

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting held in ‘The Old Stables’, Tuesday 13th June 2017, commencing at 8.00pm.

PRESENT

Vice-Chairman	Jim Donahue
Councillors	Denise Huxtable Carrie Leadbeater-Hart
Clerk	Felipa House

Public:

Gary Stovell, Mia Stovell, Leslie Maynerd, County Councillor Kevin Bulmer.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr. Simister, Cllr. Bowen, Cllr. Brooks & Cllr. Hatcher.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart explained that, as a chartered engineer, she was working on the plans for the new village pavilion. She is providing her expertise free of charge.

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.

Leslie Maynerd, representing MOWS, stated that she had received a quote from Eldon Tree Services for the lopping of the trees overhanging the area near the church entrance. As this work had been authorised in a previous meeting the councillors agreed to accept this quote. (A quote had also been received from King’s Tree Services). Leslie will forward the latest quote to the Clerk who will then arrange the work once SODC’s deadline of 26th June has passed. Leslie also asked who would be carrying out general maintenance jobs in the village following Jon Steward’s resignation from the Council. She mentioned that she knew of a young gardener who had just started working in the village. The Council asked her to pass on his contact details to the Clerk.

Mia Stovell explained that she & her friends had carried out a survey outside the school for 2 days, obtaining 60 signatures from pupils & parents supporting the skate park project. Gary Stovell was concerned that the skate park idea had been shelved, having seen comments on the village website, & wondered where the idea of a MUGA/pump track had come from. Cllr. Donahue explained some of the objections that the Council had received concerning the skate park & the fact that the last village survey had not supported such an idea. Gary asked to see the survey, as well as more objective views & evidence from those objecting to the skatepark. Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart mentioned that the skate park would need a permeable surface, due to the village green being a flood zone, which would limit its size. More natural surfaces would therefore be required. She also asked whether Mia & her friends would be interested in a MUGA/pump track or whether it was only a skate park they wanted as there was no point building something that would not be used. The Council asked the Stovells whether they could return at a later meeting with some revised designs or a compromise. They said they would think about the options.

4. Agree minutes of Annual Parish Council meeting 9th May 2017

Following objections by Jon Steward to May's draft Minutes the Council agreed to amend them slightly. As the Council was not quorate these could not be agreed so the amended draft Minutes will replace those currently on the website until they can be ratified at July's Council meeting.

The Council asked the Clerk to issue an advertisement for a councillor following Jon Steward's resignation from the Council last month.

5. District councillor's report

Cllr. Simister was not present.

6. County councillor's report

The County Council election results were : Conservative 31, Labour 14, Liberal Democrat 13 & Other 5. The Conservative Group was 1 short of a majority, but maintained the alliance formed with two independents in the last administration, & thereby formed the ruling group again.

Parish councils will be particularly interested in the creation of the new 'Local Communities' Cabinet post. One of the key tasks for the portfolio holder is to re-energise the 'Oxfordshire Together' campaign that promotes closer working between OCC and parish councils.

Cllr. Bulmer has been appointed Chairman of the Pension Committee. OCC is in the process of pooling its pension funds with 9 other authorities to form a £25 billion pension fund & find a new company to manage the fund. He will be continuing on the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee for Oxfordshire, but his new role means he's had to step down from the education committee. This will also affect his ability to attend parish council meetings.

The Leader of OCC has stated that he intends to make 'Social Care' and 'Highways Infrastructure' key priorities for the new administration.

A new website to support victims of crime has been launched by the Police and Crime Commissioners. Victims First (www.victims-first.org.uk) is a new online resource for victims of crime which has advice on what to do & how to get help. The focal point of the website is a directory which allows victims to find relevant support in their area. Members of the public are able to use the website to refer themselves directly to the PCC's own support services or find information & contact details for other organisations. This support is available regardless of whether or not the victim has reported the crime to the police.

Cllr. Bulmer also mentioned that the Council's set-up remains as it was before the General Election & unitary options are still ongoing. Roads are lower down the list of priorities, as the majority of Oxfordshire County Council's money is spent on adult & child social services.

Woodcote is installing a pedestrian crossing. Cllr. Huxtable will contact their Parish Council for advice.

7. Planning

A decision on applications P17/S1961/O, the Sports Pavilion, Eastfield Lane, & P17/S1934/FUL, The Haven, Eastfield Lane, could not be made as the Council was not quorate. The Clerk will request extensions for both.

