

# *Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council*

**MINUTES** of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall, Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014 commencing 8.00pm.

## **PRESENT**

Chairman	Mr. H. Butterworth
Vice Chairman	Mr. K. Brooks
	Mr. N. Grove
	Mr. H. Ainley
	Mrs. L. Lucas
	Mr. J. Donahue
District Cllr.	Mrs. P. Slatter
Clerk	Ms. Jenny Welham

### **1. To receive apologies for absence**

Mr. V. Aldridge

### **2. To receive 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. Mr. D. Bowen & Partner.  
Mr. S. Trinder – Village Hall Management. Mr. R. Wingfield, Mr. J. Southey TAPAG.

The Chairman invited Mr. Bowen to speak for 5 minutes.

Mr. Bowen had questions regarding the double yellow lines in the High Street. The Chair explained that these were put in to avoid the worst case scenario of parking following the Bridge closure. Mr. Bowen was unhappy at the cost from the PC. The Clerk confirmed that the PC had not paid for the yellow lines it was OCC Highways who had installed and paid the costs.

Mr. Bowen had issues regarding sandbags at the time of flooding, The Chairman confirmed that sandbags had been available and were outside the Greyhound public house for a week. The PC are not responsible for the supply of the sandbags this was SODC.

Mr. Bowen had complaints about the condition of Eastfield Lane due to the many potholes, his partner had fallen due to the uneven surface and suffered an epileptic fit. He quoted an email he said to have received from The Chairman sometime ago stating that if the condition of the highway got too bad then a complete resurface would be necessary. Mr. Bowen when asked if he had made a complaint to Highways and entered detail on “Fix My Street” said he had not. The condition of the road surface needs to be monitored and reported again if necessary. There is already an outstanding reference to repair potholes logged with OCC. Clerk to follow up.

The Chairman then advised Mr. Bowen that he had been over 5 minutes and proceeded to the Agenda.

4. To approve Minutes of the PC meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2014.  
Approved as a true record.

### **5. Police Report**

Mark Harling of Thames Valley Police gave a report,

He advised that the PCSO's have to cover 22 parishes and cover various shifts and they deal with neighbourhood policing. They offer a reassuring presence for residents, they cannot arrest or search but carry out some of the duties a normal police officer would perform. They work from Henley Police Station which is a 24 hour operation.

He advised that crime in the area has dropped by a quarter which was felt to be due to the Bridge Closure. There have been only 11 reported crimes since April 2013 which is much lower than year April 2012 to March 2013 when 39 crimes were reported. They are mostly burglary of sheds and outhouses. He advised that residents mark items such as lawnmowers with unattractive paint crosses as this make them difficult to sell. There has been a push on rural crime and many arrests have been made around hare coursing in the area.

Lastly he stressed the importance and usefulness of Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Cllr. Brooks is a member of Thames Valley NHW. More areas of the village need to be encouraged to set up NHW for their streets. Thames Valley crime alerts can be received via text and phone messages to spread the message that crime is happening in the area.

The Chairman thanked Mark for coming. He then left the meeting.

#### **6. District Councillor's Report**

Cllr. Slatter reported,

SODC will not be raising the Council Tax this year.

Recently 3 public houses within her Ward have closed and been sold, the Queens Head in Goring which is currently up to become a Tesco Express, the village are divided on this.

The White Lion in Crays Pond sold to a developer and to become residential subject to planning.

The Greyhound in the High Street. The PC have made a nomination to SODC that it be a Community Asset, if SODC decide to add it to the list then the funds to purchase it need to be raised by the local community and the PC need to purchase it. It will delay the sale for 6 months, unless it is sold previously.

Mr. Bowen expressed an interest in running a project to get local interest and look at fund raising, The Chairman agreed this would be a good idea and to work with him on this as possible. Mr. Trinder felt that local interest would be minimal and that the project was not a viable business proposition as the public house was not well supported by the village when trading.

#### **7. County Councillor's**

Electronic report received and circulated to Councillors.

#### **8. Planning**

P14/S0494/HH – Erection of detached summerhouse.

30 Manor Road, Whitchurch on Thames RG8 7EU.

The council agreed No Strong Views.

