

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting held in ‘The Old Stables’, Monday 9th January 2017, commencing at 8.00pm.

PRESENT

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| Chairman | Keith Brooks |
| Vice-Chairman | Jim Donahue |
| Councillors | Dave Bowen Rachel Hatcher Denise Huxtable Jon Steward |
| Clerk | Felipa House |

Public:
Richard Wingfield, Maureen Stovell.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr. Hart, Cllr. Bulmer & Cllr. Simister.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Public forum Opportunity for members of the public to address the Council. With the permission of the Chairman, the public may also speak about specific items of business as they arise.

Maureen Stovell was representing her teenage daughter, who had written to the Council requesting provision of a skate park on the village green. This would be on the left-hand side of the cricket net, incorporating the mound of dirt already there, & approximately 10 x 2m. Maureen had briefly investigated & found that the cost would be about £500 per m². Cllr. Donahue raised the point that in the last village survey there was limited support for a skatepark & several negative comments. The Council also raised the idea of a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) for the area, which could include a basketball hoop. Maureen stated that she would be very happy to get involved & also fundraise, which could involve the children as well as the local community.

Maureen also raised the issue of parking & traffic in the High Street & asked what could be done. Cllr. Hatcher explained that a new working group had been set up to look at all traffic & parking issues in the village & invited Maureen to join. She agreed to this & has been added to the group.

4. Agree minutes of Parish Council meeting 5th December 2016

These were approved as a true record.

5. District councillor’s report

Cllr. Simister was not present.

6. County councillor’s report

Cllr. Bulmer was not present but circulated his report after the meeting. This included details of a new regional adoption agency, the launch of a new online flooding ‘toolkit’, the home library volunteer

service, grant funding for 'open access' children's services, the publication of the health inequalities commission report & the opening of the link between Oxford Parkway & the city centre.

7. Planning

P16/S4194/LB, Walliscote Cottage, High Street. Garage conversion & first-floor alterations. The Council unanimously agreed to submit 'No strong views' on the basis that the changes would be in keeping with the character of the village. It was presumed that the alterations made would be appropriate for the house & conservation area.

P16/S4157/FUL, Eastfield House, Eastfield Lane. Erection of gas & electricity meter housing; to replace previous summer house. This would be at the front of Eastfield House on the right. The Council unanimously agreed to submit 'No strong views'.

8. Finance Approve payments/note receipts

Monthly salary for the Clerk

Expenses for the Clerk for postage stamps (£6.60)

Payment to St. Mary's Whitchurch PCC for use of The Old Stables (£20)

Payment to Goring Heath Parish Council for Remembrance Day bugler (£30)

Invoice from Rialtas for annual accounting software maintenance (£135.60).

The Clerk recommended that no increase be made to the precept due to the current reserves held by the Council. This was unanimously approved by the Council. The Clerk will therefore request a precept of £25,773 for 2017/18.

The councillors put forward their ideas for projects they would like to see carried out in the village during the next financial year. These include scalplings along Muddy Lane from the allotment gates to the school gates, resurfacing of the pavement in Hardwick Road & a footpath along Hardwick Road to Hardwick Estate. The Clerk will earmark reserves of £10,000 for renovation & repairs to the village hall, £5,000 for planning costs for the new sports pavilion, £5,000 for Neighbourhood Plan costs, £15,000 for pavement repairs, £10,000 for street lights & £10,000 for a new recreation area. The budget will remain approximately as it is for the current financial year, taking in to account revised costs.

9. Village green

Following the public forum the Council unanimously agreed that Maureen Stovell should be asked to investigate the MUGA/skatepark ideas further & asked her to return next month with some provisional plans & costings plans. Cllr. Bowen will find out about the contractors used for the new Henley skate park & Richard will put an article on the website asking for comments. The Clerk will investigate the insurance cover ramifications were this development to proceed.

2 quotes have been obtained to remove the large overhanging boughs near the entrance to the school. Cllr. Steward will liaise with Kings Tree Services to arrange this as a matter of urgency.