8. Finance Approve payments/note receipts

Monthly salary for the Clerk

Expenses for the Clerk for stamps (£6.72)

Invoice from The Community Heartbeat Trust for defibrillator pads (£45.60)

Payment to E. Williamson for Hobs Repro signs for the Neighbourhood Plan (£80.81)

Payment to eBay for hose & accessories for MOWS (£58.88)

Payment to SODC for sports pavilion planning permission (£385.00)

Payment to Amazon for laminator & sheets (£34.98)

- (a) The Annual governance statement for the 2016/17 annual return was discussed & agreed by the Council. The Vice-Chairman & Clerk signed this.
- (b) The Accounting statements for 2016/17 were agreed by the Council & again signed by the Vice-Chairman & Clerk.

The Clerk will ensure that these documents are made public on both the website & the noticeboard in accordance with the period for the exercise of public rights, which will start on 16th June 2017.

9. Village green

The Clerk mentioned that the agreement between the school & Oxfordshire County Council regarding the use of the village green had now been finalised.

The Clerk requested help with the installation of the standing pipe. Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart said that she would liaise with the football team & design a specification. The Clerk will then arrange for the plumber to install this.

Apologies were made for the cancellation of this month's WhitFest. It was felt that more planning time was required.

The Vice-Chairman asked the Clerk to confirm the cost of extra cuts to the village green should they be needed (possibly 3 extra). It would be helpful if the football & cricket teams knew in advance when the cuts were taking place.

The email from Sarah Hanfrey would be discussed at next month's meeting as Cllr. Bowen was not present.

10. Village Green Working Group/pavilion

Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart will create a spreadsheet for a fundraising strategy for the new pavilion. This should include the school, football & cricket teams as well as residents. The planning application has been submitted.

11. TAPAG (Traffic and Parking Action Group)

Cllr. Huxtable reported that a TAPAG meeting had been held last week. Surveys will be sent out on 21st June to High Street residents, requesting replies by 9th July. A poster about the survey will also be displayed & the survey will be available on the website as well. An open day will take place in July, at which it is hoped PCSO Mark Bell will attend. Yellow lines, residents' parking & a roundabout at the Manor Road junction will all be discussed. TAPAG will also be investigating the BP Castrol sign on Whitchurch Hill again in the hope that new signage could prevent overweight lorries coming through the village.

12. Village hall refurbishment project

Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart will write up her findings from the survey commissioned from Lowther Battram.

BP Castrol have enquired about using the village hall. The Clerk will arrange for them to visit.

13. Village environment/maintenance

The Clerk will measure the current village sign & send the dimensions to the local graphic designer the Council is using. This sign will be removed once the new ones are received. The AONB sign should be the same width. Only 1 of each will be ordered initially due to the cost.

The Clerk has written a letter to Ross Healthcare regarding their plans for Eastfield House.

The Polish church site will be discussed at next month's meeting.

Cllr. Donahue had received the following information from Martin Wise of Goring Heath Parish Council regarding the repairs to the war memorial :

Peter Dragonetti & Martin Wise (Goring Heath PC) met all three contractors at the war memorial on 8th June. At this meeting was Roy from A F Jones, the masons who will construct and install the new shaft & cross. He had full-scale drawings of the proposed work & we were able to verify dimensions etc. Also present was Chris Stanley from Hazell and Jeffries, who will be constructing the new roadside kerbing, & Bill from the firm who have been subcontracted to install the granite sett surround. Given the severe slope of the road at this point on the hill, much of the discussion was on the finer detail of levels and falls.

The £9,000 funding target has been exceeded by donations & grants but the street works have incurred an additional cost of £1,500. This left a shortfall of about £500 which has kindly been made up by the Whitchurch Hill Fete Committee. Goring Heath Parish Charity, which holds the funds received, is now registered with HMRC & the process of claiming Gift Aid will commence shortly.

The kerb design will be a standard concrete kerb no more than 120mm above the roadway. There will be drop-kerbs at the 'downhill' end & the structure will extend to 1.2m either side of the plinth. It will be compliant with all relevant regulations. No planning permissions are required, the Highway Authority has been involved, & the work will be completed, including high-pressure steam cleaning, by the end of October at the very latest but almost certainly well before then.

14. Village /Neighbourhood Plans

There has been no update since the annual parish assembly. Lots of people attended the open day on 3rd June & their feedback is currently being analysed.

Cllr. Bulmer made the point that Neighbourhood Plans need refreshing every 5 years.

15. Length of term for Chair

This will be discussed at next month's meeting.

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

Nothing was mentioned.

17. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 11th July 2017 at 8pm.

Meeting closed at 9.55pm.

**Signed.....
Vice-Chairman**

Date.....