Cllr Donahue asked if there was any firm information regarding the Bridge reopening. There are many rumours circulating with various dates. Currently there is no statement from the Bridge Company. The PC to formally request information.

#### **9. Other Committee Reports**

Village Hall.

Stephen Trinder reported,

The Committee met on 22 January when the following salient points should be reported here;

Mrs. Laura Lucas joined the Committee, replacing Dr Matilda Oppenheimer who resigned due to pressure of work and other commitments.

Income for the hall fell slightly in 2013. The loss of the Young Riparians, Toddlers Group and fewer private functions, was only partly offset by extra Pilates classes and other activities.

A much higher gas bill over the very cold winter period increased expenditure but this year's figure for gas is significantly lower.

Eddie Pilcher, the hall's manager suffered a severe stroke and we have appointed Mr Richard Scearce, a retired postman living in Manor Road to replace him. He is making a very good start.

A number of minor improvements were made during the hall but no further capital expenditure is planned for 2014.

Cllr. Grove had been approached by the Camera Club who use the hall asking if a WiFi connection could be installed. He asked the Clerk if there was any precedent for this., there is not, however a telephone line would need to be installed. Cllr. Trinder had been given a cost of £32 per month for the line and broadband from BT. This cost would need to be covered and it was suggested that it be added to the hire charge, however not all users would need it. More investigation is needed on the need for this service.

#### TAPAG.

Richard Wingfield reported,

That some of the High Street improvements requested by Tapag for implementation while the bridge is closed had been successfully carried out: OCC had raised the kerb to protect the bus stop opposite the picture gallery, painted a white line to create an extra passing refuge for northbound traffic and improved the pavement damaged by tree roots near Thames Bank. Elsewhere OCC had responded to Tapag requests to clear the soakaways on the hill and to drain the flooded road at the top of the hill but had not yet tackled the Path Hill flooded road problem.

#### Village Green

Cllr Ainley reported,

A meeting had been arranged to meet with David Bates of Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action Group to discuss possible grant opportunities for the new Pavilion. David had made some good suggestions, however the Land Fill grants are not available to the PC due to proximity to a land fill site, being too far away.

Other options are Sport England and he gave Cllr. Ainley a contact for Oxfordshire, also the CIF Grants from SODC.

The Pavilion will need to show multi function and show sustainability for any grant application to be seriously considered.

The Chairman advised that the two dead trees had been replaced by a small working group, and two more new trees planted.

Also the owner of the new house alongside the green had placed a concrete bollard at the edge of the grass verge to stop vehicles churning up the grass, the Chairman had agreed to him doing this.

#### **10. Finance**

<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Cheque Ref</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
Wicks23 Ltd	127	£329	Flooring for VH
T. Franklin Nova Press	SO	£367	Parish Bulletin
NSALG Ltd	128	£377	Allotment land rental annual
NSALG Ltd	129	£66	Annual Membership
SODC	130	£100	Dog bins Jul1st-Dec31st2013
OPC Drains	132	£72	Culvert inspect 18 Jan 2014

Souther Electric	131	£25	3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr Electricity Pavilion
Oxfordshire CC	133	£110	License Hardwick Rd project
J. Welham	SO	£426	Feb Salary
HMRC	SO	£96	Tax Feb
Penwood Nurseries Ltd	135	£69	2 x replacement trees
OALC	134	£145	Annual Membership 2014/15

**Total** 2,182.28

### **Note receipts**

Allotment rental £183.95.

Wreath from P. Slatter £20.00

### **11. Environment Group**

Cllr. Brooks reported,

At the last PC meeting it was reported that the sign in Old Gardens had been removed from its site. We contacted Sally-Anne Worsley who is in charge of street signage at SODC and she asked us to re-instate it. Mr. Peter Hollitzer was contacted who has carried out work for the Parish Council before. We surveyed the site with Martin Parnham who is a resident of the road and decided on the best position for the sign.

After this we surveyed the damaged rail in Hillside and realised that it would be a major task replacing it and out of the scope of an 'environmental project'. Councillor Jim Donahue was contacted who lives in Hillside and he said he would get a quote for its replacement. We also surveyed the damaged Village Green Car Park and found that a simple re-concreting of the surface would make it more stable and we are waiting for the better weather to carry this out.

