



HEATH & REACH PARISH COUNCIL



Draft Minutes

Draft Minutes of the meeting of the Full Parish Council held on Monday 1st September 2025 at 7.00pm at The Village Barn, Eastern Way, Heath & Reach

Signed – S D Grierson-Hill

09.25.0 INTRODUCTION:

- a) Meeting attendees: *Cllrs. Reading (CR), Bevan (JB), Inns (AI), Ellis (TE), White (SW), Milne (LM)*
- b) Apologies for absence: *Cllrs. Smith & Webb.*
- c) Absentees: None.

09.25.1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: *Cllr. White agenda item 09.25.7g).*

09.25.2 APPROVAL OF PARISH COUNCIL/COMMITTEE MINUTES:

- a) Approval of full Parish Council minutes for July 2025: *Approved and signed by Cllr. Reading.*

09.25.3

PUBLIC FORUM – members of the public have a cumulative 15 minutes to address the Parish Council. No resolutions other than those on the agenda can be resolved from items raised in the public forum.

Five members of the public present (MOP) Issues raised included:

Concern over narrow pavement between 6 & 12 Birds Hill, increase in traffic through village and speeding of vehicles, bus service changes, disappointment in police response following May PC meeting, flooding on corner of Woburn Road and Birds Hill. One resident had written to Alex Mayer MP regarding several of the above issues and has just received a response but only regarding the revised bus service. Concerns were noted about the limited Police presence in the village, especially after the FPC meeting in May where police indicated they would increase monitoring of speeding and parking near the Co-Op. CR pointed out that police have been present and a mobile traffic warden is in place.

The flooding on the corner of Birds Hill and Woburn Road caused by blocked drains is a safety issue. Cars are traveling on wrong side of road, facing oncoming traffic to bypass the pool of water. Cllr. Mark Versallion advised he continues to talk with CBC regarding the flooding to ensure the same problems do not occur as last year. CBC do not have the funds to carry out more regular gulley cleans than the current 3-year programme. Linslade Road is an exception to the rule, and there was a new soakaway installed with drains cleared last year. TE pointed out that the time frame should not be a blanket policy, such places as Leighton Buzzard town centre cannot be considered to have the same need as Heath and Reach, a village that is surrounded by sand quarries.

CR acknowledged the continued issues and pointed out that traffic calming will be discussed further down the agenda.

CR to speak to Police Liaison Officer regarding safety issues following flooding & clerk to write to CBC regarding an increased effort in drain clearing.

MOP (NS) confirmed he has booked Heath Band for Friday 19th December for Carols on the Green.

The tree planted for the Queens platinum celebrations has not flowered this year, possibly due to position of tree on slope and water draining away. NS to seek some professional advice.



HEATH & REACH PARISH COUNCIL



09.25.4

PARISH COUNCIL REPORTS:

a)

CBC Councillor Mark Versallion (MV) report:

During the Public Forum, Councillor Mark Versallion (MV) actively participated in discussions, addressing several concerns raised by members of the public.

Three items of concern to himself are:

1. Flooding: *MV is holding Council (CBC) to account. He is in the forefront and has tabled a motion at full Council in September about the flooding crisis. His suggestion to residents affected is to report such incidents on 'FixmyStreet.' Whilst he is aware it will not necessarily fix the issue it is a way of creating an audit trail.*

2. Traffic calming: *MV is doing everything humanly possible to get CBC to do something meaningful. When original humps were put in back in 2013, Amey agreed to come back a decade later and do more. Unfortunately, there have been too many changes since then at CBC including financial problems, political changes and three or four changes of contractors. The option of average speed cameras is exhausted; CBC will not allow PC to put up cameras on their land. Five years ago, MV met with Highways face to face in village and it was recognised Woburn Road alongside Red Lion Court is too wide. Path widening was suggested but no plans have been drawn up. Path widening alongside the Church and towards Brickhill Road is still planned, possibly in the Autumn. Clerk asked MV to confirm this matter.*

Proposed list of cosmetic changes for the village is pointless. More raised tables, pinch points and build out areas will have more of an effect. MV to meet with CBC Highways to discuss possible options.

3. Reduced bus service: *MV stated that like everyone else he only learnt about the cancellation of the X4 late on a Friday afternoon at end of July. MV is consulting with Adrian Hardy (transport at CBC). It was noted that Arriva has withdrawn its bus service, citing financial non-viability as the reason for the cancellation. The service was discontinued because it was not generating sufficient income to cover its operational costs. Red Rose bus service was able to secure national funding. However, it should be noted that this financial support is only guaranteed for a period of twelve months. Without ongoing funding beyond this period, the operation of the service remains uncertain.*

CR asked for MV to provide details for next meeting. MV unable to attend but will email Clerk prior to meeting.

b)

Clerks report: Clerk distributed report to PC members prior to meeting via email.

09.25.5

MATTERS ARISING (for info only):

a)

Traffic Calming update: *The official view of CBC and the police are that there is no speeding problem through the village. Traffic division set up two sensors, (they do not accept PC data) with the most recent one opposite The Heath Inn pub. The static cameras provided evidence of an average speed of 30-34mph coming through village. TE noted that whilst volunteering on Speedwatch previously, an average of 200 vehicles would pass through with maybe 14 cars travelling over 35mph (7%).*

As already confirmed CBC will not allow average speed cameras. CR said the money put aside for traffic calming needs to be spent and if there is an opportunity for physical slow down options PC need to look at it. Cosmetic changes such as repainting lines, village entry points, remarking dragons' teeth and re-instating worn out antiskid does not qualify as traffic calming. SW suggested the money put aside for cosmetic work is re-directed towards some better road safety.

LM asked if the number of children in village has changed over the years, as she is concerned about lack of safe crossing for families. CR said a zebra crossing by Red Lion Court would be useful. The emphasis needs to be moving towards road safety.



HEATH & REACH PARISH COUNCIL



- b) **Speed Watch update:** *A member of the village has now passed checks with the police and will start up Speed Watch shortly. He is currently checking all equipment and speaking to volunteers.*
- c) **Extension of lease agreement on Bryants Lane car park & pavilion:** *The land and car park agreements have been signed and sent to AWE for signing. The pavilion draft lease is finalised and sent for AWE's approval. TE asked that all three agreements be shared with new members who were not on PC during initial discussions. The Clerk will forward them on.*
- d) **Poppy display update from Heath Barn Birds WI.** *HBBWI confirmed they have many knitted poppies and plan to display on November 7th and leave in place for 7 to 10 days. The display will be on the iron works of the pumphouse, and grass area of Heath Green as agreed at a previous meeting agenda item 02.25.7a.*
- e) **Millennium Gardens claim following motoring incident:** *Claim is still with the MIB (Motor Insurance Bureau).*

09.25.6

Planning & Environment:

- a) **CB/25/02339/FULL – Land off Eastern Way.** Improvements to existing access to include replacement of existing fencing and gates and creation of a new internal track: *The Parish Council considered the relevant planning application, and a formal vote was taken. The outcome was a unanimous OBJECTION to the proposal, indicating that all members present were in agreement in opposing the application.*
- b) **CB/TCA/25/00362 – 9Lanes End.** Fell Cyprus Tree within front garden, previously topped, poorly shaped specimen – **NO COMMENT.**
- c) **CB/25/02223/FULL – Double Arches mobile home park.** Revised planning application further to CB/23/01630/FULL and APP/P0240/W/24/335531 to include additional four travelling showman pitches, erection of courtyard building for maintenance of fairground equipment together retention of existing hardstanding and proposed landscape & biodiversity enhancements – **NO COMMENT.**
MV has called this application into Committee.
- d) **Public consultation response regarding new homes southeast of Vandyke Road.** *The Parish Council wishes to formally note that its only comment relates to the extremely hazardous nature of the current junction with Shenley Hill Road. It is recommended that any future planning should consider significant improvements to address the safety concerns. Clerk to respond accordingly prior to 15th September – IT WAS AGREED.*
- e) **CB/25/02340/FULL - Stone Lane Quarry.** Installation of a solar array comprising ground mounted fixed tilt bifacial solar panels; string inverters; transformer; substation; underground cables and conduits; perimeter fence; temporary construction compound and associated infrastructure and planting scheme: *Concern was raised over the flooding from the quarry into Bryants Lane, Clerk to request some S106 money is put by to improve the ditches. One member abstained from voting otherwise a NO COMMENT vote was passed.*
- f) **CB/25/02520/VOC Glascoed, Reach Lane:** Change approval plan no DD 24/093.2 to DD 24/093.3 – **NO COMMENT.**



