

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

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

PRESENT

Chairman	Keith Brooks
Vice-Chairman	Jim Donahue
Councillors	Dave Bowen Rachel Hatcher Denise Huxtable Carrie Leadbeater-Hart
Clerk	Felipa House

Public:

Bill Gregory, Hilary Jensen, Maureen Stovell & children.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr. Steward, 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 had spoken to Sonning Common about their new skate park & brought in some photos of it. She believed that funding could be available from Biffa &/or Lafarge Tarmac. She has received a quote of about £50,000 for a 10m width x 20m length park. Her children showed the Council the designs they had come up with to give an idea of what the park could look like. Cllr. Bowen had also obtained a quote for a half-pipe (£21,000 including installation) as well as for a MUGA of 10m x 7m. This is a half-size basketball pitch & would include a goalmouth, hockey markings & a basketball hoop. This would cost approximately £13,000 plus VAT. Cllr. Donahue had raised the idea of a skatepark at the Village Green Working Group but this was not popular & felt to be unsuitable for the area; a MUGA, however, would work. Perhaps a half-pipe could be added at one end for the skaters. Cllr. Bowen thought that grants might be available from Sport England.

Hilary Jensen thanked Cllr. Bowen for his efforts regarding the 143 bus service & asked for any update. Cllr. Bowen stated that Goring Heath Parish Council was fully supportive of the idea of the Going Forward bus. If the service goes ahead Pangbourne station will definitely be one of the stops, enabling access to both Basildon & Beale Parks.

4. Agree minutes of Parish Council meeting 13th February 2017

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 circulated his report before the meeting. This included details of extra funding for OCC, some of which will be spent on grass-cutting of highway verges, a pilot Communities Fund, additional funding for children's social care & an increase to the flood defence levy.

An upgraded version of 'Fix my street' will be launched in March, which will improve the quality & consistency of public reports & make it easier to see what's going on in a given area.

OCC Fire and Rescue Service is now working in partnership with Thames Valley Fire and Rescue as well as South Central Ambulance Service. This will help cardiac arrest casualties to receive the quickest available defibrillator & casualty support.

Oxfordshire council have launched a campaign with Agrivert, the company that processes the county's food waste, to encourage residents to recycle their food waste rather than throw it away. Food waste generates enough electricity for 9,000+ homes in Oxfordshire as well as making fertilizer for use on local farms. See www.recycleforoxfordshire.org.uk/lovefoodhatewaste.

There will also be a new joint proposal for a single unitary council which includes 15-20 area boards, based on the county's main market towns & their surrounding villages, plus a stronger model of governance for the city of Oxford itself.

The Council resolved to change the dates of the Council meetings to the second Tuesday of each month. The Clerk will arrange this.

7. Planning

P17/S0450/HH, 1 Duchess Close, High Street. Amendment to previous permission already granted to extend kitchen by a small amount. The Council unanimously voted to submit 'No strong views'.

P17/S0638/HH, Shepherd's Close, Hardwick Road. Single storey side extension plus internal alterations. The Council unanimously voted to submit 'No strong views'.

8. Finance Approve payments/note receipts

Monthly salary for the Clerk

Expenses for the Clerk for Cllr. Hart's gift (£25.00)

Payment to MOWS for plants (£27.94)

Invoice from OALC for annual subscription (£139.63)

Payment to Cllr. Brooks for gloves for village spring clean (£4.71)

Invoice from PlaySafety for 2016 playground inspection (£92.40)

Payment to UK Safety Store for dog-fouling signs (£44.04)

Payment to Vivantage for village spring clean equipment (£37.39).

The Council received £196.70 from the Allotment Society, which represents half of the annual fee.

MOWS had asked whether the Council would be willing to pay for some planting outside 'The Greyhound'. The Council felt that it wouldn't be appropriate to support a private business so did not approve this request.

9. Village green

Cllr. Bowen will investigate the options further, obtain quotes & arrange for site visits. The skate park will need to find all/most of its own funding, which will have to be taken in to account before any final designs are approved. A bench near the area would be good in order to make it more of a sociable space. Could a stall be held at the village fete to promote the scheme & raise funds? The Council thanked Maureen & especially her children for the effort they had put in to their drawings &

research. The children will create a survey to gauge potential use & interest from the school; the Clerk can ask the school to distribute this.

