

WHITCHURCH ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish meeting of Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council on Monday 7th January 2013 at the Village Hall.

Present:

Cllr. Vincent Aldridge, Lindsay Austin, Cllr. Keith Brooks Vice Chairman,(acting Chairman)
Cllr. Jim Donahue, Cllr. Lindsay Austin, Cllr. Nigel Grove, Jenny Welham Parish Clerk.

In Attendance – District Cllr. Pearl Slater, County Cllr. Dave Sexon, Richard Wingfield, Stephen Trinder, Sally Woolhouse, several members from WOTHABS.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Harry Butterworth Chairman.

2. Declarations of interest.

Councillors are asked to declare any personal interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

None.

3. Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. – Presentation by Cynth Napper from Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum.

Cynthia gave a 20 minute presentation, the slides will be circulated by the Clerk to all present when received.

The WOTHABS members then left the meeting.

4. Public Forum – Opportunity for members of the public to address the Parish Council.

None.

5. Agree Minutes of Annual PC Meeting 5th December 2012.

Approved.

6. County Councillor Report.

Cllr. Sexon reported that OCC had received notification from Government that further cutbacks to budgets will be required over the next 2 years, the amount will be in the region of a further 17 million pounds. He suspects that the cuts will come from Highways, The Area Stewardship will be cut, he complimented all the hard work that our Area Steward Keith Stenning had carried out on behalf of the parishes. Grants such as the Big Society funds will go, although cuts to Adult Services will try to be held back he again feels that this area will also be targeted to achieve the savings.

He advised that OCC will likely increase the council tax. Also pressure will be put onto councils to use their reserve funds if they have any.

Some good news the Big Society grant of £2K for the Hardwick Rd project has been granted, however OCC may install the passing places for the PC which would mean that the grant will not be paid. Cllr Sexon will update in the next few weeks.

He advised that he will not be standing for re election in May and will therefore no longer be our County Councillor.

7. District Councillor Report.

Cllr. Slater reported that the last 3 months had been very busy at SODC.

The council tax will be reduced by 2.5% for the upcoming year and their finances are in good order. She reported that Anne Ducker, David Buckle and the financial team were responsible for the good work done in this area.

The SODC Core Strategy has now been finalised, there will be no impact to Whitchurch on Thames as the village is not earmarked for any development in the strategy.

The Boundary Commission report has been issued and Whitchurch on Thames will be in one ward with Mapledurham, and Kidmore End with one District Councillor.

8. Traffic & Pavements Group – report & update.

Richard Wingfield reported the following,

Some current activities:

- **High Street pedestrian safety.** Following discussions with OCC, arranged by Dave Sexon, the proposed dropped kerb has been constructed in the pavement opposite the Greyhound. This is to help mothers with school children. A northwards extension of the no-parking white line, to improve the sightline, is expected to follow.
- **High Street passing refuge for cars.** OCC has also agreed TAPAG's proposal that there should be a short no-parking white line painted on each side of the farm entrance in the middle part of the High Street, in order to create a second space for north-bound cars to pull into when the parking is heavy.
- **Trimming of hedges.** After an unusually active growing season most of the obstructive hedge growth has been cut back, either by requests to householders or directly. The Eastfield Lane narrows still needs attention as the Greyhound's hedge and growth alongside the Prospect House wall opposite both reduce the available width for pedestrians.
- **Surface defects.** TAPAG continues to monitor and report potholes and other defects. John Southey (Tel 984 1802) keeps an *ad hoc* list of reports and action taken. Unblocking of drains has been successfully pursued.

9. Village Hall Report

Stephen Trinder reported,

Last Meeting on 10 December 2012.

Hall's business proceeding satisfactorily, with revenue slightly above previous year, two new hirers offsetting the demise of the Young Riparians. Costs have been generally stable, with gas and electricity also constant.

Some hirers are failing to leave the hall in a clean state, notably brushing the floor, and a letter is to be sent to all reminding them that this is a condition of hire. New brushes will be provided for the purpose.

