

# WHITCHURCH ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council on Monday 4th November 2013 at the Village Hall.

## **Present:**

Cllr Harry Butterworth Chairman, Cllr. Keith Brooks, Vice Chairman Cllr. Jim Donahue, Cllr. Harvey Ainley, Cllr. Vincent Aldridge, Cllr. Nigel Grove, District Cllr. Pearl Slatter, County Cllr Kevin Bulmer, Jenny Welham Parish Clerk.

In Attendance – Stephen Trinder. Chairman Village Hall Committee, Richard Wingfield TAPAG, Geoff Weir Whitchurch Bridge Company, Laura Lucas, various members of the public.

## **1. Co-opt New parish Councillor.**

The Clerk invited a proposer for the new councillor Laura Lucas, Cllr. Brooks proposed and The Chairman seconded. Laura was duly co-opted onto the Parish Council and joined the meeting. Registration of interests form was completed and handed to the Clerk.

## **2. Apologies for absence**

None.

## **2a. Declarations of interest.**

Councillors are asked to declare any personal interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

None.

## **3. Public Forum – Opportunity for members of the public to address the Parish Council.**

The chairman invited the public to address the meeting, Mr. John Curtis had concerns about the delay to work on the Whitchurch Toll Bridge. Geoff Weir responded and reported that the contractors were currently reassessing the demolition of the existing bridge to minimise damage to the structures.

The NEC3 Contract which is a collaborative contract to encourage all parties to work together, has no penalties as such in the contract however the contractors do get paid more if they complete the works on time. Currently they are 3 weeks behind schedule, however the overall project has allowed slippage time and they are currently within this.

The bridge is still scheduled to reopen April 14<sup>th</sup> 2014, despite rumours and various web posting to the contrary. All information is on the Bridge Company website and this is kept regularly updated. The Bridge company will work with the PC website to ensure both are kept in sync with the most up to date facts regarding the project. Also a hard copy notice at the start of the temporary footpath with information would be useful, Geoff will action this.

Mr. Trinder and Mr, Wingfield felt that a relationship with the contractors and agent directly with the Parish Council would be beneficial. The Chairman felt that this would not necessarily improve the flow of information any more than currently. Geoff Weir advised that a direct relationship with the Agent is not possible as the Bridge Company are the customer.

Cllr. Slater and Cllr. Aldridge reported that parking in the High Street is better on some days than others. Cllr Aldridge had on occasions had the entrance to his drive obstructed. The parking needs to be monitored. Also the painting of a white line which has been requested needs to be actioned. The temporary double yellow lines could be put into force but this may just move the problem elsewhere into the village.

#### **4. Agree Minutes of Annual PC Meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013.**

Approved as a true record.

#### **5. County Councillor Report.**

The County Councillor Mr. Kevin Bulmer reported,  
TALKING OXFORDSHIRE PUBLIC MEETINGS

October has been dominated by the 'Talking Oxfordshire' road shows where County Councillors and Officers travelled to locations across the County to discuss savings to be made at County Hall.

Since 2010, we have saved £127 million, with plans set to save another £74 million over the next few years. Despite this, further cuts to our budget by

Central Government mean we must find another £61 million bringing the total reduction to £262 million. We will have to make changes to the way we deliver services and perhaps stopping some altogether. We understand how valued some services are and all

comments will be taken into consideration. The budget proposals will go to the Performance Scrutiny meeting on 16th December then to Cabinet on 28th

January, before finally being debated at Full Council on 18th February 2014.

So far, approximately 1,000 people attending our meetings and we will consult with our 'Oxfordshire Voice' panel of 3,000 people across the County who are chosen as a balanced representation of our residents.

You still have an opportunity to make your feelings known:

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There is an additional meeting at the MEC at 7.30pm at Marlborough School (Woodstock) on 21st November. It will focus on rural issues but any concerns can be raised here.

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The consultation is open online until 29th November. Please visit:

<https://myconsultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/talkingoxfordshire2013/consultationHome>

#### **HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT MEETINGS**

The Home to School transport policy will be out for consultation this month. It's important that we update the policy and the new proposals should provide comfort to those with concerns, whilst delivering much needed savings. Throughout November and December the County Council will be holding public meetings to discuss Home to School Transport.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Ian Hudspeth will be available at each meeting to answer your questions, alongside senior council officers Roy Leach

(School Organisation & Planning Manager) and Neil Darlington (Admissions and Transport Services Manager).

