

SOUTHOE & MIDLOE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Wednesday 6 November 2024

At the Village Hall at 7pm

Present Alan Marnes (AM), Angela Ellmer (AE), Barry Butler (BB), and Andy Kiley (AK) Parish Councillors.
R Mimiene, the Clerk and RFO
HDC Cllr Martin Hassall
CC Cllr Ken Billington
Village Hall Committee Representative Chris Faux
6 members of the public

MINUTES

11/405 To Receive Apologies and Reasons for Non-Attendance

Cllrs John Taylor, Sharon Michel, and Scott Wells sent apologies for absence.

11/406 Declarations of Interest for Members

To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary and other interests, and the nature of those interests relating to items on the agenda – None.

To receive written requests for the new Disclosable Pecuniary interest dispensations – None.

11/407 District and County Councillors Reports

Please see **Appendix 1** for HDC Cllr M Hassall report.

Water and drainage: Blocked drain issue and the sewage where water cannot flow free to the east and therefore gets stuck at this side of the A1. Tankers for the sewage are being sent to the village. Surface water cannot get away from this side to the other side of A1. The ditches at the bottom of Lees Lane been cleared, it created the big pond as water could not get away. Therefore, combining forces with Buckden in this matter would be very helpful.

A member of the public joined the meeting

It has been suggested to join various flood groups in the surrounding villages, Alconbury Flood Group suggested.

Rectory Lane issues reported to CCC again but a feedback from CCC received stating that nothing is to be done at this stage.

Agreed to find out who is responsible for clearing the ditches. Oxford Trust rented out land to various groups. Suggested to write a letter, explaining the problem on that land. Advised to copy our local MP.

Bell Lane hedge is still an issue, CC Cllr KB will chase again.

CC Cllr KB and HDC Cllr MH left the meeting

Close of meeting

11/408 Open Forum for all for all members of the public present including

Members of the public can address the Council in an open surgery session. Each person wishing to address the council will be allowed to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes, subject to the Chairman's discretion. This part cannot be longer than 15 minutes.

No requests to speak received.

Re-opening of the meeting

11/409 To Receive and Approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 2 October 2024

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Proposal: Proposed by Cllr AE, seconded by Cllr AK, all in favour, it was RESOLVED that the minutes are true and correct record of the meeting. Carried.

11/410 Matters Arising from those Minutes – None.

11/411 Planning, Local Plan

11/411.1 To discuss and agree parish comments re The **Local Plan consultation**, scheduled to take place between **18th September to 27th November (10 weeks)**

Sustainability Appraisal will be available for anyone to view and comment between the following dates: Start date: 18/09/24 10:00 End date: 27/11/24 23:59 Please select the following link to view this event: <https://consult.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/kse/event/38141>

Further Issues and Options Paper will be available for all residents to view and comment between the following dates: Start date: 18/09/24 10:00 End date: 27/11/24 23:59 Please select the following link to view this event: <https://consult.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/kse/event/38139>

Land Availability Assessments will be available for all residents to view and comment between the following dates: Start date: 18/09/24 10:00 End date: 27/11/24 23:59 Please select the following link to view this event: <https://consult.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/kse/event/38140>

Southoe Garden Village – It was agreed to support HDC initial recommendation of **Refusal**. Main reason is infrastructure, hospitals, policing – inconsistent policies.

Proposal: Proposed by Cllr AE, seconded by Cllr BB, all in favour, it was RESOLVED to support HDC recommendation to Refuse. Carried.

Cllr AM attended local PCs chairs meeting in Buckden, and in the absence of NP the suggestion is that any major developments should be restricted to already existing towns.

Cllr AE agreed to help the **Clerk** in the PC comments submission.

It was agreed to **support** the Midloe Grange and surrounding areas for Biodiversity net gain. The Biodiversity offset situation was explained, where it is possible for other developers to purchase credits from environmental reserved areas.

Proposal: Proposed by Cllr AE, seconded by Cllr AK, all in favour, it was RESOLVED to support HDC recommendation to Support. Carried.

18th Nov is the deadline for submission of the comments – Clerk and Cllr AE to feedback PC comments on the planning portal.

Note since meeting: if Midloe Grange was to be granted a Biodiversity net gain status then that safeguards the area for 30 years against foreseeable development.

