

WHITCHURCH ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council on Tuesday 6th July 2009 in the village hall

Present:

Cllr Harry Butterworth (chairman), Cllr Vincent Aldridge (vice chairman), Cllr Matilda Oppenheimer, Cllr Nigel Grove, Cllr Elizabeth Robinson, Cllr Keith Brooks

In attendance:

Jo Wheeler (parish clerk), District Cllr Pearl Slatter, County Cllr Dave Sexon, John Lynch (representing Going Heath Parish Council), Matthew Rice (Trading Standards Enforcement Officer), Lindsay Austin, Amanda Waterman and Rosamund Heath (Whitchurch and District Allotment Society) and several members of the public.

20. Apologies for absence

None

21. Minutes of previous meetings

Minutes of the 12th May 2009 meeting signed as a true record.

22. Declarations of interest

None

23. Public forum

Residents expressed concern about the proposed bridge tolls and also about parking, particularly in the region of the Hardwick Road junction.

The problem of large vehicles finding their way through the village was discussed. Matthew Rice (Trading Standards Enforcement Officer) informed the council that although the "environmental" seven and a half tonne limit was currently unenforceable (because of a paperwork error), he would see that this was corrected. The chairman asked that if anyone sees a vehicle exceeding the weight limit they report it to a member of the Traffic and Roads group. Photographs would also be useful.

24. Matters arising from the minutes

The chairman noted that David Robinson and Richard Wingfield have been working very hard on the new design for the web site, which is progressing well.

25. Co-option of new councillor

Resolved to co-opt Mrs Lindsay Austin, of Old Barn Cottages, as the new parish councillor. Mrs Austin joined the Council.

26. Thames Valley Police Update

Discussion about the two "brick through window" burglaries in the village. Agreed to publish a notice in the Bulletin asking residents to report suspicious activities to Thames Valley Police or a Neighbourhood Watch representative.

27. Allotments

The council discussed the allocation of allotments with representatives from the Whitchurch & District Allotment Society. Amanda Waterman informed the council that allocation of plots is awarded on a "first come, first served" basis. The council expressed that the allotments are part of the Whitchurch Parish and are actually subsidised by the Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council, so should be awarded to Whitchurch residents first.

The issue was not fully resolved and it was agreed that the Allotment Society and Parish Council will arrange a separate meeting to discuss the matter.

28. Toll Bridge update

Cllr Oppenheimer reported that the parish council presented its case at the Public Inquiry. The case had been prepared with the help of Neil King and Jim Kerevan and was presented by Councillor Aldridge. The case was cross examined at great length.

Cllr Oppenheimer noted that the Bridge Company had offered a statement whereby the card toll would be capped at 20p until January 1st 2013 and thereafter would "be kept as low as possible". The Parish Council had indicated that some discussions along these lines might be of interest but have sent a letter to the Minister making it clear that any discussions of this type are exploratory and do not alter the Parish Council's position which was presented at the Inquiry.

The chairman informed that council that he met with the Inspector and Martin Brain (OCC Bridge Engineer) the morning after the Inquiry to look over, around and under the bridge. The problem was clearly visible and as described by Martin at the Inquiry.

John Lynch (representing Going Heath Parish Council) offered full support and informed the council that they also objected to the proposed increase.

The Parish Council expressed thanks to Neil King and Jim Kerevan for all the help they provided.

29. Cricket Ground

Cllr Oppenheimer reported that negotiations were proceeding well. The cost to the parish was estimated at £7000. The Parish Council resolved to spend up to £7000 on the project, especially as it holds a large reserve of money earmarked for village projects. The Parish Council agreed there is a minimal risk that the project may fail for planning policy reasons, but the end benefit outweighs the risk. The risk will be reduced by the fact the site will be for community use. Cllr Oppenheimer to provide an update at the next meeting.

30. Environmental Matters

The Village Plan Environmental Group had reformed. The Parish Council resolved to adopt it as the Parish Council Environmental Sub Committee and appointed Cllr Keith Brooks as chairman. Cllr Brooks reported that they were currently looking at litter bins, street lighting and the verges in Manor Road.

31. Traffic and road matters

The Village Plan Traffic and Roads Group had reformed. The Parish Council resolved to adopt it as the Parish Council Traffic and Roads Sub Committee and appointed Richard Wingfield as chairman. Agreed that Cllr Butterworth would be the parish council representative. The chairman reported that the group had been very concerned about car parking at the Hardwick Road junction. Two letters have already been handed to people concerned and an "under windscreen wiper" leaflet is being prepared. County Cllr Dave Sexon said that he had looked at the situation and offered his full support.

32. Village Hall matters

The Village Hall Group had reformed. The Parish Council resolved to adopt it as the Village Hall Management Sub Committee and appointed Stephen Trinder as chairman. Agreed that Cllr Oppenheimer would be the parish council representative.

Resolved to increase payment to Ed Pilcher, the village hall caretaker, in line with the increase in hall hire.

33. District Councillor Report

Cllr Slatter reported that, despite a few teething problems, the new waste and recycling collection was going well and feedback from residents has been positive.

34. County Councillor Report

The Parish Council welcomed the new County Councillor, Dave Sexon. Cllr Sexon said he had toured the village and agreed with the Parish Council's approach to car parking problems.

35. Planning

Presented by Cllr Robinson:

Reference	Location	Description	Parish council decision
P09/E0565	The Garden House, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames	Erection of single storey front, side and rear extensions. Raising of roof to allow first floor accommodation. Erection of car port to existing garage. Amendment to approved application no. P08/E1064. The Councils opinion was that this improves the building.	No strong views
P09/E0483	Little Eastfield, Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch-on-Thames	Two storey side extension with front and rear projections to provide ground floor granny annexe and first floor study and hobbies room.	No strong views

36. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 10:30pm