

## Emberton Parish Council

### Minutes of Meeting – Tuesday 10th March 2020

**Present:**

Councillor Victoria McLean (Chairman)  
 Councillor Stephen Gibson (Vice Chairman)  
 Councillor Melanie Duncan  
 Councillor Soo Hall  
 Councillor Richard Logsdail  
 Councillor Harry White

12 Emberton residents

Ward Councillor Keith McLean (part meeting)

Mrs Karen Goss – Clerk and RFO

**Apologies for Absence** - Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Flowers and Ward Cllrs Peter Geary and David Hosking.

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

**Welcome to Councillor Melanie Duncan and signing of Register of Member's Interest** – Cllr V McLean welcomed Melanie Duncan to the meeting. Cllr Duncan completed and signed the Register of Member's Interest.

1. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING** held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020. These were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.
- 1.2 **Public questions** – Mr Ashley Blades stated that he was looking for the parish council to object to the planning application at 34 Gravel Walk as the development did not sit within the settlement boundary according to Plan:MK and the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The development did not conform to Policies DS1, DS2 and DS5 of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. There were a number of other issues in relation to highways, design, environment, visual amenity and the public footpath.

Mr Worswick commented that the development was in the paddock and not the garden of 34 Gravel Walk. Mr Worswick's concerns were the hard landscaping and localised flooding.

Mrs Hubbard stated that the development was outside the settlement boundary, there were already parking issues in Gravel Walk, the proposed development was not in keeping.

Cllr Gibson reminded residents that the Neighbourhood Plan still had to go through consultation and voted upon at a forthcoming referendum and had not been adopted at the present time.

Ms Allen presented her views as the applicant stating that her and Mr Green had sought pre application advice from Milton Keynes Council planning department and that the response had been favourable. Ms Allen stated that her and Mr Green wanted to stay in the village and had been open and transparent during discussions with neighbouring properties. Ms Allen and Mr Green only had two cars and the property was 20 metres away from the nearest

dwelling with no windows overlooking neighbouring properties. The two public footpaths would be brought into one and there would be a clear maintained pathway to the open fields. The stables were not a safe structure and these would be replaced with a shed.

- 1.3 **Dates for Commitment** – Cllr White confirmed that the Wind Farm Community Benefit Committee Meeting was now being held on the 28th March. Cllr Logsdail to provide a brief update on the Bell & Bear for the Annual Assembly. The clerk to provide a template. **Action KG**

- 1.4 **Risk – to identify and action where necessary** – The clerk reported that BMKALC had advised that it was not possible to substitute on line meetings or telephone conferencing at the present time due to the Covid-19 (corona virus). Cllr V McLean responded that it was always better to follow advice rather than make it up. The clerk to keep the council updated on any further decisions taken. **Action KG**

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

**Budget** – Ward Cllr K McLean reported that the budget was set by MKC to raise the council tax by 3.49%. The Ward Councillors put forward a number of amendments which were not accepted which included an additional 4 PCSOs.

**HIF** – This is still live. The Ward Councillors have lobbied the Minister to decide against awarding £94.5m to MKC.

**Traffic orders for Emberton** – This had fallen off the radar with MKC; if consultation didn't start in April, it would start in May.

## 2. Clerk's Report

- 2.1.17 **Bridleway claim at Petsoe End** – An application was submitted to Rights of Way to make a Definitive Map Modification Order to add two public bridleways onto the definitive map at Petsoe End. Recommendation made to DCC on 25/10/16 that the orders were made and public consultation ran 09/11/2017 to 22/12/2017. Objections were received from the landowner. The matter was referred to the Planning Inspectorate on 2/10/19. MKC have now received notification from the Planning Inspectorate, advising that the Secretary of State was unable to confirm the Orders because the maps attached to each order have the incorrect notations on them. The Council will now immediately withdraw these Orders and make new Orders in the correct format. Cllr Duncan confirmed she had been made aware of this situation.
- 2.1.95 **Milestone (A509 north)** – Awaiting painting of lettering; contractor working on a template to repaint text properly.
- 2.1.103 **WW1 commemorative bench** – Old bench has been re-sited in playing field. Awaiting date from contractor for the installation of the new bench. The clerk sent the invoice to MKC (supplementary fund application) for the purchase of the bench.
- 2.1.105 **Newport Road (speed limit)** – Awaiting new speed limit order. Email sent to MKC officer for update on 2/1/20 and 29/1/20. See Ward Councillors' report for update.
- 3.6.15 **Rat running and restricted access** – Request for speed van to visit Olney Road during the rat run sent to TVP on 29/1/20.

