

# ABBEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL

**Clerk: Mr. Julian Vischer**  
**50 Gibsons Green, Heelands, Milton Keynes, MK13 7PE**  
**Tel 07866 412706**  
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2014/11/162

## **MINUTES of the Meeting held on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at Two Mile Ash School at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Cllrs. E. Matthews (Chairman) S. Galbraith, D. Lewis + 2 residents: Mrs. Windmill (High St) & Dave Barratt (Chair of Two Mile Ash Environmental Group); + Marcus Young (Marcus Young Landscapes); Andy Hudson, Head of Environment and Waste, and John Price Landscape Contracts Manager.  
Clerk: J. Vischer

- 1. Apologies.** Cllrs. Dr. A Evans, K. Wilson
- 2. Andy Hudson, Head of Environment and Waste** and John Price Landscape Contracts Manager, *on taking over the landscaping* – Andy Hudson described the aim of the tendering process, just completed, as to drive up the quality of maintenance and not necessarily seek the cheapest tender. Contractors had been invited to tender for reduced contract areas so as to invite smaller players to tender. The ratio of 50/50 for quality vv price was the lowest ever (previously 60%price and 40%quality). In the end SERCO had won the contract for the whole city although they would be working with Frosts Landscapes of Woburn Sands for certain areas, including Abbey Hill. The contract specifications had been changed so that it was not for example just the number of grass cuts or the height of the grass (now a max. of 2"/50mm) but a combination of the two. Thus 10 cuts per season would be expected but should it be dry a cut could be 'banked', should it be wet extra cuts would be paid for automatically or taken from the 'bank'. A new aspect of the service would be a tool loan and training scheme so that councillors/residents can take on certain types of landscaping jobs and become 'landscape champions'. Councillors welcomed this.  
In response to councillors concerns about the poor quality of maintenance both officers explained how the next development would be to not just rely on a Maintenance Budget but also create a Capital Budget, as Highways have done, to rejuvenate the landscaped areas. They were keen to make improvements to the landscaping, to renovate it and not just maintain it. As the budget had dropped from approx. £3m last year to £1.8m this year no renovation had been possible in the past. The renovation and maintenance of footpaths comes under the Highways department but the two departments do work together - Environment maintains Highways landscaping, and work on footpaths is regularly passed on to Highways.  
In response to the question as to whether the Parish Council could take on the landscape contract (opt-out) this was not an option at the present time. However it became clear that the officers were keen to work with the Parish in identifying the areas in most urgent need of renovation, although they pointed out that it would take time to 'catch up'. To this end it was agreed that councillors and officers would meet, out in the Parish, and 'walk about' the most urgent areas so that the cause of the neglect/damage could be identified to prevent the same thing happening again. Phil Snell (Landscape Manager) would be invited. The officers would suggest dates for a meeting. Councillors would suggest the highest priorities - for example the Capian Walk area.
- 3. Public Open Forum** - Marcus Young (Marcus Young Landscapes) informed councillors that the shrub bed renovation works were starting tomorrow to the delight of councillors and Mrs. Windmill who had come partly for this reason. He said they had raised the canopies of all the trees and were going to rake through the grass prior to the winter. As he was present and councillors were pleased with the standard of work this year he was invited to submit a quotation for the coming year. Proposer Chair, Seconder Cllr. Galbraith; passed. Unanimous.  
Mrs. Windmill raised a new matter concerning dog mess on her porch and in her and her neighbour's back garden. She was advised to take the matter to the police and Environmental Health 101 as this was a health hazard and against the law. She also informed the Parish Council that the new yellow lines at her end of the High St (by Ashbrook School) were being parked on at pick-up and set-down times.
- 4. Approval of October Minutes.** Approved. Proposer Chair, Seconder Cllr. Galbraith; passed. Unanimous.

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# ABBEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL

2014/11/163

5. **Matters Arising.** None

6. **Clerk's Report**

- a. **Bollard renovation quotation** – no update. When the clerk enquired after progress via Corporate Procurement Services (who are coordinating our bid) he was eventually contacted by Phil Sears to say that the scanned copy of the redway map showing the bollards was 'too small' and could he send an A4 version. This the clerk did by post the same day but was left wondering how long he would have waited if he had not enquired.
- b. **New Grit bin application** – a letter had just been received today saying we were unsuccessful.
- c. **Noise at Mercure Hotel** – the clerk reported back on behalf of Cllr. Evans. He had attended the meeting at the Hotel where the new noise reduction measures and notices etc were shown to residents and had been impressed and pleased by the effort the Hotel management had gone to. There had been no new problems except for the occasional early delivery. Cllr. Evans proposed writing a letter of thanks to the Hotel for the way in which they had taken residents' views on board and put in place effective remedies. This was agreed. **Clerk**
- d. **Overgrowing Bushes by Mercure Hotel.** These had been done (Parks Trust)
- e. **Brioche plant screening Wymbush.** Tenders in progress.
- f. **Walkway by Dentist's** – resubmitted 12 Sep. ref. 405267 - 'in progress'.
- g. **Kiiln Farm redway overgrowing shrubs** – reported 24 Sep. ref 412508 - 'in progress'.
- h. **Wymbush overgrowing shrubs, Garamonde Drive.** Reported 24 Sep. ref. 412277 - 'in progress'.
- i. **Footpath in the Park** – reported 20 Oct. ref. 430877 – 'in progress'.
- j. **Tesco's One Stop Shop** – emailed but no reply. Letter to be written. **Clerk**
- k. **Capian Walk** - Reported 20 Oct. ref 430748 – 'in progress'.
- l. **Xmas Tree illuminations** - arranged for 21 November at 15.30. TMA school choir will be attending.
- m. **Ward Walkabout** – no update.
- n. **Overgrowing shrubs at the corner of Kepwick** and the High St. Reported 20 Oct. Resubmitted 22 Nov. ref 450702
- o. **The wooden bridge** behind the school field. Reported 20 Oct. ref. 431229 – 'in progress'.
- p. **Yellow Lines**- these were still not done at the Two Mile Ash School end. Numerous queries about this had yielded little except the promise that it was about to be implemented – with no explanation for the delay.

7. **Parish Report Leaflet** – The chair had written a draft, which had been circulated by email. To be finalised at the next meeting.

8. **Finance.**

a. **Cheques for authorisation.**

The latest accounts sheet was circulated with budget references.

The following cheques were approved for payment:

859	J Vischer	273.73
860	A H Contracts	142.03
861	Marcus Young	288.00
862	Admin Expenses	23.75
863	TMA School	17.00

b. **Balances.**

This showed a current account credit of £4,666, which tallied with the latest bank statement, and an overall balance of £24,667 for available funds.

9. **Planning Applications. Previous Applications**

- a. 14/02261/FUL 19 Pyke Hayes, Change of use from amenity land to private garden use (retrospective) – *pending*

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# ABBEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL

2014/11/164

- b. 14/02262/FUL 19 Pyke Hayes, Erection of fence boundary measuring 2 metres (retrospective) – *pending*
- c. **NEW** - None

## 10. Correspondence and Grant requests

- a. **Correspondence.** Flyers for MK Marathon next year and POPcom community events flyer.
- b. **Grant requests** – a request had been received from 2532 (Milton Keynes) Squadron, Air Training Corps to purchase a minibus. Only one resident of Two Mile Ash was a member but the project was based in Kiln Farm. It was agreed to provide £100 grant and invite them to support Party in the Park. Proposer Chair, Seconder Cllr. Lewis; passed. Unanimous.

## 11. Other Meetings

- a. **NAG** – No meeting had been held, as not enough attendees were available at the time.
- b. **WEASG** – Cllr. Lewis reported that he attended with Cllr. Wilson. There had been much discussion about the disruption to road users caused by the closed section of the V4 Watling St due to the construction of a new roundabout. Works were now almost complete on this. Cllrs were delighted to learn that a budget of £3million had been set aside for the construction of 'four underpasses', even though this had not been mentioned previously. These underpasses should go under the V4 at both Galley Hill and Two Mile Ash but it was not revealed what form these might take. Barratts recent planning application by the H2 roundabout entrance roads had been rejected because the road was not wide enough to qualify as a 'grid road'. It was hoped, even though this had not been in the tendering specification, that Barratts would agree to alter the design in line with the revised MK policy on grid roads.
- c. **Chair's Walk-round** – no update.

## 12. New Items

### a. Councillors

- i. **Wymbush footbridge by Lodge Lake** – Cllr. Evans reported that the bridge had bars missing on one side under the hand rail so a small child could slip through, and a few rotting boards underfoot. A photo was shown round revealing that remedial repairs had been carried out to the floor of the bridge. **Clerk to report**

### b. Residents

- i. Lorraine Tite (163 Clay Hill) reported (via email) flooding on Clay Hill – a dropped kerb giving access to a parking area between no's 167 and 169 Clay Hill allows the rain to run on to the access area and creates a stream down the redway; "a persistent problem". Reported by clerk 17 Nov. ref 446572.

## 13. Date and Time of Next Meeting.

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm at TMA School

## 14. Confidential Item

The Meeting closed at 9.20pm

*signed*

*date*