

WHITCHURCH ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish meeting of Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council on Monday 2nd July 2012 Village Hall.

Present:

Cllr Harry Butterworth, Cllr. Nigel Grove, Cllr. Lindsay Austin, Cllr. Keith Brooks, Cllr. Jim Donahue, County Councillor Dave Sexon. Jenny Welham Parish Clerk.

In Attendance – Richard Wingfield TAPAG, Stephen Trinder VHC, John Southey WOTHABS Eric Hartley.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr. Matilda Oppenheimer, Cllr. Vincent Aldridge, District Councillor Pearl Slatter.

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

Eric Hartley to speak about the Thames footpath. Eric reported that OCC had written and the work to the footpath would commence from 27th July. There will be steps for walkers alongside the bridle path. He advised that although pleased that work was to start he had written to 13 different officers and that there had been some serious accidents during the time it had taken for the pathway to be restored.

Cllr. Donahue was concerned about cyclists using the path a great speed down the hill. It was agreed to ask the OCC to install a sign requesting cyclists to dismount before going down the steep slope as riding down the slope at high speeds can be dangerous to pedestrians and other users of the path. Clerk to action.

4. Agree Minutes of Annual PC Meeting 15th May 2012.

Approved.

5. Matters arising from those minutes not on the agenda elsewhere.

None.

6. County Councillor Report.

Cllr Dave Sexon reported that the new signage in the Lower Narrows was now installed, however he had received one complaint which resulted in the works being stopped for a day. He had intervened and insisted that the work continue. The new signs are sited in a much better position for drivers to read them correctly. He asked if any Parish Councillors had received any complaints, Cllr. Brooks reported he had received one.

Cllr Sexon reported that the support from the Highways Area Steward had been great and that there was another meeting on Wednesday 4th July with him to look at the Hardwick Road verges, a project proposed by Cllr. Donahue, and also to look into some other issues TAPAG had raised. He suggested that a regular meeting between TAPAG and the Area Steward be set up, on a 3 monthly basis, all agreed.

The Chairman suggested that the 30mph signs up the hill out of the village be extended to include the two sharp bends, Cllr. Sexon advised that this is being looked into. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Sexon for his continued hard work on behalf of the Parish.

7. District Councillor Report.

No report as Cllr. Slatter absent.

8. Traffic & Pavements Group – report & update.

Weed Killing to protect kerbs – Robert Watson, a specialist contractor, has sprayed the weeds throughout the village. John Southey is acting as the village liaison contact on this.

Trimming of hedges that create obstructions – Tapag has been trying to get several Householders to trim their hedges. The next step is to send them a letter. The Chairman asked to see a draft of the letter before it is sent out so the Parish Council can endorse it.

Lower Narrows – OCC Highways has installed the clearer signage at each end. Tapag would like to see the footway raised.

High street safety – Tapag will be meeting with OCC Highways on measures for pedestrian safety.

142 Bus Service – Peter Hawley will attend as the Village Transport Representative at an OCC meeting on public transport today.

Potholes etc – Eastfield Lane has had many potholes repaired recently but repaving next year is still hoped for.

9. Village Hall Committee – update and report.

Mr. Trinder had nothing to report. Cllr. Grove reported that the Electrician had not turned up so was being rescheduled. The Camera Club has agreed to take the Riparians storage cupboard. A Toddlers Group is likely to take a place so more storage rationalisation will take be actioned.

10. Village Green Committee – review quotations for car park, Usage Contract with CC, and update.

Cllr. Austin Chairman of the VGC reported –

Lashings – Despite the best efforts of the Village Green committee (in particular Maureen Stovell who gave up a massive amount of time) regrettably we were forced to cancel the event which had been due to take place on Friday 22nd June. The committee are upset and disappointed at having to take this action and at any inconvenience it may have caused, especially to those village residents who were supporting the event. Lashings have a minimum number of VIP lunch seats that must be confirmed as being sold before they will attend. As it stood with only 10 days remaining until the event we were below the required number and were therefore forced to take this decision.

