

MINUTES OF COATES PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2022
7.30PM Coates Village Hall
Chair for this meeting: Robbie Whitfield

Councillors and Officials:	
Robbie Whitfield (RW)	Chair
Harris, Stephen (SMH)	Councillor
Clement-Davies, Ann	Councillor
Dobson, John (JD)	Councillor
Hobson, Andrew (AH)	Councillor
Gilly Torry-Harris (GTH)	Councillor
Alan Moorcroft (AWM)	Clerk/RFO

Members of the Public:
Large, Simon (SL) Tree Warden – By Zoom
2 members of the public attended

1. APOLOGISES

Tony Berry (District Councillor) had sent his apologies in advance. An email from Stephen Hirst (SH) (County Councillor) was received during the meeting apologising for his absence due to illness.

2. DECLARATION OF MEMBER INTERESTS ON AGENDA MATTERS including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests

All Councillors present declared that they had no such interests.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING – 25 JULY 2022

No comments received prior to or at the meeting. Approval proposed by GTH and seconded by RW. The notes were signed by the chair and clerk.

The chair asked the member of the public if there was anything in particular that they wanted to raise. There were two items. Did any of the councillors have any information on Mike McKeown the prospective candidate for the forthcoming District Council election? None of the councillors had any information other than what had been included in the circulated leaflet. The other point was the availability of allotments. The previous site was no longer available and there was nothing that could be done by the council as it was a private landlord. AWM will undertake some research about the council's responsibilities on the provision of allotments.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The application at Smerrills Dairy is outside Coates Parish council boundaries. No further action on this application is required at the current stage; the council had reserved the right to make further comment if necessary. The application to fell 4 ash trees at Larch House (22/02654/TPO) received no comment. The erection of an extension at Manor Farm (22/02928/FUL) received comments regarding screening and they were passed on to CDC.

The member of the public raised the potential renaming of Dark Lane. As nothing had changed the council regards this issue as closed. The solution would seem to be the use of What 3 Words and potentially a clear house sign. Additionally the member of the public asked about the dangers of the Trewsbury Road / A333 junction. The council are aware of the potential dangers and action had been taken to improve visibility. AH will check to ensure all proposed actions had been completed.

The handling of future planning applications was discussed. It was agreed that a planning sub-committee was impractical at the moment for a number of reasons; small number of applications, time to respond, etc. Improving parishioner's access to information and communication channels

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with councillors were agreed as the way forward. AWM is to draft a proposed Notice for consideration by the councillors. The agreed Notice will be for display on the Noticeboard and the website.

5. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR TONY BERRY AND TREE WARDEN SIMON LARGE

SL joined the meeting by Zoom. The councillors wished SL well following his recent illness.

It had been the intention to obtain replacement trees from GCC. However, GCC had wanted the council and / or SL to enter a legal agreement regarding the planting, watering and future upkeep of the trees. This was discussed and following advice from GTH had been rejected. Other councils had taken a similar stance and GCC have now rescinded the need for a legal agreement. Approximately 400 whips and 25 mature trees will be received. SL is unable to undertake the physical work as he recuperates and expressed the need for planting volunteers to come forward; SL will oversee matters and hopes to have them planted by Christmas. The intention is to plant them around the cricket field and behind the mirrors at the RDA / parade ground.

By the end of the planting season c.3,500 trees will have been planted. SL is struggling to find many further potential tree planting sites. He has however asked GCC for further trees to be planted on the GCC owned wide verge on the Trewsbury Road (back from the junction). A member of the public made an offer of land on which trees could be planted. SL will consider this offer.

RW asked AWM to send the council's good wishes to SH and ask if he had any update to share with the councillors.

6. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING (APM)

The meeting date of the APM will be set at the end of the meeting and is to precede the ordinary council meeting. AWM has started to prepare an agenda that he will share with the councillors in due course. Advertising of the meeting will be on the Noticeboard, website and in Watershed.

At this point a member of the public left the meeting.

7. FINANCIALS

Payments have been made against pre-approved items: clerk's net pay (£631.80) and WAH allowance (£84.00) totalling £715.80 and present for former chairman £98.71.

Payments have also been made against invoices received; grass cutting invoices (2) of £306.00 on 8 August and 8 September. .

Pre-approval was given to pay the clerks wages net of PAYE (£406.20) and WAH allowance (£54.00); proposed RW and seconded GTH. AWM to confirm figures to AH by email so payment can be made.

AWM is to review the grass cutting contract. How many further cuts are to be undertaken? Was the council contractually obliged for them to be undertaken?