Despite regular washing, it is proving difficult to guarantee clean drying up cloths. This is considered potentially unhygienic and those using the servery will be asked to provide their own in future. The hall will supply disposable cloths as a back up.

Following the departure of the Young Riparians, the storage has been reallocated, accommodating the Camera Club more securely in one cupboard and making provision for the Toddlers and Pilates groups.

10. Planning

No new applications.

One sent by the Clerk pre Christmas had only just been received and therefore the PC were too late to respond, it was not contentious and the recommendation would have been approve.

11. Village Green Committee

Cllr. Austin reported,

The quote from Swallow Developments for the soak away in the car park was more expensive than first discussed, it came in at £2350 + Vat. It was agreed not to proceed with this work at the present time.

The iron fencing specified in the planning conditions has been changed to post and rail to reduce costs to the PC, this work needs to be discussed and carried out, Cllr Austin suggested a site visit with Swallow to finalise this.

All the hedge plants have been received and the planting weekend will be 12/13th January, volunteers have already put their names forward, thanks to Sally Woodhouse (WOTHABS) for leading this for the PC.

The pre Christmas flyers distributed to residents have received a reasonable response with people pledging to sponsor trees and a couple of benches.

The Junior football is looking good and will be useable in the Spring.

12. Finance – Approve Payments **APPROVED.** To note receipts.

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Cheque Ref</u>	<u>Amount</u> <u>Paid</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
11/12/2012	K. Brooks	65	£40	Glass for phone box
11/12/2012	SODC	66	£98	Dog Bins April to Sept 12
20/12/2012	H. Butterworth	67	£36	Wine for Bulletin Distributors
20/12/2012	British Hardwood Tree Nursery	68	£178	Tree guards, canes, stakes.
28/12/2012	Environment Agency	69	£50	Commercial Accom Frontage chrg
02/01/2013	Thames Water Utilities Ltd	70	£68	Water rates 13 Sept-19 Dec 12
07/01/2013	Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd	71	£125	Annual maintenance
07/01/2013	NSALG	72	£368	Allotment rental charge
07/01/2013	Penwood Nurseries	73	£397	Trees for Village Green
07/01/2013	Nova Press	74	£367	Bulletin

Total £1,726
Payments

To Note Receipts

£200.00 Received so far in sponsorship of Trees for the Village Green.

13. Dispensation Forms for councillors with pecuniary Interests – agree responsibility for granting dispensation.

It was agreed that the Clerk should grant the dispensation for a period of 3 years, the maximum allowed is 4 years. The forms were circulated and signed.

14. Annual Precept 2013/14 Confirm figure and sign off.

The figure was agreed as £25850.00 for FY 2013/14 and signed off by Cllr Brooks Vice Chairman who was acting chair at the meeting.

15. Environment Group Report

Cllr. Brooks reported,

1. New litter waste bin and dog waste bin installed at the bottom of the Cut. Several people have commented on the more satisfactory positioning of the litterbin and also the presence of a dog waste bin where there was none before. In fact there seems to be less dog mess in the Cut as a result of this.
2. The Mount grass continues to grow and I have been clearing leaves away from the area in order to let light have access to the grass and encourage growth.
3. Following damage to the phone box by unknown persons I replaced several panes of glass with toughened glass paid for by the Parish Council, which came to £40.
4. Whilst replacing the glass removed debris from the entrance to Manor Road which had been reported to BIFFA but no action on their part. The small stones and shingle were used to fill in a hole on the corner of Manor Road caused by vehicles mounting the pavement.
5. I joined the committee for the Village Green last year and went to the November Meeting where we discussed finances and the next jobs to be done including planting and fencing as well as finances.
6. We have started to plant trees and shrubs and just before Christmas myself, John Southey, Sally Woolhouse, James, Wills, Gill Goodwin and Martin Parnham planted the first 20 of 500. This month we hope to plant more on the 12th and 13th and with this in mind Stephen and myself delivered leaflets to all houses in the village giving details of the time and place and requesting help in planting and also sponsorship of plants.
7. There is a another workshop for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan being run by CPRE at Dorchester on Thames Village Hall on Tuesday 5th February. Despite the lack of development earmarked for our village I think we should attend in case there are any interesting points relevant to us. So I shall be looking into whether it is important or not.
8. In my capacity as NHW co-ordinator I will be meeting Anthony Stansfeld our new Police and Crime Commissioner. There is a one-day meeting at the Kassam Stadium in Oxford on the 22nd January. This will be important for Whitchurch as it will give an insight into how best we make use of the new post to ensure our village continues to be a secure and safe place to live.

