **20/02355/TCA** - Notification of intention to - 1. Row of Field Maples: crown lift by 2.4m from ground to improve aesthetic value of trees. 2. Blackthorn Scrub (blackthorn/ bramble/ nettles): remove (cut to ground level) due to low aesthetic value. 3. Group of Cherry trees (max 4inch circumference): remove 1/5 to improve health of others by providing more light, nutrients etc approx. 3 trees to come out. 4. Willows and Hazels: coppice hazels due to being overgrown and in need of management to maintain health and aesthetic value. Crown raise willows by 4/5m to maintain health and aesthetic value. 5. Willows and Hazels: Same as number 4 but also to maintain size so that they don't outgrow the space. 7 Silver Birch: Crown Clean and reduce by 2m as it has outgrown its space and is intruding over neighbour's fence - weight is also causing lean towards neighbour's property. 8. Holly: remove to ground level as it's dead from ivy. 9: Purple plum: pollard to 1st major unions to improve the aesthetic value of the tree. 10. Rowan: Crown lift to move clear of BT lines by 2m. 11. Holly: Trim as tight as possible to shape to improve aesthetic value. 12. Purple plum: Reshape - this will include crown clean to remove dead, dying, diseased and crossing branches to improve aesthetic value and health of tree at Oltons, 18 Olney Road - **pending**
- 4.284 **20/02354/TPO** – Notification of intention to – Copper Beech (T6) – Crown raise by 4m from ground and target prune specific branches by 2m to allow light into neighbour's windows at Oltons, 18 Olney Road - **pending**
- 4.285 **20/02181/FUL** – Two storey side extension at 5 Newport Road. A discussion took place as to whether the development would impact on the neighbouring property – **pending**
- 4.286 **20/02538/CLUP** – Certificate of Lawfulness for the increase width of existing access to accommodate larger vehicles and provide side access. Lay hardcore to existing track at Hollington Wood Cottage, Newport Road – **withdrawn**. It was agreed that this application might be one for future consideration.

New applications

- 4.287 **20/02548/FUL** – Internal reconfiguration, window and door alterations and new services installation to main dwelling and alterations to utility room outbuilding including widening at West Lane House, West Lane. Cllr Markland had previously made his comments to the parish council, stating that the conservation officer would cover the alterations to the main house and that his only comment related to parking. It was agreed to respond that the parish council would be in agreement with the recommendations made by the conservation officer.
- 4.288 **20/02549/LBC** – Listed building consent for above. Comments as previous.
- 4.289 **20/02524/FUL** – Erection of one single storey, two bedroom detached dwelling with parking, landscaping and associated works at Hartoft, West Lane. Cllr Flowers asked what the purpose of the development was for. The clerk commented that this was not a material consideration. Cllr Markland stated that it was difficult to comment on overshadowing without seeing how the site related to other buildings. A discussion took place regarding responding to the application using the material consideration notes provided to councillors prior to the meeting and the draft response provided by Cllr Markland. It was agreed to submit a neutral response to the planning application and make comment as follows:

1. This scheme constitutes an overdevelopment of the proposed site which sits straddling the conservation area. If allowed to go ahead, the density of development in this area will be distinctly out of character with all previous design intent - from the creation of the conservation area in 1971 through to the present day.

2. The site in question has always been held as providing important setting to the grade II* listed All Saints parish church and churchyard, which sits on an elevated site overlooking it. The 1971 conservation area statement page 3, item 16 highlighted just that. Whereby it stated that "the untidy area of land in West Lane opposite the church which is detrimental to the settling of the building". Thus being a defect requiring remedy.

This piece of land was at that time typically used for parking HGV vehicles and was generally rough ungrazed pasture. Whilst The Paddock (including Hartoft) were eventually built on this parcel of land, it was designed to respect the area will all new buildings set back from West Lane and with the appropriate level of landscaping to screen them in the historic setting.

This area of the village was further highlighted in a draft plan prepared by MK Council in 1982 designed to assist with the shaping of the planning context of the village. This plan appraised the issues and problems that might feasibly be resolved through future development. The Village appraisal map on page 35 of this report, specifically highlighted the trees and groups of trees around Hartoft and the conservation area boundary as important to the character of the area.

Further evidence of this consistent approach to protecting the setting of the buildings and conservation strategy in this area of the village, is defined in the conservation area character statement of 1997 which describes it on page 4 as follows *'Along West Lane, beyond the lych-gate, the church tower is revealed in the open setting of the churchyard, and the paddock beyond. On the north side. There is the line of modern houses set discreetly back from the road, amongst maturing landscape'*.

3. Overall, the proposed scheme will require several trees from that maturing landscape to be felled or reduced to a level of minimal contribution. The net result will be that the character of the setting, that is adequately described and respected through previous planning documents, will be altered such that all previous design intent will be completely lost – this will be particularly unfortunate and most notable when viewed from the elevated position of the principal listed building within the village, the grade II* All Saints parish church and adjoining churchyard.

4. This area of the village has been subjected to considerable pressure from development proposals of late and it therefore continues to highlight the need for carefully considered approaches and guidance in order to protect the special character of the area. It also highlights the fact that within important historic settings, trees and landscape play an equally important role to the buildings and built features in providing diversity and quality that is typically lost if approached in an ad hoc and unplanned fashion.

5. The parish council would like to seek further details from the applicant with regard to how the proposed development would relate to the buildings around it. The parish council understands that this issue has been raised by neighbouring properties on the online portal.

- 4.290 **20/02593/FUL** – Erection of a detached oak framed car port and oak framed bin store at 3 Battle Close – It was noted that this application was not in the conservation area but probably very close to the boundary. There were no objections to this application.

5. ACCOUNTS

- 5.1 **To receive the RFO's Report for the 3rd November** and approve payments. It was proposed by Cllr White and seconded by Cllr Logsdail that the payments be approved as per the RFO's Report. Cllr White to approve the payments online. **Action: HW**

6. **CORRESPONDENCE** - nothing to report.

7. PARISH RELATED MATTERS

- 7.1 **Village publicity** – Councillor V McLean, Emberton Park, Solar Farm Funds, Emberton School

7.2 Cllrs' concerns

Cllr Flowers stated that the street light at the junction of High Street and A509 had still not been fixed. The clerk commented that this had been re-reported.

Cllr White sought clarification on where Ms Raven was from with reference to Emberton School. It was noted that Ms Raven represented Acorn Early Years Foundation. A discussion took place regarding the fund from the sale of the school house and the plans for this. The clerk to make enquiries with the VSF. **Action: KG**

Cllr Duncan stated that there was a lot in the press lately regarding the loss of footpaths as the process for recovering any lost foot paths would close in 5 years. Cllr Logsdail responded that he believed that MKC employed a footpath walker. The clerk to ascertain this. **Action: KG**
Cllr Markland commented that it would be an idea for all councillors to have a think about this and have this as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Cllr Gibson stated that councillors were now aware that Cllr Vicki McLean had resigned to concentrate on other aspects of volunteering and the issue of Chairman had now arisen. Cllr Gibson stated that he was willing to continue with Vice Chair but work commitments meant he would not be able to take the role of Chair. The clerk to email councillors regarding the role and to advertise for a councillor vacancy. **Action: KG**

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – confirmed as Tuesday 1st December 2020 at 7pm to be held virtually

The meeting closed at 9.35pm