The council considered the appointment of an internal auditor for 2022/23. The options were a GAPTC appointment or an external appointment. The council are satisfied that the GAPTC appointed auditor will do a thorough job and will be considerably cheaper than an external appointment. AWM will contact GAPTC and seek an appointment.

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Consideration of the 2023/24 budget will be made at the November meeting.

8. PLAYGROUND

Councillors expressed thanks to Keith Austin (KA) for his invaluable advice on repairs to the equipment and his regular inspections.

Consideration was made of the maintenance quotes received from Greenfields and All About Play. There was little difference in the prices quoted with both being around £1,300+, albeit with slight differences in the work to be undertaken. AWM advised the councillors that KA had suggested that whoever was appointed a fresh quote be obtained as not all of the work identified in the RoSPA report had been included. After discussion it was agreed to retain the services of Greenfields on the basis that the service they had provided in previous years had been satisfactory and they had rectified any issues promptly.

AWM will liaise with KA to obtain the revised quote. As additional work would be required it was proposed by GTH that expenditure up to £1,500 be approved, proposal seconded by AH.

When repairing the dry stone wall Bromfords erected some plastic barriers which they forgot to remove when the repairs were completed. AWM will contact Bromfords and ask them to remove the barriers.

9. ANNUAL REVIEW OF PARISH POLICY DOCUMENTS

SH proposed that the policies for Health & Safety, Standing Orders and Internal Privacy be accepted, seconded by AH. AWM will arrange for the policies to be uploaded to the website.

10. ACTION POINTS FROM LAST MEETING

AWM and RW will look at making the councillor's email addresses on the website work properly after tonight's meeting.

RW will look at the IT services currently being provided, including the levels of storage, etc. The current providers (Athena) are providing an acceptable service at the present time. There are specialist IT service providers for councils but insufficient is known at present to be able to decide if this is something that should be pursued.

RW has been in communication with Richard Gray (RG) (GCC) about the possibility of a 20mph speed limit in the village. A response has been received which RW will circulate. The response was not thought to be helpful in obtaining the desired outcome. Councillors discussed what could be done in respect of a lower speed limit, speed bumps and signs, and in particular if safety could be improved by only having 1 bus stop. AWM had received an email about potential funding for road safety matters which will be circulated to the councillors. RW will continue to consult with RG and the matter will be discussed further at the next council meeting. Concerns were discussed about the perceived increase in large farm and building vehicles passing through the village, something which was thought likely to increase with both the Smerrils and Chesterton developments; RW will send a letter to Bathurst, Fosse Hill, etc reminding them of the need for safety.

11. OTHER ITEMS

AH reported that he had repaired the grit bins and they should be satisfactory for a number of years. AH also reported that the broken road sign was now scheduled for repair.

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ACD was concerned about ivy growing on the bus stop owned by the council and thought action should be taken to cut it back. AH will have a look to see if this was something that could be undertaken by someone in the village and if appropriate seek quotes. Following on from this the council are to consider the maintenance of all council owned assets. This issue will be discussed at the next meeting. Early thoughts are that it would be necessary to identify what assets need to be maintained, what work is required and how that will be undertaken.

AH has successfully removed the Ragwort identified by SL at the last meeting.

The dog fouling raised by a parishioner was discussed. It was thought that the hounds were responsible but action would be easier if evidence was held. Notwithstanding JD will speak again with the people walking the hounds and RW will write to the hounds master. AWM will update the parishioner on the action being taken.

RW introduced Jackie Brown (JB) to the councillors and explained that JB had expressed an interest in becoming a councillor. JB has been a Coates resident for a number of years, has recently retired and has some time available. She would like to use some of that time towards helping the village. There is a vacancy that has been advertised and with nobody requesting an election it is possible to co-opt JB. GTH proposed that JB be co-opted as a councillor, seconded by JH. JB's co-option will be subject to her meeting the requirements of a councillor; AWM will send details to JB for her consideration.

RW has received an email on the subject of "Debate not Hate". RW thought that initially he would ask the other councillors if any of them had been the recipients of abuse in their roles as councillors. Comments could be made now or, if preferred, separately to RW in person.

12. POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION AT NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 15 November 2022.

The meeting closed at 21.45

Chairman Signature:
Parish Clerk Signature:
Date:

NOTICE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 15 November 2022 at Coates Village Hall.
Electronic copies of these and previous Minutes are available from the Parish Clerk:
clerk@coatesparish.org.uk