

Emberton Parish Council
Minutes of Meeting held in The Pavilion
Monday 9th December 2024 at 7pm

Present:

Cllr Melanie Duncan – Chair
 Cllr Harry White
 Cllr Colin Jamieson
 Cllr Angela Laval
 Cllr Guy Palmer
 Cllr Joe Walker

Ward Cllr Keith McLean (part meeting)

Mrs Karen Goss – Clerk and RFO (via Zoom)

Welcome – The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

To accept apologies for absence – Apologies were received from Cllr Flowers and Ward Councillors Peter Geary and Debbie Whitworth.

Declarations of interest in items on the agenda – Cllr Duncan declared an interest in item 2.1.17. In the interests of transparency, Cllr Duncan also declared a connection although not a financial interest in land at Hardmead submitted for consideration in the New City Plan. Cllr Laval declared an interest in item 5.3 regarding the grant application from the Well & Towers.

1. To confirm the **MINUTES OF THE MEETING** held on the 11th November 2024. The Minutes of the meeting held on the 11th November 2024 were amended under Ward Cllr McLean’s report to read “It was noted that only Emberton had a current parish councillor as a member of the Petsoe End Wind Farm Fund Committee” rather than “It was noted that a few parishes did not have representatives on the committee”. The Minutes were then signed by the Chair.

1.2 **Public questions** – There were no members of the public present.

1.3 **Risk** – It was noted that the parish council would now be given back the key for the clock tower and anyone wishing to access it would have to request permission. Anyone requesting the key, would be asked to sign a copy of the risk assessment to confirm that they had read it. The dates for flying the flag were agreed. The clerk to notify Mr Harris. **Action: KG.** The dead trees in the hedge line at Petsoe End near the school bus stop were cut down following storm Bert and an email had been sent thanking the land owner.

2. TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND AGREE ANY DECISIONS/ACTION

2.1 **Ward Councillors’ Report** – Ward Cllr McLean reported as follows:-

MK Connect – The contract had gone out to tender. The email sent to the Ward Councillors from the EPC Chair was forwarded to officers to ask that the comments be considered.

Draft budget – Three proposals had been put forward: 1) Parking charges went up last year and would be increased further. 2) An additional green waste bin for householders would be charged at £85 per annum. 3) There were currently 3 household waste recycling centres (New Bradwell, Bleak Hall and Newport Pagnell) with plans to replace them with two super sites at Snelshall and Old Wolverton. The Ward Cllrs would be objecting to this.

PEWFF – Noted that Mike Hughes, Chair of the PEWFF had called a meeting for Saturday 18th January and only those invited could attend. The EPC clerk had been invited and Cllr White as the EPC representative would also be attending. Ward Cllr McLean was trying to get some information requested by Mike Hughes from officers at MKCC.

New City Plan – Regulation 19 of the New City Plan was progressing.

Planning system – The new system went live in October and the weekly planning lists had only just started being produced. As the project progressed, there was very little work done to move applications forward.

Community orchard at Prospect Place – Cllr Duncan asked if Ward Cllr McLean had seen the request for comment on the community orchard and woodland planting at Prospect Place? Ward Cllr McLean responded that he had not been approached.

Rapid Transport System – Cllr Duncan commented that she had been made aware of a forthcoming consultation on a rapid transport system for Milton Keynes but it would not come as far as Olney and would stop at Newport Pagnell. Ward Cllr McLean reported that he did not have any more information.

Ward boundary review – The ward boundary review was out for consultation; the proposal being to move from 19 wards to 20 wards (60 councillors). There was a proposal for Moulsoe to join the Broughton Ward and for Stoke Goldington and Lathbury to join the Olney ward as was the case prior to 2014.