- 3.6.28 **Parking restrictions (Olney Road)** – Nothing to report. The clerk followed this up on 2/1/20 and 29/1/20. See Ward Councillors’ report for update.
- 3.6.68 **Well at Petsoe End** – The clerk contacted Fred Markland who has agreed to inspect the well.
- 3.6.88 **Leylandii trees (13/15 Gravel Walk)** – Ward Cllr McLean followed this up with MKC’s landscape officer and will report further when correspondence was forthcoming.
- 3.6.106 **Farm traffic sign for junction of Petsoe End** – MKC advised that they would be looking at the potential option of installing 2 farm traffic signs on existing posts along Newton Road and would advise the parish council once they have a drawing proposal. The clerk followed this up on 29/1/20.
- 3.6.107 **Street lighting – Prospect Place (column 1)** – nothing to report.
- 3.6.109 **Newton Road** – awaiting feedback from Davina Millership, Head of Highways at MKC.
- 3.6.110 **Erosion of grass verges in Olney Road (15, 17, 19)** – A letter had been received from Mr & Mrs Slinger, 17 Olney Road stating that they had recently been in touch with MKC highways to make them aware of the continuing erosion of the grass verge in front of 15, 17 and 19 Olney Road. Mr & Mrs Slinger had asked if MKC could put some kerb stones along the edge of the road to establish a solid demarcation line between the road and the grass verge. The response received from MKC (FS171713124) was that Olney Road was in a conservation area and they were unable to install kerb stones in that area due to regulations. It was agreed to pass this to the Ward Councillors. **Action KG**
- 3.1 **Emberton Park** – It was noted that Grounds Café were due to open in the next week following talks with MKC. Bbq bins for hot coals and bbqs had been sited in the park and there were also 4 new wooden benches.
- 3.23 **Bell & Bear Public House** – Cllr Logsdail reported that the offer to purchase the Bell & Bear had been submitted and a response received that the offer would be discussed at a Board Meeting which would not be held until next month. The process was still open for people to submit pledges.
- 3.74 **Emberton Neighbourhood Plan** – Cllr V McLean reported that Regulation 14 Submission of the Neighbourhood Plan was in full consultation and open days would be held over the next couple of weeks. It was anticipated that most residents would have received a copy of the Neighbourhood Plan by the time of the first open session on the 14<sup>th</sup> March. A questionnaire would accompany the plan, which had been designed to take into account the concerns that have been raised by residents. The questionnaire should be completed and returned either by email to [plan@embertonparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:plan@embertonparishcouncil.co.uk) or put in the collection boxes at the Church, Institute or Pavilion. The clerk reported that all this information would be available to view on Emberton Parish Council’s facebook page and on the parish council website. Cllr V McLean commented that the Steering Group had lost two chairmen and there had been some unfortunate comments regarding the process taken by the Steering Group. Cllr Logsdail responded that on the original draft, there were no reasons behind the site assessments. Cllr V McLean read out the following statement following a discussion with the planning consultant appointed to undertake the drafting of the neighbourhood plan: “It may be helpful to establish the process that the steering group underwent regarding the housing sites in the Neighbourhood Plan.

As you know we undertook a call for sites in July 2018, with a closing date set for September 2018. A total of 15 sites were submitted, with some landowners submitting a number of different options.

These sites were reviewed against a standard methodology on a consistent basis and against a set of agreed criteria to ensure a transparent and robust process. Comments on the sites were also sought from MKC planning and MKC highways, which were added into the assessment. The sites were also assessed against the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan. These included addressing the way that the A509 has segregated what was once a single community, so connectivity improvements were important. Another was to address the affordability of housing in the village and rebalancing what is an aging population, as younger people have to move away as they cannot afford to stay or move into the village. This has a knock on effect to community facilities and services such as the pub, school and sports clubs etc. The outcome of this exercise was that two sites were selected, the Institute and the Acorn Nursery site. The school playing field was not put forward as an option. The Institute subsequently withdrew their site and indicated that they did not want to pursue an allocation in the NP. In order to ensure that Acorn Nurseries were committed to a redevelopment, a meeting was held with the owners and their agent to discuss aspirations for developing their site, including our objectives regarding affordable housing. It was stressed and understood by them that this was a draft allocation in the NP and that it would be subject to further public consultation and comments prior to it being included in the final submission version. That submission version would then be subject to referendum, so it was by no means certain at this stage what form of housing would be delivered. Engaging with landowners before making a potential allocation public is normal practice to ensure that the owners are still committed to delivering the site, and they are aware of expectations and requirements in terms of number of houses, affordable housing and other improvements needed. Note the withdrawal of the Institute site as evidence of what can happen if a landowner changes their mind. Whether a site is a realistic prospect and deliverable, and our ability to demonstrate engagement with the landowner is one of the key tests the Examiner will apply to any potential site allocation. If we have not had engagement with the landowner, then the Examiner could call into question the deliverability of the potential allocation. In this instance, it was requested that the meeting be kept confidential because of the staffing and potential impact on the nursery business. The owners wanted time to discuss the potential development with their staff before it became public knowledge. Again, this is not an unusual request. We are now consulting on the draft plan and potential allocation is now public knowledge. We have prepared specific questions to seek views on the potential housing allocation and amount of development. If the feedback to this consultation indicates that the direction we have taken thus far is not supported, then we will have to take stock, review and adapt the NP. If however, we are offered support for the direction taken, then we can move forward to formal submission of the NP to MKC. I trust that this helps to clarify the process we have followed and reasons why the meeting with Acorn and their agent was not made public at the time.”