OCC have agreed to pay the legal costs for the licence they want in place between the Council & the school for use of the village green. The Clerk will progress this & ensure that a paragraph is included asking the school to book all use of the green through the Clerk.

10. Village Green Working Group/pavilion

There will be a cricket club working party in March. More working parties should also be taking place as per the WoTHabs guidelines for the area. These will be publicised.

Cllr. Donahue asked the Clerk to arrange for a plumber to make a standing pipe at the Hardwick Road end of the green to water the football pitch.

The mound of earth near the old cricket net could be moved if it's not to be used for the skate park.

Cllr. Brooks has sourced a new pavilion for the village green. All councillors agreed that the design was suitable but some debate arose about the size it should be. The current specification would provide 2 toilets (1 disabled), showers, changing rooms at either end & a kitchen & would be about 1.5 times the size of the current facilities. This was priced at £35,000, plus a similar amount for installation. Costs rise exponentially but councillors felt that a larger pavilion could be more flexible for all in the village should they want to hire it for functions, e.g. Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart will check the planning restrictions, if any, & Cllr. Brooks will continue with his application to SODC for capital grant funding, which could provide 50% of the funds needed, & obtain some further quotes. Funding must be obtained as the Council cannot afford to bear the entire cost. Offers of sizeable donations have already been received, though, but fundraising will also be needed.

The Council agreed to fund the building of a brick barbecue near the current pavilion & to ask Pete Woolhouse for his help building it.

11. TAPAG (Traffic and Parking Action Group)

TAPAG will be arranging a meeting with a representative from OCC Highways. Hopefully this can take place during either the morning or evening rush-hour. They will show him around the village to address the issues of congestion, children's safety, speeding & residents'/visitors' parking. Cllr. Hatcher will present his feedback & arrange the next steps.

12. Village hall refurbishment project

The company previously thought best for the structural survey has not proved suitable. The Clerk will arrange for another local company to evaluate the hall & will ask Cllr. Steward to lead this.

13. Village environment/maintenance

The Clerk has contacted 5 maintenance contractors, 2 of whom have met Cllr. Brooks. Quotes are awaited from them as well as a third meeting.

Cllr. Steward will liaise with MOWS & WoTHabs regarding the Polish church site. He has also proposed 2 local residents after whom the area could be named.

Caroline Widdop was unable to come to the meeting but had sent through 4 designs for the new village sign. The Council voted unanimously for one of these & will need 3 signs, one for each entrance to the village. The Clerk will liaise with her regarding production.

A new brown Chilterns sign is needed at the entrance to the village by the bridge. Cllr. Brooks will investigate & order one if possible.

Cllr. Brooks will arrange for the new dog-fouling signs to be put up around the village.

An inspection of the playground was carried out last summer & no major faults found. This has only just come to light as the report & invoice were sent to the previous clerk. Records have now been updated.

Cllr. Huxtable attended the Allotment Society's AGM. Bill Lewis is now the new Chair. They thanked the Council for the new allotment gates. One of the allotment holders has built a treehouse in one of the communal apple trees in the allotment. This could prove to be a health & safety risk. The Clerk will write to the new Chair. If the Council is responsible for the area for insurance purposes then the Clerk will request that the treehouse be taken down or, if possible, moved to the ground.

14. Village /Neighbourhood Plans

Cllr. Donahue showed the Council the timeline that had been prepared. The objectives & mission will be ascertained via an online survey, by email & in April's 'Bulletin', & there will be informal discussions held at the village hall & local coffee mornings. A budget will follow, but it is as yet unsure whether the work needed will be covered by the SODC grant. Due to workload Cllr. Donahue may ask one of the members of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group whether she wants to take the lead.

15. Summer concert

Cllr. Brooks raised the idea of having a concert by the Roy Bailey Big Band in July, either on the village green or in the village hall. This could be used as a fundraiser for the new pavilion or just as a celebration. The other councillors were all in favour. Cllr. Brooks will arrange a date with the band.

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. Brooks stated that the Great British spring clean on 4th March in the village was successful, with much rubbish collected.

The Council welcomed back Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart following her maternity leave.

17. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 11th April 2017 at 8pm.

Meeting closed at 10.05pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....