11/412 Neighbourhood plan situation – Cllr AE sent the info which was found on NP to Cllr SW. Cllr SW is investigating taking the lead on it.

11/413 Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding Assessment (WCHAR) - Connection between Southoe and Little Paxton.

Southoe footpaths, to discuss correspondence received from the CCC.

Notice of landowner deposit under section 31(6) of the Highways Act 1980 and Section 15A(1) of the Commons Act 2006

Major land owners' agents had deposited plans with C.C.C. regarding public access in and around the Diddington, Little Paxton and Southoe and Midloe parishes. The link is <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/2024-666.pdf>

Southoe and Midloe P.C will be commenting to the deposited plans that the marked ROW's have been used many times over the period referred to (20years).

But, as several of the marked paths are across managed and cropped fields, there has been a tendency for users to deviate round the wide field margins or nearby permitted rights of way, because of convenience and respect for the food production.

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Southoe and Midloe P.C. would like to sit round the table with surrounding parishes, the Land owners/agents and rights of way CCC officers, to discuss the possibility of exploring the options of getting some of the ROW's deviated to make our parishes paths more accessible/convenient to all parties. As a 1st step Southoe and Midloe P.C. are seeking everyone's views please.

11/414 A1

Meeting is being scheduled for the next week. The cutting of the central reserve has not been resolved yet even after the maps were provided by the PC. Rubbish in central reserves, flooding, are an issue.

11/415 Finance

11/415.1 Policies: To formulate a Donations and Grants Policy.

Request for donations/ grants for the electricity received from Southoe Village Hall for a donation of £800 per year towards the electricity costs.

Agreed to defer to the next meeting when the PC approved the Grants and Donations Policy. **The Clerk** to recirculate the Policy.

11/415.2 To approve Funds transfer which is needed

Proposal to transfer £21K from Natwest reserve a/c to current a/c and then to BoS leaving approx. £5K with Nat West.

Proposal: Proposed by Cllr AE, seconded by Cllr AK, all in favour, it was RESOLVED to transfer the funds as agreed. Carried.

11/415.3 National Wage Increase notification received, to back pay the increase to April 2024, which is to be paid in December for April to Nov 2024 (8 months)

Proposal: Proposed by Cllr AK, seconded by Cllr BB, all in favour, it was RESOLVED to transfer the funds as suggested in the proposal. Carried.

11/415.4 To note Cashbook, Receipts and Payments for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2

Bank statements now obtained, and the accounts will be reconciled to the end of Oct 2024.

11/415.5 To consider Budget and Precept request for 2025.26 - needs to be submitted to HDC by Friday 17th January 2025

One member of the public left the meeting

Suggested increase by 3% which would make Precept of £16,248

11/415.6 To approve November 2024 payments:

Agreed to add the 2nd Invoice No 5 to Gio gardening Services.

Date payment raised	Date debited	Income/Expenditure	Details	Chq/Sol/DD/Trans	Income	Total Expenditure	Balance	V.A.T.
Nov-24							31,731.22	
06/11/2024		Wages	Wages including PAYE	BACS		387.03	31,344.19	
06/11/2024		Expenses	On running cost of PC	BACS		13.40	31,330.79	
06/11/2024		NEST	Pensions	DD		40.74	31,290.05	
06/11/2024		Gio Gardening Services	Grass cutting Church and VH Inv 006	BACS		320.00	30,970.05	
06/11/2024		CambsACRE	Yearly membership	BACS		65.00	30,905.05	10.83
06/11/2024		Community Heart Foundation	Pads	BACS		131.94	30,773.11	21.99
06/11/2024		Rachael Horsman	Empty Medicine Blister pack x 1	BACS		167.20	30,605.91	27.87
06/11/2024		HDC	Grass cutting 13/08 & 05/09	BACS		374.40	30,231.51	62.40
06/11/2024		HDC	Grass cutting 19/9/24 & 24/10/24	BACS		374.40	29,857.11	62.40
06/11/2024		Gio Gardening Services	Grass cutting Church and VH Inv 005	BACS		320.00	29,537.11	
					0.00	2,194.11		185.49

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Proposal: Proposed by Cllr AK, seconded by Cllr BB, all in favour, it was RESOLVED to make the payments listed above. Carried.

Cllrs AK and JT to authorize.