The clerk referred to the letter sent to the two MPs for Milton Keynes from MKALC regarding deficiencies in neighbourhood planning. The clerk to email this for comment.

**Action: KG**

- 3.85 **Emberton School** – Cllr V McLean reported that a decision had been taken by MKC to close Emberton School with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. A judicial review would cost in the region of £10,000 but there was not enough information at the present time to make a judgement as to whether or not this would be an appropriate course of action. If this was the proposed action, the parish council would need to get quotes and agree whether or not to spend this amount of money. Cllr Logsdail asked if there was an appeal process. Ward Cllr

McLean responded that Ben Everitt MP had already contacted the Secretary of State to outline the failings of MKC following the correct process. The Secretary of State has responded that he doesn't think it needs any action. Mr Everitt will speak to Chris Handler. There was a very technical point in that MKC did not take into account all the information and not publishing one of the decisions was inappropriate and wrong. Cllr V McLean commented that whilst the organisation that was the school would not get Ofsted turn up and rate it as a failing school, the school governors needed to find a suitable alternative use for it; they have been made aware of the covenant on the school and the implications. Cllr Gibson commented that the only way to get the school open again was to get more families into the village. Ward Cllr McLean stated that Chris Handler would be the best person to provide an update. Specialist advice would be required to take the decision to a judicial review and there had not been any school closures in Milton Keynes. **Action:** Ask CH to attend the next meeting to see if there was any scope for a judicial review.

3.97 **Sports & Recreation Committee** – nothing to report. Next meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March.

### 3. SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS

3.39 **Consultation on Neighbourhood Area Application – Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council** – no comment.

3.96 **MK Futures 2050** – Cllr V McLean suggested that councillors read this document so that comments can be collated at the next meeting. **Action: ALL**

### 4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

4.1 **Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund** – meeting on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March

4.2 **Solar Farm Community Benefit Fund** – nothing to report

4.3 **Christopher Walton – Senior Planning Officer, Milton Keynes Council** – agenda item deferred

#### previous applications status

4.225 Airsoft site at West Farm Way, Mr Carlos Williams – nothing to report.

4.257 **19/03142/FUL** – Retrospective permission for the demolition of an existing stone barn, its rebuild, extension and conversion into a two bedroom residential dwelling at Mounts House, West Lane for Mr D J Soul and Dr Diane Soul – **decision deferred**

4.260 **20/00077/FUL** – Two storey side extension, first floor side and two storey rear extension, new front entrance, replacement pool enclosure with link to house, dormer windows to front elevation, replacement windows and internal alterations (resubmission of 19/01828/FUL) at Springside Pasture, Petsoe End for Mr C MacGregor - **pending**

4.261 **20/00164/TCA** – Notification of intention for minor pruning to 1 x Bramley Apple Tree (T1) shape and maintain health of tree, shaping of tree (crown reduction) to 1 x Holly tree (T2) at April Cottage, 27 Olney Road for Mrs M Handler – **no objections**

4.262 **20/00236/FUL** – Erection of detached timber framed study in rear garden at 20 High Street for Mr J Brown – **pending**

## new applications

4.263 **20/00282/FUL and 20/00298/LBC** – Single storey framed garden room extension to rear at The Long Barn, 1 Honey Hill for Mrs K Pickwick. There were no objections to this application.

4.264 **20/00483/FUL** – Erection of one dwelling and double garage within the garden of No 34 at 34 Gravel Walk for Mr J Green – Cllr V McLean referred to the pre application document and the fact that MKC planning department had used an old version of the neighbourhood plan which referred to the proposed development being within the settlement boundary which included the paddock land alongside the Gravel Walk property. This was subsequently excluded from the latest version of the proposed plan because it was a paddock and not garden land, so did not meet the policy that had been applied elsewhere to include only garden land. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee had wrapped it into the boundary initially as it was thought that it was part of the established garden at 34 Gravel Walk. It then came to light that the paddock use had ceased relatively recently. The owners may have been using it as a garden, but if this had not been established over 10 years for a change of use (4 years for residential use) then it was currently being used as a garden without planning permission. It was agreed to raise this point with MKC in the response. Cllr Logsdail commented that the paddock was shown in Plan:MK as open countryside. A response to the planning application was determined using the Guide to Probity and Planning as follows:-

**Overshadowing** – the proposed development would overshadow the private rear garden of number 17 Gravel Walk blocking out a fair proportion of their sunlight.

