

SARRATT PARISH COUNCIL  
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**MINUTES OF THE SARRATT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN SARRATT VILLAGE HALL ON  
TUESDAY 8th NOVEMBER 2022**

Present: Councillor Sarah Dobson  
Councillor Iain Christie  
Councillor Michael Lowry  
Councillor John Gell  
Councillor Simon Diggins  
Councillor Lee Farman

In attendance: Lena Mortimer, Clerk to Council  
9 members of the public

The meeting welcomed former councillor Anthony Soothill  
The meeting welcomed Steven Bailey

Meeting commenced at 19:30pm

**335/22 APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Cllrs Coakley, Rugg and Garvey were absent from the meeting with prior notification.

**336/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest from Councillors and to ask for any special dispensations.

**337/22 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

- 9 members of the public were present at the meeting.
- Representatives of Hollymead, attending for Planning section.

**338/22 PREVIOUS MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

To confirm and sign the minutes of the last Council Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022  
Propose Cllr J. Gell and seconded Cllr S. Diggins

It was agreed to fly the Ukrainian Flag from the flagpole on the Green on the 24<sup>th</sup> February for 7 to 10 days, in commemoration of the anniversary of the commencement of war in that country.

### **339/22 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES WHO HAVE ATTENDED MEETINGS ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL.**

Cllr John Gell attended a meeting with the Village Hall Committee. Matters discussed included the delay in levelling the car; the consideration of raking and patching the disabled spaces; the increase of letting charges to SPC and local hirers of 5% and other outside lets of 10%. Hires are healthy, with a Ballet School basing itself in the Hall.

The alterations to the building plans have been delayed as TRDC have some objections to the extent of the increase in footprint, and require a redesign of the frontage.

Cllr Gell attended a meeting of the Days Alms House Charity. Nothing to report.

KGV Trustee meeting discussed the rejuvenation of the playground area. The application to TRDC for CIL funding has been drafted. Deed of variation – KGV are seeking advice so that these revision are finally correct.

Kate Coleman has obtained an internet and Wi-Fi connection at the Pavilion from BT.

Cllr Lowry attended a meeting covering Online and Cyber security.

### **340/22 CLERK'S ACTIVITIES**

The Clerk gave a summary of activities occurring during the last month. Many matters have been resolved.

The Clerk updated the meeting on:

- Agreements between private individuals and Councils for the siting and powering of defibrillators.
- Acceptance of a quotation from Tree Monkey for work in Bottom Lane. Due process was adhered to as four quotations were obtained, and best value achieved.
- Sign of the Times are working on the new Finger Posts but must be prompted.
- The fingerpost for walkers, by the Cricketers Pond has received favourable comments. Two stakeholders have made their contributions to the cost.
- Treework at Springfield commenced this week.
- Gate repair kits received and approved. We require another 12.
- Posts and bolts arriving from Herts ROW.
- Action: to complete the funding requirement and scheduling of the work to the Cricketers Pond.
- Thanks again, to Mr Martin Kempster for the donation of the Christmas Tree by the pond. The Clerk has received a generally positive reaction to it.
- Litter picking group gathered 6 bags of rubbish along Sarratt Road.
- Permission is given for the Boxing Day Classic Car meeting on the Green.

### **PLANNING**

#### **341/22 REVIEW RECENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- **LEAD COUNCILS REPORT**
- **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Challoners on the Green – Loft Conversion – no objection subject to the investigation of light implications for neighbours.

Vine Cottage – no objection as the work does not increase the footprint of the existing house.

Hunterswood House – outbuilding. SPC does not support this development.

Hollymead – the single storey extension of the property is a pragmatic solution to a difficult situation. Energy efficiency is to be encouraged. No objection

Old Micklefield Dairy – Cllr Christie informs the meeting of an interest – No impact on the environment – no objection.

Cllr Diggins suggested that all future buildings and alterations should be encouraged to use grey water and rain capture systems.

Merrydown Commonwood – creating a third floor – adding two bedrooms (4 to 6).