We did request that Lashings attend anyway on a slightly different basis than this but unfortunately they were unable to be flexible. The weather since the start of the cricket season has been extremely poor and it can only be assumed that matches they have been involved in thus far have not been as successful as they might have been otherwise.

Costs incurred were kept to a minimum, with a total of £440 being spent on promotional materials comprising flyers and posters. In addition we spent £225 on a premises license for the Village Green site and £61.32 for a laminator to laminate posters and enable them to be displayed outdoors. In the same way as the Village Hall has a premises license we do require one for the Village Green albeit we may not have spent the funds getting one quite so quickly. Refunds have been issued for monies received in respect of the Lashings event.

Fundraising – previous appeal to village residents to make a donation to the Village Green (via the Bulletin) yielded one offer of £50. This response, coupled with the immense difficulties in getting the Lashings cricket match off the ground, give an indication of how difficult it is going to be to raise money.

Whilst we are required to install both the junior football pitch and car park (and have funds to achieve this with the aid of an SODC grant) lack of further funds will affect our ability to improve the site further.

The committee will be focussing on fundraising and would be interested to hear any ideas that the Parish Council may have.

Football Pitch – work on the junior football pitch is being undertaken by FTS Sportsturf Services Ltd, a Berkshire based company specialising in the creation and renovation of a wide range of sports pitches. The work was scheduled to begin today (Monday 2nd July 2012) although has been rather hampered by the weather, a small amount of cutting back has begun and will carry on tomorrow, with the work being completed by the end of this week. Once the grass is completely established the junior football pitch (FA Mini size – approx. 47m x 27m) will be marked out. It is hoped that there will be a playable pitch at the site in September.

Car Park – see separate document Appendix 1 outlining quotes received.

The Village Green Management Committee believe there are 3 workable options from which the Parish Council can choose.

As a significant proportion of the car park cost is being funded via an SODC grant it is imperative that we make a decision on whom to use and get the process underway in a timely fashion so as not to lose our grant funding (all works must be completed within a year of the grant date which in our case is by the end of February 2013). Once a decision has been reached the Parish Clerk will instruct the successful firm and oversee the process from there.

The Council discussed the car park quotes it was resolved to appoint Swallow Developments. Clerk to action.

Building Plot – the site acquirer (Swallow Developments) have begun fencing off the plot for Boundary House (as they refer to it).

They have submitted plans for a number of the planning permission conditions to SODC. We understand that as soon as they are able, once the various conditions have been agreed, discharged etc they will be commencing work.

A temporary access to the Village Green from Eastfield Lane has been cleared by Councillors Butterworth and Brooks to allow grass cutting contractors, cricketers, etc vehicular access to the ground.

Once the works have been completed access to the site will through a 5 bar gate at the back of the car park. Building work will take approximately 6 months and the marketing board which Swallow Developments have erected on their plot refers to the house being available in Spring 2013.

Website – work is underway to create a Village Green page on the Whitchurch on Thames website. Adrian Dixon is currently working on what will go on and we will then work with Richard Wingfield and the website team to get the page up and running. Items will include a plan and description of facilities available, directions and how to book along with changing features such as development progress, upcoming events, fundraising and committee meeting minutes.

Status of committee – there has been some discussion about the status of the Village Green Management Committee (VGMC) in relation to the Parish Council. It was my understanding at the outset that the committee would function in much the same way as that of the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC).

The VHMC is a charitable trust in its own right and its committee are charged with its management, the Parish Council being custodial trustees. It is not therefore a 'sub-committee' of the PC and it's meetings are not open to the public, albeit minutes of these are published for the information of anyone who is interested.

The Village Green is in the process of being set up as a charitable trust in the same way as the Village Hall and therefore I would appreciate clarity as to how we need to operate moving forward.

- Are we a formal sub-committee? And if so why does this differ from the Village Hall?
- What does this mean in respect of our meetings? Currently these are less formal than PC meetings (albeit minutes are taken and will be published) which make them slightly more enjoyable for what are an extremely busy group of people giving up their valuable time on a voluntary basis. If this is not going to continue it needs to be properly communicated to the VGMC asap, next meeting is scheduled for Monday 16th July 2012.