**Overlooking and loss of privacy** – the number of windows and height had been reduced on the application to mitigate the loss of privacy and overlooking.

**Adequate parking and servicing** – Cllr V McLean commented that there were more concerns regarding the parking in Gravel Walk in general and access up and down it. It was agreed that the parish council would wish to see the comments made by MKC highways.

**Overbearing nature of proposal** – Cllr Logsdail stated that the position of the proposed application compared to 15 and 17 Gravel Walk would be overbearing and was twice the size of any other property. The proposed development was also overbearing due to its raised elevation.

**Loss of trees** – not applicable.

**Loss of ecological habitats** – this has been covered in the ecological survey undertaken.

**Design and appearance** – Cllr Logsdail commented that there were many different styles of properties in Gravel Walk but it was the sheer scale of the proposed development that should be noted.

**Layout and density of buildings** – not applicable.

**Effect on listed building(s) and conservation areas** – not applicable.

**Access and highways safety** – it was agreed that highways should comment on this.

**Traffic generation** – not applicable.

**Noise and disturbance from the scheme** – not applicable.

**Disturbance from smells** – not applicable.

**Public visual amenity** – it was agreed that this planning consideration was applicable as the proposed development would block the view of the open countryside up Gravel Walk.

**Flood risk** – it was pointed out by residents that flood water runs off the field and down into Gravel Walk with the proposed development adding to this problem.

Cllr V McLean commented that there were a number of concerns regarding this planning application including the public right of way. The clerk to draft a response to MKC and circulate to councillors for approval. **Action: KG**

4.265 **20/00638/TCA** – Notification of intention to remove 1 x Acacia tree to ground level at West Lane House, West Lane for Mrs Ellis. There were no objections to this application.

3.74 **Emberton Neighbourhood Plan** – Mr Roberts, a Honey Hill resident addressed the meeting and stated that he had seen the revised version of the plan and there seemed to be a significant change in the plan with regard to the scale and size of the proposed development. Cllr V McLean responded that the first draft of the plan was submitted and a number of sites were put forward. The plan went to MKC and was returned with a number of comments. It was then agreed by the steering group to undertake a housing needs assessment. The plan was going through the consultation process. The steering group recognised that the village was facing a number of challenges and they hoped to address this in the neighbourhood plan. Cllr Duncan asked for the minimum number of houses to put in the plan identified by MKC. A resident commented that Plan:MK did not allocate any houses in Emberton. Cllr V McLean responded that 86,000 homes were required in MK over the next 20 years. The allocation of 40 houses would ensure that the village was allocated affordable housing. Mr Roberts stated that he felt that there were problems with traffic and infrastructure and did not understand how the plan ended up with 40 houses. Another resident commented that the development could permit 80 more vehicles on the highway. Cllr Duncan stated that the site could become dormitory. Ms Almond commented that highways did not seem concerned about the number of vehicles attempting to turn right. Cllr Gibson suggested putting the comments from highways as a PDF version on the website.

## 5. ACCOUNTS

5.1 **To receive the RFO's Report for the 10<sup>th</sup> March 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. Cllr White to approve the payments online. **Action: HW**

6. **CORRESPONDENCE** – nothing to report.

## 7. PARISH RELATED MATTERS

7.1 **Village publicity** – Neighbourhood Plan, decision on school, update on Covid 19

### 7.2 Councillors' concerns

**Cllr V McLean** stated that a decision was required regarding the Chairmanship of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group bearing in mind that there were now only five remaining members. It was agreed to bring the committee back to the responsibility of the parish council and that the committee still stood but a new chair would not be appointed at this time. The reason is that there was a completed plan and it was out to the village for consultation. Once the parish council has the village response, it will action as follows: Village approves submit it to MKC for approval for village referendum. If village rejects at either stage then re-appoint committee with new leadership to start again. **Action: KG** to advise the remaining members of the steering group. **Action: VMc** to write to the two outgoing Chairmen to thank them.

**Cllr Logsdail** stated that he was sad to see that Cllr V McLean would be resigning following the Annual Assembly on the 17<sup>th</sup> March and thanked her for all her hard work.

**Cllr V McLean** stated that the clerk had requested a sabbatical from her role and that options were being explored.

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – confirmed as Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.