11/416 Website maintenance - <https://southoeandmidloe.wixsite.com/website/the-parish-council>

To consider Email re gov.uk and website, Cllr J Taylor to report

To consider a possibility to apply for the funding for the website, as per NALC correspondence, please view here [Moving to a .gov.uk domain - 50% of funding now allocated - News \(nalc.gov.uk\)](#), to access funding of £100 +VAT to help offset any initial costs. This funding is finite and will not be available in future years. [Register your council's interest by completing this short form](#) and we'll be back in touch with you shortly with a welcome pack and an invitation to join one of our sessions. Everyone is welcome to come along - there is no obligation to move by attending. General enquiries can be sent to parish-helper@domains.gov.uk.

To consider advice obtained from Buckden PC. Awaiting the feedback.

11/417 Policing in the village

Huntingdonshire Police Community Meeting - The next online meeting for Huntingdonshire on Tuesday 3rd December at 7pm. **Cllr AK** to attend.

11/418 Village Defibrillator – update from the person responsible

The pads are nearly out, which we approved tonight. The defib was used in the village. If we only have one set of pads it needs to be taken of line. Could it be approved the set of pads straight away after being used. Agreed to proceed if and when required as there is money in budget.

11/419 Highways matters:

11/419.1 Footpaths in the parish including Ouse Valley Path

Southoe footpaths, to discuss correspondence received from the CCC – discussed.

11/419.2 Trees in the village – No issues raised.

11/419.3 Streetlighting - PC3 in Rectory Lane (just past the play area gate on the left) it is not working.

A lot of parish councils are installing **solar** lights. CIL funding available – there are 13 lights in the village that belong to the PC. Should be looking in the future. **Agenda item.**

11/419.4 PROW – covered earlier.

Notification of two public path orders in Diddington and Southoe and Midloe, Cambridgeshire

CCC - Verge Maintenance Survey – request – 2 areas PC cut on CCC behalf. Agreed to continue what we do.

To note that the **Flooding reported at HIGH STREET**, From Lees Lane junction towards Manor farm. Drains blocked again, reoccurring problem that needs sorting. CCC responded that 'At this time CCC do not feel that any action is necessary'.

11/420 Village Grass cutting – no issues.

11/421 Play Area and Playing Field

11/421.1 The Play area – yearly risk assessment carried out, actions from the report – report produced. **Cllrs BB and AM** walked with the Inspector.

Members offered to sit on the group but the group do not require any help at this point. Wait till the group met.

To discuss a letter received from the residents –

Councillors discussed the request for a Petanque area in detail and agreed that we need to

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know more information about the proposal in a similar manner to previous requests for play area development. One or more councillors are willing to assist the residents in their request for this village amenity. Action to **the Clerk**.

Two outline applications have now been received for the Play Area improvements. The PC to ask the second group to carry out their detailed investigations and report back.

Two Councillors had offered personal assistance to first group, therefore offer to the second similar. **Cllr AM** is willing to assist this second group.

To arrange or approve the hedge cutting of the playground – this is scheduled in the programme to do by HDC, who will let us now when it is forthcoming.

11/421.2 Monthly visual checks, no update.

11/421.3 OUEM Ltd - Southoe Recreation Ground, Lease and Head of Terms – Land registry is registered in PC and Oxford Rural – two names for that section of land. We hold the lease. Wait till **Cllr JT** is present.

11/421.4 Parking at the Playing Fields – stopped using the PF, it is getting wet, agreed to close it. Action to **Cllr AM**.

11/421.5 Playing fields – remove it from the Agenda. No further feedback from the residents who sent the letter of complaint re football games taking place on the field.

11/421.7 Grass cutting – no issues.

11/422 Village Hall update –

To clarify the boundaries that the parish council were originally granted within the original Village Hall plot and deeds held with the solicitors. To agree the situation regarding the land maintained/occupied, the payment for possible Land Registry for the first voluntary title plan of the land to secure the land for the parish as custodian trustees.

Letter from solicitors Wilkinson and Butler received:

- Initial letter, 2 copies
- 2 sets of Terms and Conditions,
- Map of the area

One member of the public left the meeting

They will register the 'hammerhead' section to the PC who are custodian trustees. The deed states PC are the custodian trustees.

Agreed to ask Solicitors who originally did the transfer from Oxford Trust.

It is PC understanding that PC own the land and VH committee / trustees own the Hall. VH have a different understanding.