After ensuring there is no overlooking issue, this does not threaten the Green Belt – No objection.

- **RECENT PLANNING DECISIONS**

Commonwood Cottage. Stable and home gym. No objection – TRDC have asked that the development should be considered ancillary to the main house.

- **PLANNING ENFORCEMENTS**

Mulberry Bush, next week – planning contravention notices are to be enacted.

Land adjoining Blenheim Cottage – contravention notice not yet actioned.

Vine Cottage - closed

Hollymead is progressed.

- **APPEALS**

Ramillies, legal points continue to be argued.

Clovercourt – there will be a view of documents in 6 to 8 weeks.

Burlington have lodged an appeal – no information is available yet. Letter from Your Shout, seeks to see how important the Scout Hut component is to the application. SPC are prepared on additional fronts, to counter the appeal.

Cllr Diggins asks if we have the resources to fight this and Cllr Farman confirmed that SPC has.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **343/22 TO RECEIVE THE LEAD COUNCILLORS REPORT**

Steven Bailey brought a selection of draft drawings of the possible renovation and reconstruction of the playground at KGV. The old, and now disintegrating play equipment would be completely replaced. These proposals have been suggested by Calloo, who have designed a multi-age recreational area, with weather-proof facilities for toddlers, to teenagers. The playground would be safer and of more use, with seating for parents and children, planting and tables for picnics. Calloo has prior experience of projects of this nature and their work comes with a 30yr guarantee.

SPC will apply for CIL funds from TRDC, perhaps in separate sums, so that the Pavilion restoration is not amalgamated with the playground cost. However, the overall cost is approximately £260,000.00.

Additional funding applications could be made to Sports England, Lottery, Fields In Trust, Garfield Weston Association.

**ACTION:** Councillors would like to visit similar playgrounds to assess their suitability for Sarratt.

The KGV Football Team are in favour of the plan, as are SCCF.

### **343/22 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE**

**Former Cllr Soothill detailed the latest developments in the Neighbourhood Plan.**

The Plan is now online for reference at [sarrattneighbourhoodplan.org](http://sarrattneighbourhoodplan.org). Sarratt has submitted our draft plan to TRDC, formally. TRDC has a new Head of Planning and this staff change has afforded some breakthroughs, and TRDC have agreed the draft NP. They have accepted the point in the NP that Sarratt should not be subject to edge of settlement development, and a new category of Village has been created for Sarratt and Bedmond. The biodiversity and sustainability section has been accepted fully.

SPC has made some compromises, and this has been mirrored by TRDC. There is now a six-week consultation process and at district level. As this may throw up changes to the Plan Anne Skippers an external examiner will be approached to assist us.

A Referendum will be held, hopefully to coincide with the May Elections to defray the costs to the Parish.

The meeting expressed its wholehearted thanks to Anthony Soothill and John Carter for their dedicated work on the NP.

Cllr Diggins asked if the process should be communicated to the Parish to excite interest? It was decided by the meeting that March would be an appropriate time to start this process.

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

#### **347/22 TO RECEIVE THE LEAD COUNCILLORS REPORT**

Cllr Garvey outlined the key points from her report circulated with the agenda.

- Queens Green Canopy closed early due to the death of the Queen.
- Cllr Garvey has agreed to be the SPC representative on the Steering Group for Chess Smarter Water. She hopes SPC will qualify for a grant for the allotment site from this group. It was suggested the Allotment Policy should be updated, such that any new sheds erected should include guttering and water collection butts.
- Cllr Garvey asked for a small grant (£150) for the Sustainable Sarratt Group for guest speakers. This was approved in principle but the Sustainability Group should complete a grant Application Form for this as other organisations in the Village applying for SPC grants had done.
- The Oak at the Croxley entrance of the Village is going ahead. The Clerk will contact Julie Rees regarding the location of the second oak to replace Tree 666. It was suggested locating this on The Green at the Chipperfield end would enable the 2 new oaks to be sited at the east and west entrances / exits from the Village and could be marked with plaques commemorating the late Queen and Prince Philip.