- 2.2 **Update from Thames Valley Police** – Crime statistics between 11/11/24 and 9/12/24 was as follows: tools, socket sets and a cut off saw stolen (November).
- 2.3 **Parishes Forum 5/12/24** – The draft budget for MKCC was discussed; 5th January to comment. MKCC had noted regarding the September flooding that “Petsoe End was particularly badly affected”. MKCC had a responsibility to carry out a s19 investigation into the flooding in the Milton Keynes area, but to do this it was vital that they received information from the affected residents. Cllr Duncan reported that she had asked a resident to mark out on a plan information on the flood, depths and directions of flood water in Petsoe End. Discussions took place regarding allocating community hubs for emergencies. Report on the number of parish councillors per parish and whether this needed to be increased.
- 2.4 **Dates for Diaries** – These were noted. The clerk to include the date for the Annual Assembly.
Action: KG.
- 2.5 **Clerk’s Report**
- 2.1.17 **Bridleway claim at Petsoe End** – Nothing to report.

- 2.1.82 **Residents parking – Hulton Drive** – Nothing to report.
- 2.1.83 **Manhole cover outside Stonepits House** – The area around the manhole cover had been marked for repair.
- 2.1.86 **Home Farm Court (lighting)** – Awaiting further response from Joanne Payne.
- 3.6.15 **Rat running and restricted access** – Nothing to report.
- 3.6.30 **Allotments** – Awaiting MKCC’s legal team to respond to EPC’s solicitor.
- Grass cutting** – It was noted that the area at the top of the allotments had recently been cut but not the bottom. The clerk reported that she had queried this with MKCC.
- 3.6.50 **Litter warden** – The parish council had been approached by MKCC environmental crime to advise that a litter warden service was available to parishes at no cost. It was agreed to request a visit to Emberton by the litter warden who could also issue fixed penalty notices for dog fouling. **Action: KG.**
- 3.6.68 **Well at Petsoe End** – Nothing to report.
- 3.6.114 **Steps in High Street (no 5)** – Nothing to report.
- 3.107 **Tree planting** – Photos and “what3words” locations of newly planted trees have been sent to MKCC as requested by the tree officer, advising that one of the trees was dead.

3. SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS

- 3.1 **Emberton Park** – Nothing to report.
- 3.5 **Together We Can 2024** – It was noted to respond as per the previous consultation to the effect that there was a general perception that there was no feedback from MKCC following parish and town councils’ responses to consultations. **Action: KG.**
- 3.74 **Emberton Neighbourhood Plan** – Nothing to report but noted that consideration must be given to the policies in the Emberton Neighbourhood Plan when the parish council looked at planning applications and that consistency was key.
- 3.85 **Emberton School (School House Fund)** – Cllr Walker reported that there were a couple of actions from the previous meeting; 1) agreed to try and get and set of accounts from the trustees and 2) to speak to a previous trustee. Cllr Walker stated that he had had a useful conversation with this previous trustee, who had been Chair of the Governors which meant that he was automatically a trustee of the Emberton School House Fund, leaving in 2016 and must have been a trustee when the fund was set up: Cllr Walker’s understanding from this former trustee was that the SHF was a capital fund and could be used for non-day to day reasons and that indeed it had been used for play equipment and a marketing campaign; Cllr Walker suggested that the constitution was ambiguous as it stated that the object of the fund was to advance the education of the pupils of Emberton First School and that both the income and capital thereof shall be applied at the discretion of the trustees in pursuance of that said objective. Cllr Duncan responded that there were two separate constitutions for the two separate Emberton School charities running in parallel and the parish council had only

seen the constitution for the charity set up with the parents and had been unable to find the other constitution relating to the sale of the school house either from the trustees, on-line or through dealings with MKCC. Cllr Walker reported that the previous trustee had seemed positive that both the capital and income from the fund could be spent and stated that this could be backed up by other trustees at the time. Cllr Duncan asked if the trustees could potentially have applied the constitution of one charity to both the Emberton school charities, as they were being run in parallel? Cllr Walker reported that the previous trustee had also stated that when he resigned as a trustee in 2016, that the fund stood at £20,000 and not £90,000. EPC Minutes in June 2020 indicated the fund had at one point stood at £97,000. The former trustee approached by Cllr Walker thought the parish council were chasing a large sum of money that did not exist. The trustees were under no obligation to release the accounts and in the last five years that the accounts had been submitted, albeit late, no expenditure had been recorded. Cllr Duncan commented that she understood that anyone could ask for the accounts of a charity, provided they paid any admin charges for producing the information. Cllr Walker responded that when he spoke to the Charity Commission, he was advised that freedom of information was an option for obtaining copies of the accounts. Ward Cllr McLean stated that it was not dissimilar to the wind farm fund in that transparency was important. It was noted that none of the current trustees had any continued involvement with the village school's federation nor did they have children still attending the VSF schools.