One member of the public re-joined the meeting

This matter to be confirmed. Look at the deeds and both parties get understanding as it can be read differently.

Cannot register the land as the deeds are being read differently.

Agreed to ask solicitor re the legal perspective. Action **Cllr BB** to ask the solicitor he knows

Proposal: Proposed by Cllr BB, seconded by Cllr AK, all in favour, it was RESOLVED to seek free advice. Carried.

The Clerk to send the electronic copies of certified deeds to Cllr BB.

According to the deeds, PC should be presented VH accounts. VH chairman agreed to provide.

11/423 Update on the Hub project

The Hub are looking at some new technology development for the heating, carbon neutral

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which could bring the price down. Once costed will have a meeting in the New Year to present what they are doing.

Grants for Christmas tree received.

11/424 Church & Burial Matters.

11/424.1 To review Cemetery Fees – not reviewed since 2019. Looked at Lt Paxton. From Jan 2025 need to update the fees. At Dec PC with the proposal. **Cllr AM** to circulate what Diocese of Ely charges.

11/424.2 Consider Closed churchyard situation maintenance plan and Parish survey results

PC briefly discussed the prospected Churchyard Wildlife Stewardship programme and it was felt that the PC needed to understand the process in more detail as soon as possible so that they could get things in place for the cutting contractor or go out to tender early in January, so that the contacts are in place ready for the growing season. Therefore, it was suggested that the Churchyard Wildlife Stewardship programme be put on as an agenda item for the December 4th meeting to be discussed.

A big thank you expressed to volunteers for the tidying up of the churchyard.

Closure of the Churchyard – Cllr Ellmer updated on the vandalism in and around the church but confirmed that the case was complex and the advice from the investigating police officer was that no further information or comment should be given at this time. The situation is being monitored.

Agreed to respond to the resident who expressed comments re the churchyard survey. After due research and investigations, PC have found the Parish council were transferred in the 1970's the land we now know as the Southoe cemetery. Thus, we hold the title deeds of the land on behalf of the residents of the parish. These Deeds are registered with the Land registry and we have a digital copy and a map. Unfortunately, we do not have the minutes books from that time, so we have no idea of the comments made then.

11/425 Training - Training can be booked via: www.bookwhen.com/capalc

[Bring the info from the training to December.](#)

11/426 To note Correspondence received (other than agenda items)

East Anglian Air Ambulance request and poster for display

HDC's Town & Parish Councils Newsletter for October 2024. [Town & Parish Council Newsletter - October 2024](#)

Cambridgeshire matters view [here](#)

HDC: Christmas and New Year Waste Collection Arrangements

HDC Town and Parish Forum 2024 slides and presentations have been circulated to Cllrs after the conference Cllr AM and the Clerk attended in October

LHI application window for the 2025 / 2026 funding round has now reopened. The window will remain open until Friday 10th January at 17:00PM.

More information can be found on our website at the following:

- **Local Highway Improvement home page, measures and indicative costs –** [Local Highway Improvement funding | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)
- **Application form and associated guidance –** [Applying for a Local Highway Improvement \(LHI\) | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

CPRE meeting on 14th Nov at 7.30pm at 7.30pm, email; office@cprecambs.org.uk

11/427 Councillors' Questions

Please, note that no decisions can lawfully be made under this item. Business must be specified therefore the Council cannot lawfully raise matters for decision.

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We have been asked about the Village Sign again – 1st raised on 5th Oct 2016. In Jan 2027 – Village Sign issue raised but no further outcome received. Chair resigned. 5th Apr still nothing – vice chair covering. Was not highlighted again. Seems to be a lot of interest in it. Suggestion – asking for a proposal with costings as soon as possible. Could CIL funding be used? **Cllr AM and the Clerk** to prepare the reply.

Cllr AK asked re the gates and the small plaque to be investigated.

Risk Register – **Cllr AK** will carry this out for December 2024 meeting.

11/428 Date of the Next Meeting: Wed 4 December 2024 at 7pm at the Village Hall

Meeting finished at 9.54pm

Appendix 1

Southoe District Councillors Report

Dear Residents and Parish Councillors,

This month, I thought that it would be helpful to address the recent media reports regarding the means testing of winter fuel payments and its implications for our local community.