### **HIGHWAYS**

#### **348/22 TO RECEIVE THE LEAD COUNCILLORS REPORT**

National road safety week – 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November. The key message is: SAFE ROADS FOR ALL.

Speed Limits - Cllr Diggins has consulted with Sustrans, in conjunction with the work they are doing in the Chess Valley in support of the Chess Smarter Water Catchment Programme; that is

primarily focused on improving access, so covers a wider remit than just road safety, but road safety is a key element in that. This is still in development and Cllr Diggins will report back. Separately, after investigating options, Cllr Diggins will come back with a firm proposal, that will need to become part of formal Traffic Regulation Order. The simplest option, which Cllr Diggins is personally in favour of, is a blanket 30 mph speed limit throughout the Parish, with further restrictions to 20 mph, within the village boundary, close to schools (such as Sarratt and York House schools) and some other designated areas. Whilst supportive of a 20mph limit close to the schools, not everyone on the Council, was entirely comfortable with the blanket 30mph limit as it was thought it may affect arguments about 'edge of settlement' developments. Cllr Diggins agreed to take further advice, consider these views, and come back to Council at their meeting in December.

Parking in Village - Cllr Diggins was pleased with the sensible responses to the Spotlight parking article. The Council noted that it is a more acute problem in the summer with increased visitors and customers at the Boot Pub.

## **RESOURCES AND POLICY**

### **349/22 TO RECEIVE THE LEAD COUNCILLORS REPORT**

#### **350/22 OCTOBER BANK TRANSACTIONS APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS £5,483.24**

Supplier payments £5,483.24 to 26<sup>th</sup> October.

Proposed: Cllr Rugg; Seconded: Cllr Christie

SPC has received the second half yearly precept of £48,278.50 from TRDC and received a VAT reimbursement of £4,500 from HMRC. The closing current account balance = £81,384.00

#### **351/22 SANTANDER AND CO-OPERATIVE MANDATES FOR SIGNATURE**

Thanks to Cllrs Coakley, Christie and Garvey for being additional signatories on the Co-operative account. For audit purposes this is formally being recorded in these Minutes.

#### **352/22 CYBER INSURANCE**

Cyber insurance – Mike Edmund will investigate the necessity and cost of this for the SPC website, and John Merritt (SPC IT Contractor) will look at the SPC IT infrastructure and applications.

Generally, SPC have been proactive in assessing the risk of the Council's operations. John Merritt backs up the SPC systems weekly as well as providing IT support, costing SPC £120 per month.

#### **353/22 REVIEWED POLICIES SCHEDULE**

The proposed new schedule to review SPC's Policies commencing in December was shared with Council. It was noted there may be some overlap between the Financial Risk Assessment and the Risk Register which would need to be resolved before these were brought to Council for review.

#### **354/22 BUDGET 2023/24**

SPC actual spending is on target. However, the large quantity of tree works over the next few months will impact the financial year-end figure in March 2023, although most other expenditure on the environment will tail off over the winter. The compilation of a quarterly spend profile would assist budgeting in future years.

Grant requests were reviewed. The 40% increase in the request from Sarratt School compared to 2022/23 was noted but understood to be a part payment for an IT project. The 1% increase in grants was approved by Council.

Proposed: Cllr Garvey; Seconded: Cllr Coakley

SPC should budget a figure for celebrating the King's Coronation in 2023. A suggested value of £1,000 will be included as a provision in next year's budget. The Clerk will find out more information on the potential arrangements recommended.

Making money available to support parishioners in financial difficulty was discussed. It was noted SCCF already has a generous fund for this purpose. SCCF has also registered the monthly Community Café as a "warm place" under the government scheme. HCC has made £100,000 available to support warm spaces. District Cllr Ciaran Reed to investigate further. It was suggested it might be helpful if different stakeholders in the Parish come together to co-ordinate what they can offer to those struggling this Winter, in a similar way to the approach adopted at the start of the pandemic e.g. SCCF, Sarratt Care, SPC, the Village Shop? The support available could then be published in the January Spotlight, but potentially advertised earlier in the Village Shop and on the Parish website and noticeboards. Action: Cllr Diggins, Cllr Coakley and Carol Chorley.