16. Sustainability and Allotment Report

Allotments:

The PC has agreed and signed the NSALG is up for 21 year renewal this year. PC needs to pay £367.90 annual fee that was due October 1.

Jenny is investigating Public liability insurance covers the allotments. WDAS fee now due to PC. Proposing 25% of NSALG fee to continue. While the NSLAG uses the majority of the allotments land, the Parish Council is only requesting that the WDAS pay 25% of the total fee to compensate WDAS for taking primary responsibility for managing and maintaining the Allotments as defined in the agreement and agreeing to the principles in the agreement.

Request Council to agree to the draft terms proposed to send the WDAS for agreement by the annual meeting in March. (see attached).

Following this report Cllr. Aldridge stated that he had an issue with the figures and that the PC were in fact subsidising the allotments as the rentals did not cover the cost of the annual lease. He stated that the PC do not subsidise any other groups in the village and therefore the rentals should cover the costs. The rental costs would need to increase by approximately £3 per plot to cover this all felt that this increase was minimal.

A discussion followed and it was agreed by Council that the plot rentals should cover the lease cost annually. Cllr. Donahue to talk to the WDAS committee and impart this information. Clerk to update regarding the public liability insurance.

Whitchurch Maze Committee

Maze upgrade costs estimated to be approximately £1400:

- Labour to upgrade bricks: £450
- Small Skip Hire: £200
- Pedestal upgrade £150
- 39 engraved brick replacement: £293
- 111 plain brick replacement: £278
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If 100 new bricks are sold at £20 each, there is still a slight shortfall in the required funding, but close enough to proceed with brick sales on this basis. Will continue to work with Maze Committee and Whitchurch Society to:

- Issue formal communications to sell new bricks at £20 each with a target of selling at least 100 by mid-April with a May installation.
- Request Whitchurch Society resolve funding issue to release some funds from previous maze fundraising.

Hardwick Road Verges Project: Waiting for outcome of 'Big Society fund' proposal that was submitted via the Parish Council.

Chilterns Sustainable Development Fund but not approved, but other TOE2 finding being sought for grants of up to £5,000 for projects which:

Promote and improve biodiversity (eg; wildlife surveys, practical habitat management, habitat creation)

Improve access to green spaces (eg; replacing stiles with gates, surface improvements, creating new links and encouraging safe routes to schools and other local facilities)

17. Other Matters for Chairman.

Cllr Austin had two matters,

Sale of the strip on Land in Manor Road to Resident. The Clerk had established that the strip did belong to the PC and had advised the Chairman accordingly. No further update had been received. All agreed that it was not in the PC's interest to sell strips of verge beside footpaths and that this would set a precedent for other residents wishing to buy PC owned land adjacent to their properties, therefore the Council agreed the sale will be declined. Clerk to liaise with the Chairman re the communication.

Vacancy for a Parish Councillor. – There is still a vacancy, the Clerk has received no instruction from the Chairman regarding this so nothing has been advertised. The PC agreed that the vacancy should be posted on the village website and also put in the next Bulletin.

18. Note date of next Meeting Monday 4th March 2013.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm

Signed.....Chairman/Date.....