The Clerk has obtained legal advice regarding OCC's draft heads of terms regarding the school's use of the village green. The appropriate licence would cost approximately £500 to draft. As OCC are requesting this document the Council felt that they should pay these costs. The Clerk will liaise.

Cllr. Brooks received an email from Peter Seager. He would like to plant a tree in memory of his parents, who lived in the village for many years. Cllr. Brooks will forward this request to the VGWG, so that they can determine the correct place for this tree. Cllr. Steward volunteered to plant it.

Cllr. Donahue stated that the VGWG would review the sports pavilion design & oversee its progress. A separate working group is needed in order to obtain costs, designs & grants.

Cllr. Steward volunteered to mow the village green during the cricket season. The Clerk is trying to find a new maintenance contractor.

10. TAPAG (Traffic and Parking Action Group)

The inaugural meeting in December was attended by Cllr. Hatcher, Cllr. Steward & Diana Smith. The residents' issues list was discussed, as well as all potential future plans; actions & priorities were drawn from these discussions. These included parking, pavements & the speed of traffic. (A full list of ideas & issues will be included in the minutes, which will be published on the website).

Recommendations from this group will feed in to the village plan. The group will liaise with SODC regarding some of the issues &, if necessary, engage independent consultants, for which there will be a cost. Quick wins were felt to be the Castrol sign for lorries, tidying up vegetation around the village to improve visibility & clearing soakaways. Cllr. Hatcher will revive the SpeedWatch campaign & write an article for the website, which will reiterate the importance of reporting overweight lorries. She will also prepare a survey for the website asking who has parking issues.

Richard mentioned that there is usually leaf sweeping/removal along Hardwick Road but that this has not yet happened. Cllr. Hatcher will investigate.

11. Village hall refurbishment project

As it is currently not feasible to sell the village hall, Cllr. Brooks asked Cllr. Steward to lead the project to refurbish it. Cllr. Steward will contact current hall users & ask for their opinions. He will also contact surveyors for quotes on the general condition of the building. Cllr. Hatcher will finalise her article for the website requesting committee members & volunteers.

12. Village environment/maintenance

The Clerk has contacted SODC regarding the lease for the site of the Polish church & is awaiting the final copy of the contract. Cllr. Steward has cleared the site, for which the Council thanked him.

MOWS would like to order some plants for the raised beds, the cost of which would be about £74. The Council agreed this. MOWS would also like to trim some overhanging tree branches to allow more light. The Clerk will ask MOWS to liaise with the relevant landowner.

13. Village /Neighbourhood Plans

See 10 above.

Cllr. Donahue held the inaugural meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group in November, which was well attended. The minutes are already available on the website. If a 5% increase in housing is required, this would equate to an extra 17 houses in Whitchurch. The group looked at the constraints on development within the village (AONB, conservation area, farmland, floodplain etc.). & will investigate these areas & where any future housing could actually be sited. An independent planning consultant may be required. Cllr. Donahue is meeting the new SODC Neighbourhood Plan contact this week.

14. Action for Pangbourne Toilets

Members of the group were unable to attend due to illness but will be present at February's meeting.

15. Village sign

Some confusion has ensued. The Clerk will liaise with a local artist regarding the Council's requirements. Cllr. Donahue will send the Clerk the relevant information.

16. Other matters for Chairman & PC to consider Items that arise that are not on this agenda but need discussion & to be proposed for a future agenda

Cllr. Bowen is meeting a representative from the Bicester bus co-operative this week to see whether theirs is a model we could follow. He has obtained a quote from TK Travel for a minibus shuttle service from Pangbourne to Whitchurch Hill. This would cost £78,000 to mirror the existing service (minimum of £300 a day).

The Council congratulated Cllr. Donahue on his recent engagement.

17. Date of next meeting

Monday 13th February 2017 at 8pm.

Meeting closed at 9.55pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....