The status was discussed at some length by the Parish Council and it was resolved that the Village Green Committee be classed as a Working Group similar to TAPAG.

They would also run the Charity when the registration is completed, they will be responsible for managing the Village Green, fund raising and hiring. The finances will be handled by the Parish Clerk and the VGC will manage the budget from fund raising activities, and the annual amount apportioned from the Parish Council Budget. Any capital expenditure amounts would need to be approved by the Parish Council.

Charitable Status – we are currently in the process of registering Whitchurch on Thames Village Green as a charitable trust with The Charities Commission. They have come back with a number of questions for us to answer but hopefully the application will be processed soon.

Hiring – we are doing some research into hiring out the Village Green and how this can best be done. This is not straightforward as currently the buildings on the site are owned by the Cricket Club rather than the Parish Council and therefore any event which requires access to them would need to be arranged in conjunction with the CC.

Agreement with Cricket Club – as part of the initial work undertaken by the Parish Council ahead of the planning application and eventual planning permission for the site in Eastfield Lane, a “Provisional Understanding between the Cricket Club and the Whitchurch Parish Council for the future use of the Cricket Ground” was drawn up. This document set out details around usage of the ground by the Cricket Club, maintenance of the ground etc.

This agreement has now been converted into a “Usage Contract” between the Parish Council and Cricket Club which needs to be signed by Harry Butterworth on behalf of the PC and David Mattimoe on behalf of the CC.

11. Finance – To approve Payments

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Cheque Ref</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
23-May-12	R M Weavers	SO	£522	Grass cutting April
28-May-12	S. Butterworth	34	£367	May Bulletin
28-May-12	Came & Co Insurance	SO	£419	Annual Insurance premium
01-Jun-12	J. Welham	SO	£373	May Salary
01-Jun-12	HMRC	SO	£83	Tax
06-Jun-12	Wot Parish Council	TRANSFER	£15,000	Wot Village Green
16-Jun-12	Mrs. J. Gordon	36	£69	Jubilee Tea Party expenses
16/06/2012	Linda Close	37	£89	Jubilee Tea Party expenses
16-Jun-12	S. Trinder	38	£129	Jubilee, band & printing
25-Jun-12	Nova Press	39	£45	Caterpillar Leaflets
25-Jun-12	J. Welham	40	£15	Postage costs
01-Jul-12	J. Welham	SO	£373	June Salary
01-Jul-12	HMRC	SO	£83	June tax
02-Jul-12	SODC	35	£49	Dog bins 1Jan-31Mar2012
02-Jul-12	Nova Press	41	£367	July Bulletin
02-Jul-12	R.M.Weavers	43	£455	May Grass cutting
02-Jul-12	Thames Water	44	£44	21 March to 25 June 2012
	Total Payments		18,480.48	Approved

Note no receipts

11.1 Review and Approve Quotations. – None.

12.Planning. No New Applications.

12.1 Applications Granted by SODCP11/E2542/LB Repair the porch to the rear of the building. The porch has slipped about an inch away from the house in the last six months or so. This work is to stop it sliding any further and collapsing. 1 Swanston Cottages High Street Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7ES.

P12/S0359 Erection of 2 storey rear extension with single storey glazed link. Venn Cottage Hardwick Rd RG8 7HH.

P12/S0344 Erection of a timber single storey summer house in the rear garden. Tall Beeches Hardwick Road Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7HW.

13. Environment Group – Report.

Cllr Brooks reported,

Successful projects have been carried out since the last meeting and others in preparation.

1. A new sign for Muddy Lane has been ordered from SODC, which will cost £43. When it arrives I will organise a work party to fit it.
2. A new sign for 'NO FISHING' on the slipway by the toll bridge was made and fitted.
3. A new entrance to the village green was made since the builder intended to put up a fence around the building plot, which would mean that access to the field by the gate would be impossible. A working party consisting of myself, Harry and Martin Hardcastle carried out the work. The site was made secure using a rope together with a sign indicating private property.

