

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting held in the village hall, Tuesday 1st March 2016, commencing at 8.00pm.

PRESENT

Chairman	Keith Brooks
Vice-Chairman	Jim Donahue
Councillors	David Bowen Caroline Hart Rachel Hatcher James Polansky Jonathan Steward
Clerk	Felipa House

Public:
Richard Wingfield

1. Apologies for absence

District Councillor Rob Simister, County Councillor Kevin Bulmer.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr. Steward (gardening contracts in the village).

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.

4. Agree minutes of Parish Council meeting 2nd February 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 had sent his report before the meeting. This included details of reductions in the budget cuts to services for children & older people, proposals for district unitary councils & the possibility of a third Reading bridge.

7. Planning

P16/S0651/T28 Bozdown Vineyard, Hardwick Road. Replacement of existing no. 3 antenna & installation of no. 1 cabinet on existing base. The full details for this application had not been received by the Council at the time of the meeting. The application will therefore be discussed at the next meeting.

The Chairman had received a telephone call from the new owners of Avoca Farm, Hartslock Bridleway. They will be submitting an application for the demolition of the existing house &

construction of a new dwelling in keeping with the local area. The Chairman advised them to submit a planning application in the usual way once ready.

8. Finance Approve payments/note receipts

Monthly salary for the Clerk

Expenses for the Clerk for stamps (£8.67)

Invoice from Collins for bulbs & gardening items (£38.13)

Invoice from OALC for annual subscription fees (£146.12)

Invoice from SLCC for the 'Local Council Administration' book (£72.30)

A VAT refund from HMRC for April-September 2015 has been received (£945.93), as well as payment of £193.22 from the Allotment Society for 50% of the annual rental cost of the allotments. SODC has agreed our precept request & 50% (£12,991) will be paid to the Council in April.

The Clerk asked whether the Council would again be willing to provide a grant for the running of the village hall. Following some discussion the Council agreed to donate £1,000 immediately & review the hall's financial situation in July with the possibility of further funds. The Clerk will distribute the hall's annual accounts to all councillors. The hall's manager has noted that the projector screen in the hall is broken. Cllr. Steward will look at this &, if a replacement is needed, liaise with Cllr. Polansky regarding the purchase of a new screen.

The Clerk had circulated various financial reports before the meeting, showing that the Council was under budget for the financial year to date. The Council does not wish to hold significant reserves but it was felt to be prudent to have extra money available in the light of devolution issues & cuts to OCC's budget over the coming years. The Clerk will ensure that sufficient funds are always maintained in the Council's bank account.

9. Village green

The contract for the provision of gardening services in the village was signed & Cllr. Steward will begin work immediately. The Chairman will be the Supervising Officer required by the contract. Cllr. Steward will provide monthly timesheets & invoices & work to the VGWG's maintenance schedule.

Cllr. Steward has sourced a large wooden compost bin for the village green. The Council approved the purchase of this, which the Clerk will arrange.

Cllr. Steward has received a quotation for work to the beech hedge at the village green. This will be discussed at next week's VGWG.

Cllr. Polansky attended last month's Allotment Society AGM. 2 of the 42 plots are empty & will be advertised in the village first. The Allotment Society would like a new gate & the Council agreed that it would purchase this. The Chairman will obtain quotes.

10. TAPAG

TAPAG issues will be added back on to the 'Residents' issues' list to avoid confusion.

The Whitchurch Bridge Company is thinking about redesigning the speed hump near the toll bridge, which is also used as a pedestrian crossing. The Council all agreed that this should not only be made much more visible but also bigger & wider with a flat top, & a textured surface as well if possible. This would make it the same height as the pavements & make crossing with buggies much easier. Cars should not be able to stop on this crossing & pedestrians should have priority here. TAPAG will liaise with the Bridge Company.

A further quote has been received for repaving 'The Cut'. The Clerk will chase the other interested company in order to obtain 3 quotes.

The salt bin in Hardwick Road has fallen over. Richard Wingfield stated that the concrete foundations had not been laid correctly in the first place & should be relaid. Cllr. Polansky will specify what needs to be done to OCC.

Parking in the village is again an issue, with parking tickets issued in the High Street & Hardwick Road. It was felt that this was an issue best included in the Neighbourhood Plan, with residents given a range of options from which to choose.

OCC have no intention of replacing the bollard outside Wells House. Cllrs. Hart & Polansky will investigate to find out whether it is actually needed.

The safety of pedestrians in the Lower Narrows was discussed. The Council wants to improve this area as a matter of urgency. Cllr. Hart will talk to OCC Highways to see what could actually be done that would comply with road safety regulations yet protect those walking as well.

Sufficient volunteers have been recruited for the SpeedWatch campaign & Oxfordshire Police can now become involved. Cllr. Hatcher will draft an article for the website & 'Bulletin'.

11. Village hall replacement project

Cllr. Hart has produced a 'Village Pavilion Project' document, which the Council examined & discussed. This, or an abridged version, will be made available on the website/in the 'Bulletin'. The Council thanked Cllr. Hart for her efforts in producing this.

12. Village environment/maintenance

OCC's 'Oxfordshire Together Highway Services' document was discussed. An increasing number of services are devolving to town & parish councils &, although Whitchurch already takes on some of these responsibilities, it is worth keeping this in mind for the future.

A Whitchurch resident has volunteered to repaint the boundary fences. The Council felt this was a very kind offer which should be accepted. The Chairman will contact the person & arrange for any supplies needed to be purchased via the Council's account with Collins.

Cllr. Steward has received agreement from SODC that the Council can rent the old Polish church site with a view to creating a memorial garden. The Clerk will arrange the rental agreement.

13. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr. Hatcher will attend Goring's open day on 5th March & has also been in touch with Woodcote following their successful plan. Whitchurch's open day will probably be an exhibition held one Saturday, where people can look at what is proposed, express their own views & preferences, discuss issues & express an interest in becoming a member of a working group. A second event would then be held for the volunteers themselves. Cllr. Hatcher will circulate proposed dates for the initial meeting this week & then advertise in the 'Bulletin' & on the website.

14. The Queen's birthday celebration

This will be held on the village green on Saturday 11th June. The Council will prepare a News item for the website & 'Bulletin' requesting volunteers.

15. Conservation area reappraisal

Cllr. Bowen has spoken to Tom Wyatt of SODC Planning, who does not feel that there is any need to have the conservation area reappraised, even though it has not been carried out for some time. SODC would be unable to pay for it & it was felt by the Council that this was another issue that could be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

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

Richard Wingfield would like an update on the future of the 143 bus service. The Council currently has no news of this but will circulate anything it does receive in the future.

21. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 5th April 2016 at 8pm.

Meeting closed at 10.05pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....