

WHITCHURCH ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council on Monday 2nd November 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, Cllr Lindsay Austin

In attendance:

Jo Wheeler (parish clerk), County Cllr Dave Sexon

54. Apologies for absence

District Cllr Pearl Slatter

55. Declarations of interest

Cllr Butterworth declared an interest in the planning application for New Place.

56. Minutes of previous meetings

Minutes of 14th September 2009 were agreed and signed as a correct record

57. Matters arising

None

58. Public forum

There were no issues about anything other than the bridge toll.

59. Toll Bridge discussion

Several members of the public commented on the toll increase:

1. One requested that the parish council make it an aim that Oxfordshire County Council take over the running of the bridge, especially as the Bridge Company has proven that it cannot manage the bridge financially. He stated that the Bridge Company displayed a lack of concern and awareness of the local community, and the Bridge Company provides no community benefit at all.

2. Another member of the public asked whether the parish council intend to meet with the Bridge Company to discuss concessionary tolls. Cllr Oppenheimer replied to say the parish council attends all meetings with the Bridge Company and the concessionary toll is something the parish council has always campaigned for.

3. Another member of the public asked whether Oxfordshire County Council could become involved with the concessionary rate issue.
4. It was asked whether the Bridge Company would meet with Toll Freeze, and the parish council concluded that it was the responsibility of both parties to make this decision.

County Councillor Dave Sexon responded to resident comments:

a) Oxfordshire County Council is in no position to take over the running of the bridge. It does not have the finances to purchase or maintain the bridge. The County Council has pledged to keep council tax down. This means it would be impossible to purchase the bridge, at least in the next 10 to 15 years. If the County Council purchased the bridge it would probably also have to raise tolls to recover costs.

b) He recommended that the Bridge Company are pressurised about a concessionary toll for local people and other issues. In summary, the parish council will be seeking to meet with the Whitchurch Bridge Company to discuss the arrangements for closure and the need for concessionary tolls for local residents.

The parish council will report the results of this meeting in the Bulletin.

60. Thames Valley Police update

PCSO Mark Bell introduced PC Stephen Pink, the new neighbourhood officer. A number of youths were found trespassing on the grounds of Whitchurch Primary School at the weekend. They were escorted home. The youths reported that there is nowhere to go to play sports in the village and this is why they trespassed on school property. The council agreed that this is another example of the need for a recreation ground in the village. The protest against the toll increase was a peaceful demonstration and no trouble was reported. The police normally attend demonstrations with an aim to oversee events and ensure that the Highway remains clear, rather than to make arrests.

61. Planning

Presented by Cllr Robinson:

Reference	Location	Description	Parish council decision
P09/E1052	New Place High Street Whitchurch Hill RG8 7ET	Erection of single storey front and side extension. Installation of roof light to north elevation and replacement of existing front door with window	As this is a relatively new application and the documents were incomplete, the parish council agreed to review it at the next meeting.

Planning decisions:

P09/E0918 Land at Wells House, Eastfield Lane Erection of detached two storey three bedroom dwelling and garage. (Resubmission of planning permission P09/E0166) - **refused**

62. District Councillor Report

None

63. County Councillor report

County Cllr Sexon confirmed that the 7.5 ton limit for the B4071 has been approved and that the scheme will be funded by the County Council, including appropriate signage.

Cllr Oppenheimer asked whether the County Council carry out any kind of regular inspections of roads. Cllr Sexon confirmed that they do but an email from the parish council will help to get problems repaired more quickly.

It was suggested that now the Pangbourne 20mph limit is in force and the Bridge Company have issued a 20mph limit across the Bridge; it would be an ideal opportunity to implement a 20mph limit into the village. Cllr Sexon replied that the 20mph limit on the bridge isn't statutory.

There are other measures to reduce traffic speed. The parish council agreed that it would continue to pursue the 20mph limit with the County Council, and request another traffic survey to test the effectiveness of the removal of the white lines.

64. Whitchurch Society

Parish council suggested that the Whitchurch Society continue with annual subscriptions to increase their funding.

65. Website

All agreed that the TollFreeze link can go on the website.

66. Community sports field

Cllr Oppenheimer confirmed that the architects have been appointed. A feasibility planning report has been produced. All agreed that more car parking is required. An evening meeting will be planned in the New Year to show parishioners the plans, and to consult with local people and potential users. All agreed that there is a great need for a community sports facility in the village.

67. Environmental Matters

Cllr Brooks provided an update from the group. The report from the Environmental Committee will be published in the Bulletin.

68. Traffic and road matters

The last meeting was on Friday 30th October. A new road and pavement review has been drawn up, listing all the road & pavement problems in the village. Parish clerk to send to Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire County Council. Report from the Traffic & Roads Committee. Full report will be published in the Bulletin.

69. Village Hall matters

Nothing to report

70. Financial matters

Payments made:

Payee	Description	Amount
Sarah Butterworth	Bulletin printing	£367.00
J Wheeler	Salary	£754.00
Royal British Legion	Parish council wreath	£50.00
National Society of Allotments	Annual subscription	£63.25
David Parker architects	50% architects fee	£1685.67
Vincent Aldridge	Clips for dog fouling signs	£27.60

71. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 10.10pm. The next meeting is on Monday 14th December.

Signed:

Dated: