

Emberton Parish Council
Minutes of Virtual Meeting
Tuesday 2nd February 2021 at 7pm

Present:

Cllr Melanie Duncan - Chairman
 Cllr Steve Gibson
 Cllr Paul Flowers
 Cllr Colin Jamieson
 Cllr Fred Markland
 Cllr Harry White

Ward Cllr Peter Geary (part meeting)
 Ward Cllr Keith McLean (part meeting)

Mr Warwick Clarke – Emberton United Charity
 Mr Andy McGrandle – Emberton United Charity
 Mrs Sue Soul – Emberton United Charity

Mr Chris Handler - Resident
 Mr Gerald Mann – Resident

Ms Zoe Raven – Acorn Early Years Foundation
 Mr David Morris – Governor of VSF
 Mr Matthew Robinson – Governor of VSF

Mrs Karen Goss – Clerk and RFO

Apologies for Absence – Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Logsdail and Ward Cllr David Hosking.

Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda – Cllr Duncan Declared an Interest in item 2.1.17.

1. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING** held on the 12th January 2021. These were confirmed and will be signed by the Chairman at the next face to face meeting.
- 1.2 **Public questions** – Cllr Duncan asked those attending whether they wished to speak at this point. It was noted that those attending were doing so in order to listen to the discussions regarding Emberton School and the School House Fund.
- 1.3 **Risk – Covid 19 update** – Nothing to report.
- 3.85 **Emberton School** – Mr Robinson introduced himself and stated that he was a parent governor of the Village Schools Federation and was incoming Chair of the School House Fund and his view was that he wanted to look at all the options for the fund. There was a lot of history around the fund which required investigation. Cllr Duncan asked who the trustees were. Mr Robinson responded that these were; Noel Sibbald (treasurer), Marie-Claire Parsons, Alexis Peters, Anna Shotton and Dr Victoria Morgan (secretary).

Mr Handler commented that his interest was that he was a resident of Emberton and he would be able to provide regular updates to the community with regard to what was happening with the fund and what it was being used for.

Mr Robinson stated that he was getting up to speed on the fund and there had been a lot of issues since the outgoing trustees.

Mr McGrandle stated that he started taking an interest in the School House Fund in 2017 and was able to find a lot of historical information regarding the various legal documents held in relation to the school and the school house fund. It was noted that the original legislation provided for the land to revert to the original owners or their heirs, in the event the school closed. The legislation had since been amended, allowing MK Council to dispose of the school building as they liked. However, if the school building was no longer used as a school, this created a liability for MK Council to pay the value of the school building to the original owners or their heirs. In other words, the school building land no longer reverted to the heirs, but the heirs would potentially be due a financial pay out from MK Council.

Mr Robinson responded that initially, the VSF would look to have a member of EUC as a trustee.

A discussion took place regarding the option of Emberton School being able to re-open as a school in the future. Mr Handler commented that it was very positive to hear this statement. Cllr Duncan commented that EUC were a long standing charity and would have a lot to offer and suggested that the fund was set up in such a way that if the school opened, the fund would continue to benefit the children of Emberton. It was noted that the VSF would be promoted within the Acorn Early Years Foundation.

Mr Mann stated that he had been involved with the school in previous years; when the school house was sold, EUC expressed an interest in administering the fund. The Charity Commission turned EUC down and stated that the fund would be administered by the governors of Emberton School who would automatically become a trustee.

Cllr Duncan stated that legally, both the school field and building were owned by MKC under two separate titles. Cllr Duncan stated that the next steps were for Mr Morris and Mr Robinson to go back to the trustees and advise them that EUC were interested in administering the School House Fund subject to the approval of the Charity Commission.

Ms Raven – Acorn Early Years Foundation – Ms Raven stated that she had a meeting with Peter Beer at MKC and the legal team had been looking at planning consent which would not be necessary for a change of use from a primary school to a nursery school as long as they were able to complete the Lease by a particular date (June/July). The reason being that Acorn Early Years could still use the old planning use class system until then, as the relevant new planning use class changes were being phased in. If Acorn Early Years did not get the Lease completed in time, then planning consent would be needed for change of use from a school to a nursery because the two uses would then fall into different planning use classes.

Ms Raven Zoe Raven also confirmed that the school building and the playing field would go together in a single lease. This was good news as the concern from the parish council was that the nursery business might close but leave the forest school on the playing field operational,

meaning that a future separate educational use of the school building could be deprived of the use of the school field.

Tree planting – The lease would be for 25 years with a break clause but it would be at least 10-15 years in order to recoup financial investment. Mr Morris stated that there would only be a break in the lease if there was an opportunity for the school to re-open.

Ms Raven was responding to the question raised whether some landmark trees could be planted and stated that Acorn would like the village to be in agreement with where any trees would go and what size they would be. There were some volunteers who were able to help with planting trees and she wanted to make full use of the field. The memorial tree currently planted would be protected and Ms Raven needed to be shown the location of the tree. **Action: EPC to identify the memorial tree and to give further consideration to the planting of landmark trees.**

Shelter – Ms Raven commented that Acorn Early Years were looking at a temporary shelter which would not require planning permission and would also look at erecting a permanent building on the school field further down the line which would require planning consent and that these plans would be shared with the village. An outside toilet block would be required which would be serviced on a regular basis.

Priority for Emberton children – Ms Raven Stated that priority for the holiday clubs would be given to Emberton children together with the other children of the VSF, by releasing the booking availability to them first (ie to Emberton and all the VSF villages). There would be no priority given to Emberton for the nursery school; parents would just need to book ahead on this.

Parking – Ms Raven stated that Acorn would like access from the field with a mesh being put on the field which the grass would grow through so that there would be parking for parents to drop off and pick up children. There was a further discussion to be had whether this parking would be available for the village to use and consideration would have to be given to security and access. Ms Raven made the point that overnight parking for the village could be a security concern for her business regarding trespass and might not be ideal for the security of the residents' cars either. It might though be possible to provide parking which was fenced off from the remainder of the school field and the school building.

Cllr Markland emphasised that the parish council should be pushing for the nursery business and forest school to have proper parking accessed through the school field entrance to avoid congestion in the centre of the village. There were concerns that “mesh” grass parking would require planning consent for change of use in any event.

Mr McGrandle stated that The Institute had previously been used by the school for PE and he also made reference to the village archive in the pavilion which the school had made use of. Mr McGrandle stated that Ms Raven was welcome to have a look at the artefacts held by the History Society. Ms Raven stated that she would like this and would look to work with the local community by taking the children out and about to understand the area they lived in and to understand the local environment.

Timescale – The building will continue to be used as an office until the end of the school term. There will be some internal alterations in the building allowing it to open as a nursery in September 2021. The play scheme will start in the summer holidays.

Cllr Markland made a comment with regard to parking and stated that there would be traffic problems if parking was in the centre of the village and a more permanent solution was required. Ms Raven responded that a decision was required on the use of the small playground which could potentially become parking for staff. Cllr Geary stated that if there was parking in the field, it could potentially require planning permission.

Ms Raven, Mr Morris, Mr Robsinon and Mrs Soul left the meeting.

2. TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND AGREE ANY DECISIONS/ACTIONS

2.1 Ward Cllrs' Report

Trees in Gravel Walk – Ward Cllr McLean stated that there was a lot more light at the back of Gravel Walk and this had taken ten years to be resolved. Cllr Duncan thanked Ward Cllr McLean for his efforts his resolving this issue.

7 Westpits – Ward Cllr McLean stated that he had been pushing officers to get the rubbish in front of the property removed. Some of the rubbish has been moved by a resident.

MK Futures 2050 – Ward Cllr McLean commented that the MK Futures 2050 plan only showed the western route for a bypass and there was no reference made to it within the plan. The Olney Ward Councillors had raised objections to the MK Futures 2050 plan as they felt it was not appropriate for the rural area.

Emberton School – Cllr Markland asked about the selection process for Emberton School. Ward Cllr McLean to send this to the clerk. **Action: KMc**

2.2 **Dates for Diaries** – Annual Assembly to be held on the 16th March via zoom; Cllr Gibson will act as Chair. The clerk to circulate the previous presentation to councillors. **Action: KG**

2.3 Clerk's Report

2.1.17 **Bridleway claim at Petsoe End** – Update from Rosie Armstrong, rights of way at MKC. The matter is with my colleagues in our Legal team. The Order that will be advertised again on site and in the newspaper is currently being prepared. A copy will be sent to you for erection at the Village Hall, as the agreed area for displaying additional notices, as soon as I have been provided with a date for publication.

2.1.82 **Residents parking – Hulton Drive** – the clerk emailed Karen Creed at MKC for an update on 26th January to request an update. The clerk to forward to Ward Cllrs to chase. **Action: KG** Mr Handler commented that this issue might have an impact further up the village. Ward Cllr McLean suggested that the question could be asked.

