



MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL
Virtually at 20:00 Thursday 1st October 2020

Members Present

Chairman	Jim Donahue
Members	Hanna Ferguson Jean-Marc Grosfort Katherine Higley Carrie Leadbeater-Hart Diana Smith – Vice Chairman Jon Steward

Officers Present:

Clerk	Jane M. Yamamoto
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Public and Press:

The Aitchisons, Alice Blackham, Dave Bowen, Adrian Dixon, Cllr Peter Dragonetti, Sarah Hanfrey, Barry Read, Tim Suiter, Richard Wingfield

The meeting started at 20:00.

- 1 **Apologies for absence & Mission Statement** 20:00
- 2 **Declaration of Interests** by Councillors on any items on the Agenda
Cllr Higley declared an interest for TAPAG issues to do with Manor Road. Although it is not a pecuniary interest, she declared an interest because she lives in Manor Road.
- 3 **Public Forum** - an opportunity for members of the public to express their point of view on any item on the agenda. With the Chairman's permission, a member of the public may express their point of view on specific items of business. Five minutes are reserved per item.
 - 3.1 Sarah Hanfrey:
 - Said how great it is that the Parish Council is looking at these issues
 - She believed that a lot of people thought the TAPAG proposal was a done deal
 - She felt that the village understood there to be no residents parking in the plan
 - Villagers required honesty from Parish Council for the funding of this scheme
 - She said that the Parish Council need to understand the real figures for ongoing administration and enforcement of parking spaces only used by residents.

Cllr Donahue responded that there was a budget for this annually but it is based on rough estimates and agreed there are a lot of unknowns at this point. Cllr Dragonetti said that SODC will be enforcing residents parking and revenue from fines for parking on yellow lines would go into a central pot. This money can only be spent on parking enforcement and similar schemes. Traffic wardens were covering the whole district – Goring, etc.

Cllr Smith said that TAPAG were already talking to OCC who together with their district councils are discussing parking enforcement. OCC already run some residential parking schemes.

3.2 Cllr Leadbeater-Hart asked if there was a lower amount of parking spaces.

Cllr Smith responded that there were 31 spaces if you included Manor Road, but only 24 if just the High Street.

4 Council to discuss and agree if Agenda Items 5 and 6 should be discussed without public participation due to the confidentiality of the individuals involved. 20:20

Resolution: It was agreed that the agenda items be discussed without the public and would allow the public to return to the meeting after the discussion had been completed.

5 Complaints raised by residents

The complaints raised by residents were discussed.

The Clerk reminded that only Councillors, themselves, can declare an interest. The Parish Council can recommend that Councillors declare an interest, either pecuniary or prejudicial, but cannot enforce this.

All were reminded that Councillors must act in accordance with the Nolan Principles. If a person in the street believes a Councillor to have a bias, then the Councillor should err on the side of caution and declare an interest.

6 FOI requests

It was agreed that the Clerk work with Cllr Higley and present the FOI policy and Complaints Procedure at the next PC meeting.

7/8 Review of objectives for addressing traffic and parking issues. This agenda item was combined with item 8 to discuss Cllr prioritisation and phasing of key objectives 20:50

All of the councillors were given the opportunity to state what objectives they felt were the highest priority to address in the short-term and longer-term.

Cllr Steward:

- 1) Pedestrian safety for all areas but specifically, the crossing to Eastfield Lane from the High Street and at the Ferryboat Inn. Cllr Steward mentioned that a zebra crossing was costed previously at £27k and the council at that time decided against it. Other lower cost initiatives should still be considered. It may also reduce the number of residents parking spaces and cause other traffic issues.
- 2) Involve people in the High St and do what they see what is important to them above everyone else. The traffic and parking issues are on their doorstep – find out what their opinions are.

Cllr Grosfort:

- 1) Safety, residents parking, congestion, speed, parking on the pavement, surprised by the TAPAG not prioritising the people on the High Street as it impacted them the most.

Cllr Ferguson:

- 1) Support better understanding views of residents on the High Street to understand what impact the plan will have on them.
- 2) Approach the objectives in a more comprehensive way.

Cllr Higley:

- 1) Too many cars parked on the High Street. Supports less cars in the village and less pollution. Create car sharing schemes and reduce the number of cars and journeys and therefore, pollution. We are accommodating the cars and the village does not have the infrastructure. When she grew up in the village, there were two lanes in both Manor Road and Hardwick Road. We are trying to accommodate everyone. New government initiatives are planned that will may result in fines for cars parking on the pavements. We need a fundamental switch. She also recommended monitoring air pollution in the village.
- 2) Parking restrictions on entrance to Manor Road are important for safety reason such as near the High Street intersection and along the bend in the road which both contravene the Highway Code.

Cllr Donahue:

- 1) Supports all the objectives in the Village Plan that the Parish Council had previously agreed to support: Traffic Flow, Parking issues, Safety in terms of speeding and pavements, and improvements to verges on Manor on the High Street. The question is on the timing and what order we should implement them.
- 2) Based on the recent feedback from many High Street residents that Residents Parking should happen at the same time as parking restrictions and traffic flow changes. As there is now reduced traffic and parking from Covid behaviour changes, he recommended we link these two objectives and make them a medium-term goal.
- 3) Items that can be decoupled, such as the Ferryboat pavement issues, and improvements to verges should be progressed in the short -term.
- 4) Initiatives to reduce speeding, particularly on Hardwick Road have not be investigated in any detail. He suggested that this is something TAPAG should look at now that he key High Street initiatives will likely be delayed.

Cllr Leadbeater-Hart:

- 1) Safety for pedestrians at the Ferryboat, narrow pavement at Walliscote Cottage and Warren Beard's house; upper narrows parking on pavement; reducing car flow in village; make village not a nice drive through, which would encourage more traffic; traffic calming measures.
- 2) Parking for residents, art gallery, hairdressers, and what houses need parking; maximise the amount of spaces, otherwise people will park inappropriately; we need gaps. She mentioned that a resident and Will Barclay counted 34 possible

parking spots on the High Street. Cllr Smith said that the current number of spaces have no consideration for the Highway Code.

- 3) Speeds/traffic flow go up when parking is not there. For this reason, she was not in favour of making changes to reduce congestion.
- 4) Set up project team and start again with the information already gathered. We need a more structured way from strategy through to implementation, better communication, for example, assumptions, cost, programme, etc.

9.0 Way forward

22:45

9.1 Agree actions to be taken in in the short, medium and longer term

Resolution:

The following priorities for TAPAG to address were agreed by the Council:

- 1) Addressing safety of pedestrians on the pavement in front of the Ferryboat Inn should be a short-term priority.
- 2) The desire to get residents parking in the village was re-confirmed. It is recognised that this will take some time as SODC still needs to take over parking enforcement, so this is likely to be a medium-term goal.
- 3) Councillors were generally supportive of designated parking bays and revised parking restrictions to address congestion, safety, and parking issues, but we now have time to review and re-validate the current proposal developed by the TAPAG and the traffic consultant. Any changes to parking should be linked to implementation of Residents Parking making this also a medium-term initiative. Some councillors and residents were not clear on the reasons behind details of the proposal, such as justification for the number and location of the proposed parking spaces. TAPAG should develop a written document and strategy that answers these questions. Other issues should also be addressed such as Manor Road parking restrictions.
- 4) As parking and congestion issues will be medium term issues, TAPAG should also looking at other issues that had not been previously investigated in any detail in the shorter term:
 - i. Traffic calming initiatives on Hardwick Road.
 - ii. Pollution reduction initiatives such car sharing and use of emissions boxes.
 - iii. Pedestrian safety crossing the High Street at Eastfield lane, for parents and school children, in particular.
- 5) It was also agreed that moving forward, all initiatives should build upon what TAPAG had already done, but the council recommended a re-structuring of TAPAG to provide the following benefits:
 - i. A clearer strategy that is communicated better and more detailed documentation of the proposals

- ii. Enable the addition of new members including someone with skills at documenting and communicating the proposals.

10 Meeting close.

23:15