This is an excellent opportunity to raise your concerns with them, and you can attend any of the meetings listed below.

#### **Venue Date. Time**

Carterton Community College 11th of November 2013. 7:00pm - 8:30pm

Matthew Arnold School. 14th of November 2013 7:00pm - 8:30pm

Bartholomew School. 22nd of November 2013. 7:00pm - 8:30pm

The Marlborough School. 29th of November 2013. 7:00pm - 8:30pm

Icknield Community College. 2nd of December 2013. 7:00pm - 8:30pm

Wheatley Park School. 4th of December 2013. 7:00pm - 8:30pm

Larkmead School. 10th of December 2013. 7:00pm - 8:30pm

The Warriner School. 12th of December 2013

7:00pm - 8:30pm

#### **READY FOR WINTER**

We have enjoyed the best summer since 2006 but the weather is changing with a noticeable drop in the temperature. The County council has been planning the winter maintenance program throughout the summer to be ready for the frosts that will occur.

All grit bins should now be full, please contact us if any in your area have not been filled. We work with Town & Parish councils so that they have plans in place to assist clearing the snow during the bad weather. There will be a series of road shows during October to explain what is available. If you require further information then please contact Paul Wilson, the Adverse Weather Manager.

### **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

There are a number of funds available to local organisations in the Division.

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#### **Councillors Community Budgets**

We have continued to fund these popular local funds to support local organisations. If you know of any organisations that might be interested, please contact me or seek further information at <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/councillor-community-budgets>

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#### **Area Stewardship Funding**

These are continuing but are now organised differently. I will attend meetings with other councillors in my locality to pool our funds together for greater effect where possible. It is used to fund highway issues in particular.

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#### **Chillout Fund**

We have continued a £100,000 fund to support projects for children and young people. More at <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/chill-outfund-youth-activities-and-projects>

### **6. District Councillor Report.**

Cllr. Pearl Slatter report,

South Oxfordshire are going to be allocated more housing, this will affect the larger villages, but not Whitchurch on Thames as there are no development sites, however there may be some infill.

SODC have sold all their housing stock to SOHA and loaned them £15 million from their invested funds to enable SOHA to build more affordable housing in the District. The timing for the building is not yet available.

### **7. Traffic & Pavements Group – report & update.**

Richard Wingfield reported;

The twice yearly inspection was recently carried out. John Southey is following up the actions from this inspection with SODC, Biffa Waste, OCC and Thames Water. Responses are not always speedy but the matters will be chased.

Cllr. Aldridge reported that due to the recent rain there was flash flooding at the top of the Hill in Goring Heath by the Forge and also on Path Hill. This to be reported to OCC Highways.

### **8. Village Hall Report**

Stephen Trinder reported;

The Committee has not met since the last PC meeting but there are two points worthy of mention, plus a minor maintenance item:

The temporary surgery during the closure of the Whitchurch bridge has been discontinued after two trial weeks. Insufficient response from the village's patients, coupled with IT problems, meant that the medical team's time was not being used productively.

3 new lights have been installed in the Committee Room. These provide significantly better illumination and, being fluorescent, are more economical to run. The suppliers mis-specified the original fittings and replaced them with larger models at no extra cost, now installed. The company did not require the return of the first lights and so we will re-use them free of charge to improve the toilet lighting.

The third toilet for which we fitted new sanitary ware, with the other two toilets last year, but did not redecorate at the time of the refurbishment, will now be decorated.

## 9. Planning

P13/S3319/FUL Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a new dwelling. Address: Firhill Whitchurch Hill RG8 7NT.

This application was examined and reviewed and the Council had No strong views.

## 10. Village Green Committee

Cllr. Ainley reported,

He had had a meeting with the Cricket Club and they are actively exploring grant possibilities, as it is obvious that fund raising towards a new Pavilion is not going to raise enough money. The Football Club are also looking at grant possibilities.

## 11. Finance – Approve Payments/note receipts.

The following payments were approved, no new receipts.

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Cheque Ref</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
			<u>Paid</u>	
10/09/2013	Nova Press T. Franklin	SO	£400	PArish Bulletin
11/09/2013	Berinsfield Community Business	SO	£409	Grass cutting Aug
23/09/2013	SODC	111	£70	Annual premises license
27/09/2013	Thames Water Utilities Ltd	112	£120	Water bill CC 20/6-11/9/13
01/10/2013	J. Welham	SO	£419	Sept Salary
01/10/2013	AO Cumberland	SO	£95	Tax Sept
01/10/2013	Swiftclik	113	£23	Stationery
01/10/2013	J. Welham	114	£46	Mileage expenses 1st half year
09/10/2013	Swiftclik	113	£0	Correction to 113 23.39
16/10/2013	Environment Agency	115	£52	Frontage
16/10/2013	Thake Ltd	116	£59	Viullage Green Sign
26/10/2013	Berinsfield Community Business	SO	£520	September grass cutting
01/11/2013	J. Welham	SO	£419	Salary
01/11/2013	HMRC	SO	£95	Tax
01/11/2013	Village Hall Committee	117	£2,000	Annual grant
01/11/2013	Swiftclik	118	£6	Stationery
04/11/2013	Royal British Legion	119	£40	2 wreaths for remembrance day
04/11/2013	Souther Electric	120	£45	Pavilion
04/11/2013	Milo Technical Support	121	£30	Support for laptop
		<b>Total</b>	4,846.10	
		<b>Payments</b>		

## 12. Environmental Group Report

### Cllr. Brooks reported;

Since the last meeting there has been much activity on the Village Green. The owner of the field adjacent to the green contacted me saying that the fence had been broken. I duly went and examined it and found one of the steps on the stiles had broken where it was weak. There was also evidence that badgers had been at work and disturbed some of the wire netting but the two were not connected and the damage accidental not malicious. I replaced the cross piece straight away.

We also have a new sign for the Village Green and this has been fitted to the gate leading to the green.

The seats on the green which were fitted in the summer needed covering with a suitable paint to protect them from the weather over the winter and to this end I purchased some hard wood furniture protectant and Stephen trinder and myself applied it. Several people I have met whilst walking the dog in the field have remarked on their excellent appearance.

Some problems with lighting in the High Street opposite the Greyhound and by the toll booth, both needing replacement bulbs, resulted in this area being in total darkness overnight and many complaints. I therefore contacted Alan Cockbill electrical inspector at OCC and he arranged for them to be repaired.

We have had request from the Chilterns Conservation Board to look at and comment on their 'Framework for Action' management plan.

In this the Board states that it wants to work with PC's and to seek their support for the aims of this Plan for the Chilterns. In particular by 'encouraging local pride in the landscape and a special sense of a place to promote concern for its conservation'.

Since the 'engagement plan' has about 135 points which covers mostly every conceivable situation they will be relying heavily on organisations such as the PC to get involved and carry through the objectives.

In Whitchurch we have groups such as TAPAG and WOTHABS who are constantly endeavouring to keep this a 'nice' place to live and I therefore think that we are doing our bit and can use the document as a blue print of how Whitchurch should be in the future.

I have been to several of their meetings and they do care passionately about conserving the Chilterns and to produce a document such as this is very important by putting down 'on paper' so to speak the wishes of the people of this area who they represent.

### **13. Sustainability & Allotments Report**

Cllr. Donahue reported;

#### **Whitchurch Maze Committee**

Maze brick upgrade complete:

- New bricks 157 new bricks and 80 replacement bricks delivered
- Installation performed by Phil Wise
- Re-opening Ceremony held in conjunction with PAWS Apple Juicing Day 20<sup>th</sup> October – Kevin Bulmer officially opened maze – traditional Musket salute
- Allotments participated in Apple juicing
- Whitchurch Society held funds from sales of brick paid invoices – approx. £250 surplus – may be used towards improved lectern top
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#### **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.

PC has received £8000 for the Hardwick road improvements –

- £2000 original Big Society Funding - January
- £6000 from OCC for verges renovation – March

Kevin Bulmer visited with Committee to get support – highlighted issue of OCC – design estimates provided as a result of Kevin's intervention but not in detail.

WOTHabs requesting at least two contractor bids. Butler & Proctor plus others. Putting diagram and spec in place. Plan is for two laybys plus new drainage as part of the Village entrance upgrade. Will need OCC sign-off on the design.

SSE started tree cutting work on the hedge near Hardwick gates due to power lines. Does not appear to be complete.

**14. Other matters for Chairman** – None.

**To note date of next Meeting** Budget Meeting only Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013.

Next Parish Council Meeting is Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2014. *Meeting closed at 9.40pm*

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