4. As part of the village action plan to “undertake a co-ordinated improvement of street furniture and signage” I had a meeting with Alan Cockbill from SODC lighting department and we reviewed the lights in the lower High Street. A new style light paid for from the locality fund from OCC will be installed opposite the Greyhound in a better position to light Eastfield Lane. The signs for the Thames Path will be transferred from the existing sign post to the new light which would make it possible for the sign post to be removed completely if the school sign was made considerably smaller and this could then be transferred as well.
5. Continuing with the upgrade of lights the two lights one outside Wells House and the other outside The Stables could be upgraded for approximately £1000 with contributions from the residents of the lower High Street and I am proposing that the Parish Council fund this.
6. The bin at the bottom of The Cut is an old style one and I have received requests that it be replaced with a new style one and repositioned and also a Dog Waste bin installed. I have contacted OCC to find out how much this will cost and will report back to the council at the next meeting.
7. The drain outside The White House, which is blocked, was reported to OCC and also ‘Fix My Street’. Keith Stenning from OCC’s Highways Department phoned to say that it would be cleared within 28 days. That is now passed and it still isn’t done. I have reported this on ‘Fix My Street’. There are other drains in Swanston Field and the High Street which I have reported and am awaiting attention.
8. There is a need for a speed indication sign in Hardwick Road for traffic coming from the Chalk Hills direction into the 30 mph zone. The cost of this is being investigated.

14. Sustainability & Allotments Report.

Cllr. Donahue reported,

Allotments:

- Working to renew the Council agreement with NSLAG is up for 21 year renewal this year.
 - Chasing NSLAG. They promised it by end of last week. Should have shortly. Needs to be agreed by end September
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Whitchurch Maze Committee

Cllr Donahue gave an update for those who may not be aware of our progress:

We have selected a brick! They are Blockley's red paver brick:

<http://www.engravebricks.co.uk/products.htm> We concluded it was the best and should at least hold out better than the previous bricks. We have received recommendations that use of sand rather than mortar between the bricks may reduce the amount of cracking in the future, but this is still being investigated. As there are a lot of questions and suggestions on this so we have not finalised the approach.

- Next steps are to perform an inventory of all bricks, highlighting those needing repairs. Felipa is trying to get volunteers from the school for this. Based on this inventory, we can plan for the replacements and new subscribers, with a target of advertising this in September.
- Progress was made on initial children's area using the donated logs. They have already been popular with the children, and the trees are now my son's favourite climbing spot. We would like to expand the small path made with more donated logs. Its not much, but a start!
- Other areas progressing such as the table and survey, but still in progress.

Hardwick Road Verges Project:

The Parish Council agreed it was a worthwhile scheme and suggested that if a group of village residents wanted to work on this to see what they could achieve with WOTHabs to progress the Hardwick Road Verges project proposal, with Councillor Donahue's participation, on its behalf, with the objectives of making the following improvements to Hardwick Road between the village entrance and Hardwick Gate:'

1. Restoring the carriageway passing place verges to make a consistent width, single carriageway road with clearly defined and maintained passing places at appropriate places.
2. Include Thames Path access as agreed by the Parish Council establishing continuous safe off-road access on the south side of Hardwick Road, connecting the pavements in the village with the miles of recreational walking, cycling and bridle paths available on Hardwick Estate, and village access to the Thames via Sheepcote Lane. As a first step, this will require seeking agreement and active support from local landowners and managers, and the Oxfordshire County Council. We will be requesting Dave Sexon support to arrange an initial meeting with the OCC Highway representative to meet with local stakeholders.

15. Adoption of Code of Conduct. – adopt code of conduct as per SODC

It was resolved the Code of Conduct adopted by South Oxfordshire District Council be adopted as the code for members and co-opted members of the Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council with effect from 1st July 2012.

The Clerk is requested to notify the monitoring officer of SODC of the passing of the above resolution.

16.Matters / Questions for the Chairman.

None.

17.Note date of next Meeting Mon 3rd September 2012.

Meeting closed at 9.45pm

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