



DRAFT

MINUTES OF MEETING OF WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL
At the Village Hall at 20:00 Thursday, November 14, 2024

Councillors Present:

Jim Donahue (Chairman), Diana Smith, Katherine Higley, Debbie Leach, Frances Parkes and Nick Brazil

Officers Present:

Clerk, RFO – Brian Inglis

Public and Press: 5 residents were present at the start of the meeting

In Attendance: District Cllr Peter Dragonetti (SODC)

The meeting started at 20:00.

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| 1 | Apologies for absence & Parish Council Declaration Cllr O’Grady sent apologies. Cllr Donahue read the Parish Council Declaration. | 20:00 |
| 2 | Declaration of Interests Cllr Donahue declared an interest in item 7.2, as a close acquaintance of an immediate neighbour | |
| 3 | Public Forum – a time for members of the public to speak on any item on the agenda. A resident spoke on behalf of all residents of Eastfield Lane, outlining the scale of the emotional impact of the ongoing development at Cedar Lodge, with particular emphasis on the last 12 months. | 20:05 |
| 4 | To approve minutes of the meeting of October 10, 2024. Resolution: The Council voted to approve the minutes. | 20:10 |
| 5 | Chairman’s Announcements See Appendix 1 | 20:10 |
| 6 | To receive reports from the representatives of OCC and SODC | |
| 6.1 | SODC District Councillor Report – Cllr Dragonetti. See Appendix 2 | |
| 6.2 | OCC County Councillor Report - Cllr Bulmer. No report received | |
| 7 | Planning Applications – to discuss and agree Council’s response to the following: | 20:20 |
| 7.1 | P24/S3273/HH - Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing conservatory. Mellifont, Hardwick Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7HW Resolution: The Council voted to support this application. | |
| 7.2 | P24/S2700/S73 - Variation of conditions 3 (Landscaping compliance), 11 (Windows obscure glazed and fixed shut) and 14 (Approved plans) on application P23/S4055/S73 to allow internal and external changes to the approved building and changes to landscaping. (Amended plans received 1 November 2024) (Variation of conditions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13 and 14 of planning permission P11/S0126 to allow changes to tree protection measures and landscaping details. (Partial demolition of existing care home, Eastfield House, construction of extensions and associated works and change of use of land at the rear of the home from C3 to C2 to provide additional external amenity space) Cedar Lodge Care Home, Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7EJ 5 separate residents addressed councillors, each resident in turn strongly objecting to this application. Resolution: The Council voted to object and submit the following comments – <i>"Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council consider the contents of this application and the proposed changes to be inappropriate for a Section73 application. The Parish Council strongly feels that the</i> | |

proposed changes are not of a minor nature, and that a new, part-retrospective planning application would be more appropriate in this case.

The Parish Council continues to strongly object to this application, and fully supports the residents of Eastfield Lane who have lodged objections on the planning portal. The Parish Council considers this development to be unneighbourly, overbearing, and oppressive in its scale and bulk, out of proportion and damaging to the street scene of existing dwellings along Eastfield Lane and the Whitchurch-On-Thames Conservation Area.

The Parish Council has concerns over the siting of the Plant Room, now proposed to be at ground level and likely to be a source of noise disturbance to neighbours. The Parish Council is concerned that there is no mention of any plans for the safe evacuation of fumes from this area, or from the kitchen area, fearing a build up of smells and cooking aromas which would create an unpleasant environment for neighbours. Finally, the Parish Council requests that, should the Planning Officer be minded to approve this application, that it be called to panel for a final decision to be taken"

All residents left the meeting at this point. The meeting continued with no public attendance.

- 8 The Clerk gave an update on planning decisions made since the last meeting and an update on the progress of applications which are currently under consideration by SODC planning team. 20.45
 Future agendas will show details of applications for tree work within the parish.