- 3.97 **Sports & Recreation Committee** – Nothing to report.
- 3.103 **Demand Responsive Transport (21 bus service) and double yellow lines** – Nothing to report, as MK Connect had already been discussed during the Ward Councillor's report. The clerk followed up the position regarding changing the double yellow lines in the centre of the village with Paul Harrison. Response awaited.
- 3.113 **Climate Change** – Nothing to report.
- 3.118 **New City Plan** – Reported on previously. The clerk to make comment on the Rapid Transport System. **Action: KG**
- 3.125 **Flooding and water management – maintenance of pumping station, flooding at lower Petsoe End and Olney Road, EPC's role in flood management** – noted that a formal complaint regarding the pumping station in Harvey Drive had been sent to the CEO of Anglian Water. Flooding at Petsoe End had been discussed previously following the Parishes Forum meeting attended by the Chair. Cllr Laval commented that she had looked at the Ravenstone flood plan and had taken out the names and addresses and would circulate this. **Action: AL.**
- 4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT ISSUES**
- 4.2 **Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund** – Reported on previously. The clerk confirmed that she would be able to attend the meeting on the 18th January. Ward Cllr McLean commented that the committee members were looking for financial information up to 2016 which was when they took over the administration of the fund.
- 4.384 **24/01688/HOU** – Erection of single storey porch extension to front, and the conversion of the loft with associated alterations at Hartoft, West Lane - **pending**

- 4.385 **24/01791/TCA** – The removal of T1 (Box Elder Maple), pruning of T2 (Box Elder Maple) and reduce height to 6m and spread to 4m and pruning of T3 (Robina Frisia – false acacia) to remove dead branches to prevent disease at The Barn, 4 Manor Court, Olney Road - **pending**
- 4.386 **24/01807/TCA** – The reduction in height by up to 1.5m and sides by up to 1m of 2x Copper Beach trees (T1, T2), reduction in height by 3m and sides by 1.5m of Sorbus tree (T3) and reduction in height by 1.5 and sides by 1m of Judas tree (T4) at 4 Gravel Walk - **pending**
- 4.388 **24/01987/HOU** - The erection of a single storey rear extension with roof lights replacing the existing conservatory. The conversion of the garage into living accommodation with window to replace the shutter and rear door to replace the window and associated alterations. New rear balcony with railings at 4 stone court – **pending**
- 4.389 **PLN/2024/2224** – To remove to ground level T1 (Goat Willow) due to tree split at base posing a high risk of failure. To reduce height by approx. 30-40%, equating to approx. 5m from height of T2 (Western Red Cedar) due to proximity to neighbouring house (approx. 3m from trunk) at All Saints’ Church, Church Lane – **pending**
- 4.390 **PLN/2024/2254** – The erection of two storey front extension with two gable dormers and front porch at Hill Farm, Petsoe End, Emberton – **pending**
- 4.391 **PLN/2024/2314** – Demolition of existing pergola and the erection of a pergola to the rear at 19 High Street, Emberton – **pending**