Council then discussed the 2023/24 budget noting there was likely to be a deficit on this year's budget due to increases in supplier costs and additional costs in relation to professional fees and some substantial remedial tree work needed. Council discussed this shortfall and the potential demands for funding next year and felt that it would be necessary to increase the precept value by 9% next year to maintain existing service levels within the Parish against the backdrop of the increased costs it is operating within. Council acknowledged this is a reasonably high percentage increase for next year, but this is against a history of holding the precept flat for the last three years, which has been an exception within the Three Rivers District. The 9% increase will represent an increase of £7.91 per annum for a Band D householder next year. SPC thanked Cllr Lowry for his hard work on the budget.

### **355/22 ELECTIONS**

- Parish Council elections are due to take place nationwide in May 2023.
- For SPC these means any existing Councillor wishing to remain on the Council from May 2023 onwards, potentially for a 4-year term till the next Parish Council elections in May 2027, will need to submit a Nomination Form. District Cllr Reed advised this form / process had recently been amended, such that anyone standing for the role of Parish Councillor needed only 2 sponsors on their Nomination Form.
- Cllr Rugg and Cllr Gell advised they would be retiring in May and not re-standing as Parish Councillors.
- Should the remaining Councillors decide to re-stand and they will need to select on their Nomination Form the Wards they are standing for. SPC covers 2 Wards – Sarratt and Grove. The Grove covers the Buck's Hill and Chandlers Cross parts of the Parish. The Nomination Forms are sent to TRDC.
- If there are more than 9 nominations for the position of SPC Councillor, including existing Councillors and any new candidates there will need to be an Election. This is managed and paid for by TRDC as part of the 4 May 2023 local elections, alongside any County or District Councillor seats up for election, and potentially the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan referendum.
- If 9 or less candidates stand for the position of SPC Councillor then their nominations are uncontested and there does not need to be an SPC election on 4 May 2023, but care should be taken over the number of nominations for the separate Sarratt and Grove Wards.
- The first SPC meeting after the May election is the Annual Statutory Meeting (ASM) this includes the election of the Chair and Vice Chair as well as the appointment of Councillors to various other positions within Council. As Cllr Rugg is retiring SPC will need to appoint a new Vice Chair. Cllr Dobson advised that having complete a 4-year term in May 2023 she would be happy to hand over the role of Chair should another Councillor wish to take over this position.
- Further details on the election process and key dates will be shared in the New Year

### **356/22 CORRESPONDENCE**

No correspondence.

### **357/22 REMEMBRANCE DAY: 11 NOVEMBER**

Cllr Rugg has kindly offered to lay the wreath on behalf of SPC as the Vice Chair at the Remembrance service on The Green on 11 November while the Chair is in hospital.

### **358/22 COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

Cllr Gell asked if some authentic red paint could be purchased for the Parish Warden to re-paint the telephone box on Sarratt Green. The Clerk to investigate. It was suggested checking with CCRA who had recently re-painted the telephone box at Buck's Hill.

District Cllr Ciaran Reed said Parishioners should notify the Police on 101 about vehicles that have broken down in the narrow lanes around Sarratt, so they should send out a police car to manage traffic flows until the vehicle is removed.

Cllr Dobson thanked Cllr Coakley for agreeing to attend the TRDC Joint Parishes meeting at Basing House with the Clerk on 16 November as neither her nor the Vice Chair were able to attend. Cllr Rugg asked the Clerk to remind the meeting not to publish Councillors' email address on the emails they send out and to use the BCC facility

### **359/22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND ITEMS REQUESTED TO BE PUT ON THE NEXT AGENDA**

The date of the next Council meeting is **Tuesday 13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

The meeting finished at 22:30 pm