2.1.95 **Milestone (A509 north)** – Cllr Flowers provided an update on the milestone stating that it was not in a good condition and had been painted just over 12 months ago and the main issue was where it was located; just inches from the A509. Cllr Flowers stated that the best thing would be to get an estimate for the milestone to be restored. **Action: PF/KG to arrange estimate when restrictions are lifted**

- 2.1.105 **Newport Road (speed limit)** – awaiting speed limit signs – clerk chased MKC on the 26/1/2021.
- 2.1.108 (January 2021) – **Mud on West Lane** – The clerk to contact the owners of West Lane House to request that the builders keep the road clear of mud.
- 2.1.109 (January 2021) – **Ash tree (junction of Petsoe End)** – the clerk reported the diseased ash tree to MKC on 13/1/21. Cllr Duncan subsequently provided photos.
- 3.6.15 **Rat running and restricted access** – nothing to report.
- 3.6.28 **Parking restrictions (Olney Road)** – Update from MKC - I am looking to make a general no waiting restriction Order for this years requests and will be including Emberton with this. I am currently working on a couple of high priority schemes. Once I have completed these I will be able to focus on the no waiting restriction requests.
- 3.6.50 **Dog fouling in playing field** – Issue of dog fouling raised by groundsmen of the playing field and will be addressed by the Sports & Recreation Committee at their meeting on the 11th February and any recommendations brought forward. The clerk sought advice from Shaun Greig, environmental crime team at MKC on 26/1/21.
- 3.6.68 **Well at Petsoe End** – Update from Nick Crank, MKC. I will add the site to the Historic Environment Record which I maintain. I visited the site in November as indicated and took some photos and was also given some additional historical background Mrs M White of Emotwell Farmhouse. I'm yet to receive any information from the Emberton History Society, though Mrs White did provide a further contact for follow up with them. Note: Nick Crank has been provided with all the information held by the History Society on the well.
- 3.6.88 **Leylandii trees (13/15 Gravel Walk)** – Trees now removed. It was agreed to remove this item from the agenda.
- 3.6.106 **Farm traffic sign for junction of Petsoe End** – It was agreed to remove this item from the agenda.
- 3.6.109 **Newton Road** - The clerk to contact highways department to arrange for truvello strips along Newton Road.

3. SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS

- 3.1 **Emberton Park** – Cllr Flowers reported that the PLUG meeting would now take place on the 3rd March. Ward Cllr McLean commented that Grounds café re-opened today; it was their choice to close and their choice to re-open. The access would be open until the end of February. Ward Cllr McLean had also requested that the toilets be opened. Cllr Hosking had raised an issue regarding the footpath down to Olney from the old layby to the bridge. It was noted that the poplar trees were due to come down and it was hoped that the hedge would also receive some attention at the same time.
- 3.5 “Together We Can” – parish charter – It was agreed that a response to this was not required.

- 3.6.1 **Emberton Parish Council website** – WCAG compliance. The clerk reported that this was in hand.
- 3.23 **Bell & Bear Public House** – Cllr Logsdail submitted a report for the meeting as follows;
- The asking price has been reduced to £375,000 + VAT
 - We attended an open viewing of the pub on the 21st January.
 - It does not appear that the pub is in any worse state of repair than when we last viewed it
 - Approximately 5 others viewed the property - we are unable to surmise how serious they are, or what their intent is
 - The agents mooted that dialogue would open with an offer of £300K + but would require evidence that we do have the funds available before they enter into any negotiation
 - We have offered £311K and are in the process of requesting the major investors to provide the actual funds which we can deposit into an escrow account and start talking to the agent
 - The agent has acknowledged our bid and is waiting for us to present evidence of our funding
- 3.74 **Emberton Neighbourhood Plan** – Cllr Duncan reported that councillors were probably now aware that the Article 14 Submission of the neighbourhood plan went out for consultation for 8 weeks on the 29th January and the steering group were trying to advertise it in as many places as possible. The planning consultant has sent out letters to statutory consultees and there was a leaflet to be distributed within the Well & Towers.
- 3.85 **Emberton School** – Previously reported on.
- 3.96 **MK Futures 2050** – Cllr Duncan asked councillors whether they wished to write and make a comment regarding the bypass being included without reference in MK Futures 2050. Ward Cllr Geary stated that the ward councillors made comment at the time of consultation. It was noted that there was not the funding for a bypass. Cllr Markland made reference to the greener transport system plans for MK. Cllr White remarked that MKC had taken away a route that was put on the map to reserve space that couldn't be built on. It was agreed to write regarding this. **Action: KG**
- 3.97 **Sports & Recreation Committee** – Cllr Logsdail submitted a report for the meeting as follows:
- Ongoing Covid restrictions means very little is going on
- We have had a quote for jet washing the tennis courts from Colourcourt which comes within our budget and we shall be asking them to carry out the work before the end of the month
- Committee meeting set for Feb 11th where the main agenda item will be dog fouling - Thank you Karen for making enquiries to MKC regarding legislation etc
- 3.99 **Conservation area – review of 1997 Conservation Area Statement by MKC** – Nothing further to report.
- 3.102 **Public footpaths in Emberton** – It was noted that this information was on the website.
4. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT ISSUES**

- 4.1 **Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund** – It was noted that MKC had not been able to find a dated and signed S106 agreement. Ward Cllr Geary commented that he was at the meeting when the document was signed. The clerk to follow this up. **Action: KG**
- 4.2 **Solar Farm Community Benefit Fund** – Nothing to report. No further applications.

previous applications status

- 4.301 **20/02840/TPO** - T1 Atlas Cedar 15m high - Reduce lateral braced branch by 2 metres and thin 2 lateral branches in upper canopy. T3 Beech 14m high - crown raise to 5.5m over the road to clear passing buses at The Old Rectory, Olney Road – **no objection**.
- 4.303 **21/00025/TCA** - Notification of intention to Thuja (T1) requires dismantling to ground level at All Saints Church, Church Lane – Cllr Flowers commented that having seen the email from the tree surgeon, it is clear to see why the tree works were required. It was understood that the tree was healthy but was causing damage to the churchyard wall and making a break in the wall was not possible due to the sloping nature of the ground and the possibility of earth falling onto the path on the other side of the wall. Cllr Markland asked Mr Clarke whether All Saints Church would consider further tree planting. Mr Clarke commented that he was in favour of planting trees but there was the view of the PCC that it did not want to obscure the view of the church from the road. The trees that had been planted in the last 5 or 6 years had been at the top end of the churchyard. Mr Clarke went on to state that the thuja was not a native species to this country. It was proposed by Cllr Markland, seconded by Cllr White and unanimously **agreed** that the objection to this planning application lodged with MKC be withdrawn. **Action: KG**
- 4.304 **21/00017/PNHSE** - Prior notification of single storey rear extension measuring 4 metres beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling house, 2.25 metres in height to the eaves and 3.5 metres maximum height at 7 Newport Road – **pending**

5. ACCOUNTS

- 5.1 **To receive the RFO's Report for the 2nd February** and approve payments. It was proposed by Cllr White and seconded by Cllr Gibson that the payments be approved as per the RFO's Report. Cllr White to approve the payments online. **Action: HW**

6. CORRESPONDENCE

- 6.1 **7 Westpits** – A discussion took place regarding the current situation of the resident at 7 Westpits and how MKC allocated properties despite the parish council writing and advising them to consider the person's needs when allocating this property. The parish council had pointed out that there was a limited bus service in Emberton and no shops or school. It was noted that MKC had a policy in place to house people in urgent need. The parish council had previously been asked to make recommendations for vacant properties but this was no longer the case. Ward Cllr Geary commented that any person in Band 1 would get priority. Cllr White stated that he would still like the question raised with regard to allocations. **Action: PG to follow up with MKC housing**

7. PARISH RELATED MATTERS

- 7.1 **Village publicity** – Emberton School, Neighbourhood Plan, Petsoe End bridleway

7.2 **Cllrs' concerns**

Cllr White – electric fence at the top field. It was noted people had been walking on the field as the track was muddy. Noted that there was warning signage.

Cllr Markland – commented on the lack of maintenance at the Anglian Water pumping station in Harvey Drive. Suggestion to write to the CEO of Anglian Water. **Action: KG to follow up with FM**

Cllr Duncan – reported that the wall had collapsed at Hartoft, West Lane. It was noted that the boundary wall was in a private road, but part of the conservation area. It was agreed to follow this up once the repairs had been made.

Cllr Flowers - reported that the light at the junction of the High Street and the A509 was still out. **Action: KG to follow this up.**

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – confirmed as Tuesday 2nd March 2021 at 7pm to be held virtually.

The meeting closed at 9pm

APPROVED