09.25.7 MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION & RESOLUTION (where possible)

- a) **Quarry work to Reach Green.** Condition 7 of planning application CB/19/01753/MW requires work to a small area of Reach Green. Works involved would see the removal of a small area within Reach Green to allow for a more effective turning circle for the lorries when exiting the quarry. During the planning application, process support was granted by the Parish Council for this work, and it was contingent on the provision of a new pavement to be built down the side of Heath Inn car park connecting to the existing pavement on Woburn Road and the full restoration of Reach Green once the operation at the quarry ceases. Due to the change in PC members since originally discussed, quarry has asked PC for formal written consent for work to be carried out – IT WAS AGREED.
- b) **Local plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategy.** TE attended a meeting regarding this and reported not much emphasis was put on the LNRS. A survey can be completed online and members of the public are encouraged to do so www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/lnrs.
- c) **Renewal of clock tower service agreement.** Current service agreement has expired. Smiths of Derby have offered the following service for 2026-2028: Payment in advance for full 3 years - £993.00 plus VAT. Annual payment £364.00 plus VAT: PC considered any saving to be taken. The 3 years in advance payment was accepted – IT WAS AGREED.
- d) **Planning nuts and bolts training session.** Cllrs. Ellis, Reading & White wish to attend training session. 24th September £35.00 per attendee, £105 total – IT WAS AGREED.
- e) **CPRE greenbelt petition.** Bedfordshire's Green Belt remains under constant pressure. Changes to recent planning legislation are making it easier for developers to secure planning permissions within the Green Belt. CPRE Hertfordshire have launched a petition which calls on the Government to urgently amend the definition of 'grey belt' to uphold vital Green Belt protection: Clerk to sign on behalf of PC. Members of the Public who wish to sign the petition can search CPRE website 'save our greenbelt – sign the petition.'
- f) **Notice board Thrift Road.** TM unable to remove. Clerk is speaking with another contractor who hopes to remove it before next meeting.
- g) **Toad patrol grant.** SW left the meeting during this discussion. Patrol Manager has applied for a grant of £260.04 to cover costs of new signage due to theft and vandalism of original signs. IT WAS AGREED.
- h) **Bus service.** H & R have recently found out that the current X4 service that runs north and south of the village is to be stopped. Details of the replacement service to be provided by CBC, and leaflet dropped to all residential properties in the village.
- i) **Clerks pay rise** (in line with NJC for Local Government Services) – IT WAS AGREED.
- j) **Hiring of Bryants Lane Sports Field.** Heath FC has requested to use the grass sports field for training and matches, as well as access to the changing rooms. The club will be responsible for maintaining the grass area during their use. The Clerk will arrange a deep clean of the changing facilities and ensure that electricity is reinstated in the main changing room. To provide additional amenities, a second changing room will be created by clearing one of the existing containers. It is noted that this second container currently has no electricity or benches, and Heath FC is aware of these limitations. Heath FC will be required to sign a 'permission to use' agreement, which will be valid



HEATH & REACH PARISH COUNCIL



for one year - IT WAS AGREED.

k) Millenium Gardens –future maintenance of area.

TE presented several options for low-maintenance plants. AI requested that wildflowers not be used, as their seeds tend to drift onto the neighbouring allotment. The Clerk will reach out to the Scouts to explore the possibility of allocating a section of the land for a bug hotel.

Before any expenditures or plant selections are finalised, the Parish Council will wait for the insurance claim process related to the recent crash to be completed. The outcome will determine the available budget for this project.

09.25.8 FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION:

- a) Treasurers: £8,843.73 TBC Savings: £ 382.97
32 day notice account: £ 67,284.56 Unity Bank: £ 47,736.59

	August	September
b) Payments:		
Markland Gardens	£ 425.00	£ 450.00
Reynold Landscapes (Monthly grass cutting)	£ 684.00	£1,279.20
Sue Grierson-Hill	£1,054.62	£1,054.82
Sue Grierson-Hill (Expenses)	£ 21.54	£ 35.90
Community Heartbeat	0	£ 20.34
BATPC	0	£ 105.00
One Group	£ 72.00	£ 72.00
Simplink	£ 425.00	0
Lock Services	0	£ 122.50

c) Direct debits/Standing orders:

Bri Gas (Bryants Lane)	£ 84.39	£ 102.20
Bri Gas (Clock tower)	£ 25.49	£ 33.32
Litter picker (Bryants Lane)	£ 61.05	£ 61.05
Anglian Water	£ 45.00	£ 45.00
NEST Pension	£ 16.87	£ 16.87
Waste Managed	£ 117.75	£ 117.75

09.25.9 AOB/ Items to go on next agenda:

Future of Co-op (Community asset)

09.25.10 Date of next meeting: 6th October 2025

Meeting closed at: 8.38pm