

# *Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council*

**MINUTES** of the Parish Council meeting held in ‘The Old Stables’, Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016, commencing at 7.00pm.

## **PRESENT**

Chairman	Keith Brooks
Vice-Chairman	Jim Donahue
Councillors	Dave Bowen Rachel Hatcher
Clerk	Felipa House
County Councillor	Kevin Bulmer
District Councillor	Rob Simister

Public:

Mrs. Bulmer, Hanna Ferguson, Hayley Bowen, Dianne Brooks, Wendy Blow, David Pearson.

## **1. Apologies for absence**

Cllr. Hart, Cllr. Steward.

## **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.

Hanna Ferguson was interested in putting herself forward for the Parish Councillor vacancy. Despite her strong links with the village she has however lived here for less than a year, so is unfortunately not eligible.

Wendy Blow & David Pearson were interested in finding out the Council’s position on the 143 bus service post-April 2017. Without Whitchurch’s financial support it is unlikely that Goring Heath alone will be able to meet the full annual running costs.

## **4. Agree minutes of Parish Council meeting 4<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

These were approved as a true record.

## **5. District councillor’s report**

Cllr. Simister mentioned that Neighbourhood Plans in several local villages are underway. They have also been taken into account nationally during planning considerations. He will send the Clerk some examples of these to circulate.

There is currently a hiatus in the plans for devolution.

From 3<sup>rd</sup> November only clear sacks in/outside green recycling bins will be accepted. Anything in any other colour of sack will be left behind.

There is to be a new, cashless parking service within SODC. Cllr. Simister will send details to the Clerk.

## **6. County councillor's report**

Cllr. Bulmer mentioned that an important public health report had just come out which OCC was circulating to all parish councils. A link to this is included in his monthly report.

A consultation on Oxfordshire's daytime support services has just been opened. The Clerk will circulate.

Online applications for primary & secondary school applications are now live.

Cllr. Bulmer was disappointed to relay the fact that his motion to make commercial satnavs compulsory for HGVs was not adopted by the Government. HGVs are therefore free to continue using standard satnavs, which are unsuitable for their vehicles.

## **7. Planning**

P16/S3106/FUL. Elm Cottage, Hartslock Bridleway . Removal of existing barn & erection of replacement barn. Cllr. Brooks & Bowen visited Elm Cottage & spoke to the owner. They saw no reason to object to this application. The Council therefore unanimously voted to submit No strong views to SODC Planning.

P16/S2863/HH. 4 Whitchurch House, High Street. Rebuild garden wall/fence with brick & flint wall (amended). The revised plans fit in with what was discussed at October's meeting in that the wall curves around the existing tree. The Council therefore voted unanimously to submit No strong views to SODC Planning.

## **8. Finance** Approve payments/note receipts

Monthly salary for the Clerk

Invoice from Steward Gardening Services for October village maintenance (£250.00)

Payment to Alistair Aitchison for purchase of hose & sprinkler for village green (£54.38)

Payment to Lady Haig Poppy Fund for Remembrance Day wreath (£31.50)

Invoice from West Berkshire District Council for July – September subsidy for the 143 bus service (£1,533.65)

Payment to St. Mary's Whitchurch PCC for hire of The Old Stables for next year's PC meetings (£120).

The Council received a refund of £1,274.76 from HMRC for VAT paid during April – September 2016.

## **9. Village green**

The Clerk has received a quote from Veolia for the provision of an 1,100 litre general waste bin for the village green. This would cost £20 per week plus an annual amount of £40. The Clerk will meet a representative from Biffa & has contacted Grundon as well.

A draft agreement between the Council & the school regarding the school's use of the village green has been drawn up. The Clerk will check this & ensure that the school are happy with its contents. She will also look at the Council's insurance cover for the green & possibly the use of a solicitor to act on behalf of the Council.

## **10. TAPAG**

A resident emailed the Clerk with several issues. These were : a continued water leak on the Hartslock Bridleway (Cllr. Hatcher to report), parking on the Hardwick Road/High Street junction (to be

included in the traffic focus group Cllr. Hatcher will establish) & the lack of a 'School' sign near Muddy Lane on the way out of the village. Cllr. Hatcher will include this in the list of things to be discussed within the focus group.

The Whitchurch Bridge Company has sent the Clerk a copy of their report on the proposed improvements to the Pangbourne bridge approach. Cllr. Hatcher will review this & report back to the Council at December's meeting so that they can put forward their views to the Bridge Company.

### **11. Village hall replacement project**

The Council has received an email from SODC's property department asking about its plans for the village hall. Cllr. Simister stated that he felt SODC would probably exercise its right-to-buy option on the village hall should the Council wish to sell it. It could be a potential site for development within the Neighbourhood Plan, in which case the Council could have a say in its future & benefit from its share of the Community Infrastructure Levy it would attract. The Clerk will reply to the property department, explaining the Parish Council's position, & asking for clarification of SODC's views on the exercise of their option to buy. She will copy in Cllr. Simister.

### **12. Village environment/maintenance**

A resident has sent in several emails regarding the provision of dog-waste bins in the village. Cllr. Brooks will discuss this with him to obtain a clearer picture.

The Clerk has recently received a revised draft contract from SODC concerning the lease of the old Polish church site. She will review this.

Cllr. Steward wishes to cease being the village maintenance contractor at the end of his contract. The Clerk will look into finding a replacement contractor, bearing in mind the parameters of the work involved & WoTHabs guidelines.

The Clerk met Leslie Maynerd to discuss the new MOWS working group. MOWS have cleared the area to the right of the church driveway & have drawn up a detailed plan & costings of what to put there (subject to the landowner's approval). This would consist of 2 planters made from sleepers, planted with bulbs/seasonal flowers/foilage, with bark on the ground to keep the area tidy. A resident wishes to buy a bench for the back of the plot in memory of his wife & to either side of this would be bulbs. The cost for the planters, sourced from Bouchier Fencing Limited, will be £279.10 + VAT. The Council unanimously agreed to finance this. The process for further spending for plants is to be agreed at next month's Council meeting, with the MOWS charter amended accordingly to reflect the Council's decision.

### **13. Village/Neighbourhood Plans**

Cllr. Simister stated that SODC have not yet agreed the number of houses needed in the area. There is as yet no replacement for the person who left who was dealing with Neighbourhood Plans. Cllr. Bulmer added that Whitchurch is in an AONB, which is protected. Goring have used a consultant to examine sites & product impact assessments. He emphasised that Neighbourhood Plans must be very clear & specific about sites under consideration e.g detailing exactly what/how many types of building would be considered.

Cllr. Donahue presented some slides showing the process & progress of these plans. The Village (Community) Plan would include areas such as traffic & parking, environment, the future of the village hall & recreation, whereas the Neighbourhood Plan is to state where any future development in the village could/not take place. He has had various meetings to discuss this & is keen to make further progress. He has organised a meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November to discuss the Neighbourhood Plan with those people who expressed an interest in being part of this working group. Cllr. Bowen felt that

the Council should perhaps delay the Neighbourhood Plan for a period of time to see how other local villages fare with theirs, as there have been some issues with them reported in the local press. Diane Brooks mentioned that perhaps it would be a good idea to make public a list of the pros & cons for having/starting the process of a Neighbourhood Plan. Following a heated debate it was agreed that this issue would be added to next month's Agenda for a final decision. This would then take into account any new information or ideas from the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November.

#### **14. Action for Pangbourne Toilets**

The Council requested that the Clerk obtain a statement from the group which they could then endorse.

#### **15. Council policies**

The Clerk has incorporated Cllr. Donahue's comments into the policies & circulated them to the Council. These will be reviewed at next month's meeting.

#### **16. 143 bus subsidy**

The Clerk of Goring Heath Parish Council had asked the Clerk for the Council's likely views on their continued support for the bus service. Wendy Blow from Whitchurch Hill stated that OCC's Comet bus service was not suitable as it only ran on weekdays during school hours. David Pearson, also from Whitchurch Hill, mentioned that SOBAG (Save our bus action group) had been established in Whitchurch Hill; Cllr. Bowen stated that he would be happy to join this group as the Whitchurch representative. The Clerk will investigate the options for increasing the precept should the Council decide to continue their financial support.

#### **17. Parish Councillor vacancy**

The Clerk had received only one application at the time of the meeting. She knew of someone else who had expressed an interest so would check whether they were still interested in applying. The Chairman & Vice-Chairman will interview any candidates.

#### **18. Village hall complaint**

The Clerk had received a complaint from one of the hall's users regarding the state of the floor. The Council asked the Clerk to ask the hall manager to ensure that the hall floor was swept weekly before this class to prevent any further issues.

#### **19. Parish Council meeting dates**

Due to other commitments Cllr. Bowen requested that the meetings revert to Monday evenings if possible. The Council were happy to do so, at least for the next few months whilst Cllr. Hart is on maternity leave. The Clerk will issue a calendar of dates for 2017.

**20. 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 Chairman had received a request from Whitchurch United Charities to approve the appointment of a new trustee. The Clerk will add this to the December Agenda & let WUC know of the delay.

#### **21. Date of next meeting**

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016 at 8pm.

*Meeting closed at 8.50pm.*

**Signed.....**  
**Chairman**

**Date.....**