Following agreement by the Parish Council to replace the lights in the High Street outside the Stables and by the Ferryboat in accordance with our 'Village Plan' which recommended an upgrade of street furniture in the High Street. I contacted the OCC Street Lighting Department to arrange a survey. This was carried out by Chris Marks Street Lighting Electrical Inspector, Highways and Transport OCC with John Southey and Susan Lee from the Environmental Group. The positioning of the lights was agreed and they will be installed in the near future and will match the ones by the Toll Booth and opposite the Greyhound public house. This will greatly enhance the lower High Street and compliment our new bridge when it is completed.

I recently attended a meeting of the Rural Neighbourhood Action Group at Henley Police Station where there were several Parish Councils represented- including Woodcote, Sonning Common and South Stoke and with South Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Inspector Mark Harling and Local Policing Area Commander Andy Boyd present it made for a very interesting evening.

These meetings are very good for keeping up with the latest types of crime and how best to combat them and hearing about problems in adjacent areas of South Oxfordshire. At the meeting it was emphasised that Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) Groups are a very important means for communicating to residents and it was suggested that Parish Councils should play an active role in contacting these NHW groups and help them by running articles on crime prevention on Parish Council bulletins and web sites. The Whitchurch on Thames village web site has details of our NHW group under 'security' and contains details of how to join the group which is coordinated by myself. We are always looking for new members and if you join you will receive 'Thames Valley Alerts' from our area and benefit from knowledge I have gained from attending meetings of the Neighbourhood Action Groups, Police and Crime Commissioner Updates and the Thames Valley Neighbourhood Watch Association of which I am a committee member.

### **11. Sustainability & Allotments**

Cllr. Donahue reported

**Allotments:**

Annual payment made to NSALG – January

Annual Invoice sent to WDAS Allotments Society January

NSALG Legal team has given their consent for the changes requested for Hardwick Road Project which is adjacent to NSALG land.

**Whitchurch Maze Committee**

Maze brick upgrade complete:

Half a dozen bricks to be ordered for mistakes to be corrected, plus a few last minute additions

Lectern top leakage problem solved by Peter Woolhouse and Stephen Trinder

Will plan a committee meeting for Spring to plan a potential Village Summer event at the Maze.

**Hardwick Road Verges Project:**

Working with WOTHabs to promote:

Conservation of biodiversity of verges along Hardwick Road.

Improvement of verges to prevent growth of ‘unofficial verges’

Development of a footpath along the length of south side of road to prevent the need to cross back and forth.

Dan Hazel Chosen to complete work within £8000 budget for 2 new lay-bys plus drainage at village entrance. Once completed work on footpath can start.

Dan Hazel ready to proceed subject to OCC approval of design and appropriate licenses. John Southey is heroically working with OCC to overcome these obstacles.

SSE started tree cutting work on the hedge near Hardwick gates due to power lines, but still not complete. Sally Woolhouse chasing.

**PAWS Activities:**

Whitchurch Litter Blitz planned for Saturday April 5<sup>th</sup>, 11am to 1pm – Meet at the Greyhound

Hillside Railing Repair:

Purdy Gates of Woodcote submitted quote for £566 plus VAT for repair of railing. Need to understand in PC can fund this.

A second quote from Michael’s Gates of Reading has been received for £120.

Hillside road does not appear to be adopted by OCC which is a risk of liability for future repairs. Who should be responsible for maintaining the stairs and the concrete wall on the bank?

It was agreed by Council that the quote for £120 be accepted and that work should proceed.

OCC to be contacted regarding the ownership/adoption of Hillside, Clerk to follow up.

**12. Other Matters for Chairman**

Mr. Trinder asked if a report from OCC regarding the Floods was available for the village. The Chairman advised that the Pc had been asked to provide a report regarding the flooding to SODC, Richard Wingfield and John Southey were currently preparing this report, a draft has already been sent.

Cllr. Grover suggested that a “Drainage Forum” be set up in the village using local knowledge to document the situation to be prepared for future floods. TAPAG said they would invite him to join them on the report they are preparing.

**13. To note date of the next PC meeting: Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May Annual Parish Council Meeting.**

However prior to the next PC meeting there is the Annual Parish Assembly Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April

*Meeting closed at 9.40pm*

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