Regardless of our opinions on the new government's means testing of winter fuel payments, Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves are unlikely to change their stance due to the motion against it at HDC's October Council Meeting. Most importantly, HDC can only control the limited services it provides. The motion from the Conservative group was part of country-wide political initiative and, in my opinion, mixing local and national politics.

It seems easy to forget that the Conservatives lost over 300 councillors back in May. Bringing this bundled motion to Council was a Westminster manoeuvre. It seems that our Westminster Conservative politicians continue to let their local government councillors bear the brunt of their political strategies. We lost some good Tory councillors back in May because behaviour like this encourages the public to vote along party lines rather than for their best local representatives. In my opinion mixing national and local politics is unwise.

I think that we can all agree from a community perspective it's important to encourage those who are entitled to claim pension credit to do so, as it is a gateway payment to winter fuel allowance. To claim Pension Credit, residents can either:

Claim online: Visit the GOV.UK Pension Credit page and apply online if you already claim State Pension and there aren't any children or young people included in your claim.

Call the Pension Credit claim line: Call 0800 99 1234 (textphone 0800 169 0133) and they can fill in the application for you over the phone. Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm.

Apply by post: Print out and fill in the Pension Credit claim form or call the claim line to request a form. Send the claim form to the Pension Service. You don't need a postcode or a stamp.

I hope we can work together to ensure our local governance remains focused on the needs of the community that the district council can directly control.

Flooding Update

I continue to support the Parish Council in their efforts to improve flood protection for the village. This has included our success in bringing together Anglian Water, HDC and LLFA to discuss the groundwater and sewage situation in Southoe. I am hoping that this talking will lead to far more action. Having walked the flood sites with our Parish Council Chair I am convinced that more can be done.

Riparian ownership is a key challenge, and I am lobbying at HDC to ensure that riparian owners are identified, and their responsibilities are communicated to them, particularly where there is a likely risk of flooding.

Riparian Rights and Ownership: A Summary

Riparian rights refer to the legal rights and responsibilities of landowners whose property adjoins a natural watercourse, such as a river, stream, or ditch. These rights are established in UK law and include:

- **Right of Flow:** Riparian owners have the right to the natural flow of water onto or under their land from neighbouring properties. They must allow water to flow naturally and cannot obstruct it.
- **Water Use:** Riparian owners can use the water for domestic purposes such as drinking and washing, up to 20 cubic metres (20,000 litres) per day, without needing a licence. They can also

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use the water for certain activities connected to the land, such as fishing and mooring.

- **Ownership:** Riparian owners typically own the stretch of watercourse that runs on or underneath their land, up to its centre. However, they do not own the water itself.
- **Responsibilities:** Riparian owners are responsible for maintaining the watercourse, which includes removing blockages, fallen trees, or overhanging branches, and ensuring that the watercourse is not polluted.

Effective management of riparian rights is crucial for flood risk management and protecting the environment. By identifying and communicating the responsibilities of riparian owners, we can work towards a more comprehensive and multi-agency approach to addressing annual winter flooding in our district.

Importance of Scrutiny at Huntingdonshire District Council

Before my resignation from Cabinet, I indirectly initiated an LGA peer review of some of our council's governance processes. I was motivated by a growing concern over HDC's governance processes, one of which is scrutiny. Recent training sessions have highlighted that our scrutiny process has been largely ineffective for many years, starting well before the present administration.

One critical issue identified is that the agenda has been predominantly set by officers. This practice has resulted in every decision made by the council being routed through the committee. While this may appear thorough at first glance, it has often prevented the committee from scrutinising issues of greater importance to our residents.

It's imperative to address these inefficiencies to ensure our scrutiny process genuinely serves the interests of our community. Effective scrutiny is essential for transparent and accountable governance, and I remain committed to advocating for improvements in this area.

To strengthen the link between the community and the scrutiny process, residents are encouraged to suggest topics for scrutiny. This initiative allows community members to actively participate and highlight issues that matter most to them, ensuring that our scrutiny process remains relevant and effective in addressing local concerns.

In support of Southoe, one pressing issue is the need for a multi-agency approach to the annual winter flooding and sewage problems. I would support requests from residents and/or the Parish Council to scrutinise this or other areas of concern. It's important to note that a key criterion for a topic to be included on the O&S agenda is that it must have a cross-district impact.

Wishing you well,

Martin

Martin Hassall

District Councillor for Buckden, Diddington and Southoe

Phone: 07480 798 342 - Email: martin.hassall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk