

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Council meeting held in ‘The Old Stables’, Tuesday 9th May 2017, commencing at 8.00pm.

PRESENT

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

Public:

Leslie Prater, Laurie Ray, Hilary Jensen, Hayley Bowen & Lissie Steward.

1. Election of Chair & Vice-Chair

The Clerk requested nominations for the positions of Chair & Vice-Chair. Cllr. Bowen nominated the current Chair, Cllr. Brooks, & Cllr. Donahue seconded this. Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart nominated the current Vice-Chair, Cllr. Donahue, & Cllr. Brooks seconded this. The remaining councillors agreed & Cllrs. Brooks & Donahue will therefore continue in their positions for a further year. Cllr. Bowen thanked Cllr. Brooks for his hard work during the last year.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr. Bulmer, Cllr. Simister & Cllr. Huxtable.

3. 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.

4. 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 Prater reiterated the fact that the last village survey had not supported the creation of a skatepark. Laurie Ray expressed concerns about noise, graffiti & litter in the area were the park to be built. She also represented the similar views of her neighbours in expressing opposition to the idea. Hayley Bowen was in favour of an activity area; more children now live in the village & there is therefore more need for outdoor activities. She felt that the village green should provide multiple activities. Cllr. Bowen had been sent comments from residents via the website survey & Facebook & felt that he now had balanced feedback from both those in favour & against the idea. Cllr. Donahue stated that he was not in favour of the skatepark but was still keen on the idea of a MUGA or a pump-track, which would use the existing earth mound & could be used by a wider age range. This was felt by all concerned to perhaps be a good compromise. Consultation with the village will take place before anything is built.

5. Agree minutes of Parish Council meeting 12th April 2017

These were approved as a true record.

6. District councillor's report

Cllr. Simister was not present.

7. County councillor's report

Cllr. Bulmer was not present due to illness.

8. Planning

P17/S1453/HH, Paddock Lodge, High Street. Demolition of existing front porch and canopy, erection of new front porch and canopy. The work will be carried out mainly at the back of the property. The Council unanimously voted to submit 'No strong views'.

P17/S1169/HH, 4 Old Gardens, Manor Road. Increased size of detached double garage. The Council unanimously voted to submit 'No strong views'.

9. Finance Approve payments/note receipts

Monthly salary for the Clerk

Invoice from Nova Press for April's 'Bulletin' (£343.75)

Invoice from Community First Oxfordshire for annual subscription (£50.00)

Grant to Chilterns Conservation Board for 'Beacons of the past' project (£150.00)

Annual grant to village hall (£1,000.00)

Grant to Action for Pangbourne Toilets (£750.00)

Invoice from SODC for annual premises licence fee (£70.00)

Invoice from Arrow Accounting for internal audit cost (£313.28)

Invoice from Came & Company for annual insurance renewal (£484.61)

Invoice from UK Planning Maps for site/location plans for village pavilion (£77.40)

Payment to InstantPrint for Neighbourhood Plan leaflets (£27.99)

Expenses for K. Brooks for printer cartridges (£16.02).

The Council received a VAT refund of £303.12 from HMRC, £70 for advertising revenue from the 'Bulletin' & half of the CIL money from 'The Haven' (£1,085.63).

The Clerk's annual payrise was approved by all councillors. Cllr. Bowen thanked the Clerk for her efforts & suggested that a further increase was perhaps made. The Clerk will circulate the latest payscales to the Council before the next meeting.

The Clerk has received a request for payment of the annual insurance premium. The Council agreed that she could renew this with the same insurer as last year once she has investigated that appropriate cover is in place.

The Clerk reported that the Council had passed its annual internal audit. A list of recommendations has been drawn up which she will work on, the main one being not to exceed the s.137 limits. Reserves have been put aside for the coming financial year.

MOWS have requested an extra-long hosepipe to water the new raised beds near the church entrance. The Council approved this. The Clerk will liaise with Leslie Maynerd & purchase this. Cllr. Brooks will investigate the purchase of new defibrillator pads. The bollard in the Lower Narrows needs a new reflective strip.

10. Village green

Sarah Hanfrey had sent a very detailed email to the Council regarding the proposed new skate park. Cllr. Bowen will review this & reply in full to each of the points raised at the next meeting.

The Clerk was asked to contact Maureen Stovell & request her/the children's feedback by the next meeting. An Eastfield Lane resident has volunteered to contribute towards the cost of the skatepark. Cllr. Bowen will obtain more quotes for MUGAs & pump tracks, together with images, & present them at next month's meeting so that a decision can be made. It was presumed that there are no restrictions on the use of the village green.

Cllr. Steward is awaiting a quote regarding the provision of a new standing pipe on the village green for the football pitch. If this is under £300 then the work can go ahead immediately.

The Council asked the Clerk to investigate the details of the annual premises licence fee. The Clerk will contact SODC to confirm.

Cllr. Bowen has arranged for 4 acts to play at WhitFest, which will cost approximately £700. Additional costs, such as generators, portaloos, food & drink etc. will bring the total to about £1,000. The hope is that ticket & food/drink sales will recoup some of the costs & also raise money for the new pavilion. The Clerk will contact the school & see whether they want to have a stall there. There should also be a stall with information about the new pavilion. The Clerk will check the ramifications of such an event with OALC & the insurance company.

11. Village Green Working Group/pavilion

The football team will be having a working party on the village green on 19th May.

Cllrs. Brooks & Leadbeater-Hart have finalised a plan for the new pavilion based on an enlarged version of the original design they were sent. It will be a traditional wooden building which includes a meeting area (6m x 5m, 30 people at trestle tables), 2 changing rooms, 2 toilets, a disabled toilet & ramp & a verandah at the front. There are no showers or cooker, but space for a fridge & microwave. It will cover an area of 126m² rather than 117m² occupied by the 2 current buildings. Budget quotes from 3 contractors have been requested (+/- 20% of the actual cost) & Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart has received a verbal quote of around £70-80,000. The Clerk will send the Council's tender process to Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart. There will be ongoing annual maintenance costs too which must be taken into account. Outline planning permission for the pavilion is £385. The Council unanimously approved this spend & the external appearance of the building & it is hoped planning permission can be obtained soon.

12. TAPAG (Traffic and Parking Action Group)

Cllr. Hatcher stated that at the last TAPAG meeting priorities had been established, which were parking in the village, safety (speeding, crossing the High Street) & traffic. A survey is being drafted to obtain residents' feedback, the results of which will form the basis of a proposal.

Cllr. Steward met Mark Francis of OCC Highways. A zebra crossing would be possible near The Greyhound but a final price is awaited. Zigzag lines on either side of the crossing, prohibiting parking, could be installed, or a more subtle crossing like that near the toll bridge. A letter & questionnaire to all residents will be issued within the next fortnight. Intermittent yellow lines or a yellow line up the High Street past The Greyhound were also discussed.

Cllr. Brooks stated that PCSO Mark Bell had said that a speed survey across the High Street could be set up for a month to help evaluate traffic levels. This would cost about £150. He will ask Mark Bell to liaise with Cllr. Hatcher.

The current 143 bus will be stopping its service through Whitchurch on 2nd July. The new Going Forward service 142 bus will be providing a Saturday service from 2nd June.

13. Village hall refurbishment project

Cllr. Steward had inspected the hall with the hall manager & concluded that there is a lot of wasted space which could be put to better use. He requested that an up-to-date public liability notice be displayed. The Clerk will arrange this.

Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart had looked through the surveyor's report & felt that although the building's structure was old it was still serviceable. Point-to-point/end-to-end testing is needed. Cllrs. Bowen & Brooks can carry out PAT testing when needed. Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart will meet Cllr. Steward & look around the hall with him to produce a final snagging list.

14. Village environment/maintenance

The Clerk will contact the Chiltern Society regarding the provision of a new AONB sign. Cllr. Brooks will send the Clerk pictures & dimensions of the sign. Caroline Widdop could be asked to recreate this for the Council if one cannot be purchased directly.

Azalea Landscapes are doing a good job thus far & Cllr. Steward is building a good relationship with them. He felt that several additional cuts would be needed to those on the agreed schedule. The Clerk will liaise with him & the contractor to monitor expenditure.

A lot of work has already been done in the memorial garden. Cllr. Steward asked the Council to approve the name of the area as the Kaiser-Miles garden. The Council felt this was a good idea but that the area should have a more generic name to reflect all those in the village who have died. It was therefore agreed that it be named 'The Polish chapel memorial garden'. There could perhaps be a specific area within it just for Polish memorabilia. The Council will investigate the provision of memorials for the Kaiser & Miles families to mark their importance to the area. The Clerk will liaise with SODC to ascertain what is acceptable.

The tree conservation officer from SODC needs to be consulted regarding the pruning of the sycamore above the new raised beds near the church. Cllr. Steward will resolve this matter.

SODC will be coming to the village in June to provide a deep-clean. It was felt that Hardwick Road, Manor Road, Swanston Field & the Upper & Lower Narrows would particularly benefit from this. The Clerk will inform SODC.

15. Village /Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood Plan open day leaflets have been delivered to all villagers. Cllr. Donahue suggested that Cllrs. Hatcher, Leadbeater-Hart & Steward attend to discuss any issues residents might have regarding TAPAG, the new pavilion & the village hall.

Cllr. Donahue stated that those on the Neighbourhood Plan steering committee must submit a declaration of interests form. The Clerk will collate these.

16. Code of conduct

Following the circulation of various emails about Council members the Chairman urged positivity & support for the Council & for them to present a united front. The Clerk had circulated SODC's Code of conduct before the meeting, which all councillors were happy to adopt & use with immediate effect.

17. 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

The Council was happy to continue using The Old Stables as its meeting venue due to the activities taking place at the village hall & the fact that it was putting money back in to the community through the PCC.

There was some discussion about the length of time a Chair should serve. The Clerk will add this to next month's agenda.

Cllr. Hart raised the question of too many emails being sent to members of the council which were not to do with Parish Council business and asked for this to cease immediately.

At the conclusion of the meeting Hayley Bowen raised personal issues with Cllr. Steward. These were unrelated to Parish Council business.

18. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 13th June 2017 at 8pm.

Meeting closed at 10.45pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....