New applications

- 4.392 **PLN/2024/2498** – The erection of a micro-energy storage facility at Verge at Olney Road, by Harvey Drive. Cllr Duncan referred to an email received from Fred Markland regarding this application. A discussion took place in which the parish council agreed on the concept of the application but also agreed that it was in the wrong location as well as possibly creating a blind spot at the junction, in a prominent place, size and scale, spoil the main access to the village and country park. The clerk referred to the Emberton Neighbourhood Plan which stated that grass verges should be protected. The clerk to compile a draft response for circulation. **Action: KG.**
- 4.393 **ENF/2024/0454** At Holcombe House, Olney Road – for information only.
- 4.394 **Tree planting at Prospect Place** – Cllr Duncan reported that she had spoken to an officer of the Marston Vale Trust (Rachel G) and reported as follows: - The land in the red edging on the plan they sent us, and other adjoining land, is owned by SDC, an architect and development company, operating out of Bedford and Cambridge and other places. They have a unit in an industrial estate in Bedford, off the A41. 2. Forest of Marston Vale Trust wanted comments from Emberton Parish Council to include in their impact assessment for the Environment Agency. Rachel said they did not need planning consent for their proposal. Rachel said that Marston Vale had also written to nos 1-7 Newport Rd about a week ago asking for their comments, and that one resident had replied to ask about maintenance. It seemed Rachel had perhaps not contacted the residents on Prospect Place, or the named houses on Newport Road (Tenterden, Barnby, Sunray, Bellamy) 3. The community orchard and woodland area would be part of the programme Trees for Climate, grant aiding for schemes for planting trees. Forest of Marston Vale would be involved in the planting from beginning to end, and would then carry out maintenance for 15 years, with a contract between Forest of Marston Vale and SDC

to maintain the area to the highest standard for 15 years. The intention was to sequester carbon.

4. I asked what the arrangements were for the Emberton community to have access to the orchard and the woodland. Rachel said there was a public footpath running beside it, and there would be no fence. I said that currently there was a public footpath and farmland, with no fence between, but it would still be trespass for the public to go on to the farmland, despite the lack of fence. Rachel confirmed there was no intention to grant legal rights of access to the general public to use the community orchard or the woodland. The "community" benefit was for the staff of SDC. SDC had bought the land not for development, but looking for green space for their staff members, as Olney was at a halfway point for their community, between offices. There was no plan to have any fencing around any side of the planting, and in that way the general public would not be discouraged from going into it.

5. I asked about the car park. Rachel said that she had not intended to send a plan with a car park on it, as there was to be no car park, that was just her playing around with design. Rachel said that the space between the road and the planting was to be a good open space for the SDC staff, for events for staff, picnics, recreation, barbeques.

6. I asked what was to stop the owners, SDC, from chopping down the trees after the 15-year contract ended. Rachel said that SDC could in theory do that, but that they wouldn't, because the carbon sequester scheme, the process of locking in the carbon, would run for about 100 years.

7. Rachel repeatedly emphasised, throughout the conversation, that there was no intention to develop. She said that the open land between the road and the planting always made people suspicious. Rachel asked if I thought the comments from the meeting would be positive. I said that the parish council would be interested to know what the residents thought about it, but that planting trees was a positive. Also, that I was only one member of the committee and our comments would be a group response.

It was established that the planning application sought to create an orchard and woodland between two offices for the use of employees but councillors believed that Emberton was an odd location for this, with parking also being an issue. It was agreed to carry out some research into SDC and draft a circular for residents in Newport Road and Prospect Place. **Action: MD/AL.**

5. ACCOUNTS

- 5.1 **To receive the RFO's Report for the 9th December 2024** and approve payments. It was proposed by Cllr White and seconded by Cllr Jamieson that the payments be approved. Cllr White to approve the payments online. **Action: HW.**
- 5.2 **Co-operative Bank – application for Sports & Recreation Committee** – The clerk reported that this was in hand.
- 5.3 **Draft budget and consideration of clerk's review** – Following a brief discussion without the presence of the clerk, it was agreed that the clerk's salary be increased to the 2024/25 level of SCP28 with effect from 1st April 2025. It was proposed by Cllr Palmer and seconded by Cllr Walker that the budget be approved with the precept being set at £20,000.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

- 6.1 Cllr Flowers had previously circulated by email, an evidence document from a resident in relation to planning. It was noted that this document had been used in support of the making of PlanMK which would be superseded by the New City Plan currently in process.

7. PARISH RELATED MATTERS

- 7.1 **Village publicity** – no Well & Towers in January.
- 7.2 **Cllrs' concerns** – Leaves on footpath (West Lane & Olney Road) – the clerk to chase this.
Action: KG
- 8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – The date of the next meeting was confirmed as the parish council meeting on Monday 6th January 2025 at 7pm to be held at the Pavilion.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.