- 9 **Finance:** 20.50

- 9.1 To approve the payment schedule for September:

| Payment | Sub-total | VAT | Total (£) |
|---|-----------|---------|-----------|
| Staff Expenditure (November) | | | 639.10 |
| Officer Back Pay (NALC Pay Award 2024/25) | | | 151.90 |
| Green & Gorgeous | 30.00 | NIL | 30.00 |
| Environment Agency | 181.85 | NIL | 181.85 |
| RBL Poppy Shop | 20.41 | 4.08 | 24.49 |
| Printinco | 494.00 | NIL | 494.00 |
| Scofell | 6250.00 | 1250.00 | 7500.00 |
| South Oxfordshire DC | 858.73 | 171.75 | 1030.48 |

Resolution: The Council voted to approve the payments.

- 9.2 To note receipts as detailed:

| Receipts | Amount |
|---|---------|
| PJ Wise Ltd – Bulletin Advertising | 100.00 |
| Warmingham & Co – Bulletin Advertising | 175.00 |
| South Oxfordshire District Council – CIL Payment (Oct 2024) | 1043.19 |
| THP Solicitors – Refund of Fees | 185.60 |

- 9.3 **Bank Statements and Reconciliations for September - October 2024:** 21.00

The RFO gave a concise report on documents which had been previously circulated and scrutinised by councillors, answering questions to the satisfaction of councillors.

Resolution: The Council voted to approve the RFO report.

District Cllr Dragonetti left the meeting at this time.

- 10 **Motion:** To publish Residents' Issue List on the website. Proposer Cllr Donahue, Seconder Cllr Smith. Cllr Donahue gave a report on various "OPEN" items on the list of issues, answering questions from councillors as appropriate. Cllr Donahue to continue management of this list. 21.05
Resolution: The Council voted to publish an updated list to the village website. (Action – Clerk)

- 11 Cllr Higley gave an update on plans for the Ruth Popper Playground, summarised as follows – 21.20
1. We are still working to resolve the ownership of all the land in the playground.
 2. We are proposing that we remove the existing wet pour and replace it with wood chips. This represents a move towards nature-based play and removes any potential for health impacts on children and other visitors to the playground and detrimental impacts to the environment.
 3. We will be putting up 'No dogs' signage. The Parish Council will consider putting in place a Public Space Protection Order in due course.
 4. We will be replacing the gate stops on the gates and cutting back the overhanging trees. We will be adding some additional seating in the playground.
 5. We are currently considering which equipment to replace and which equipment to restore/update. We intend to make part of the playground suitable for very young children and toddlers.
 6. We are actively working on grant funding.
- Cllr Higley answered questions on this report, to the satisfaction of councillors.
- 12 Cllr Parkes gave an update on speeding through the village, noting the concerns of many residents and 21.35 reported that OCC Highways will soon be installing a set of traffic monitoring wires are to be placed on the High Street to supply data which can be used to decide the next steps to address this issue. A small supply of traffic cones has been ordered to be used in one particular problem area.
- 13 Cllr Donahue asked that The Clerk oversee the maintenance of the Parish Council's Actions Log in future. 21.45 This was agreed – Cllr Donahue to fully update the log and pass to The Clerk in due course.
- 14 The deadline for submission of items to The Clerk for inclusion on the next Agenda is close of business on Thursday, December 5 2024.
- 15 The date and time of the next meetings was set as Thursday, December 12, 2024 at 20:00. The meeting closed at 21.47

APPENDIX 1 – CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Village Drains Clearing

OCC Highways cleared the village drains last week (from the 4th-8th November) on the High Street and all other streets in the village. This was a full cleaning including the gulleys as well as the street run-off pipes between them along the High Street and other streets including Manor Road, Eastfield land, Hardwick Road and Hillside.

- There were a number of drains where a red marking was made., There have been reported to OCC where the gulleys are damaged in some way. There are quite a few:
 - 2 on the High Street
 - 6 on Hardwick Road
 - 5 on Swanston Field
 - 1 on Hillside
 - 4-5 on Manor Road
- The OCC manager responsible stated that the work be completed on 18th November to address the red-dot gullies.
- I have raised a request again for SODC to clear the leaves from the village streets to avoid drains getting filled again quickly. I am pleased to report that this work was completed on Monday, 11 November.
- I have also chased them to improve the 'catch-pits' on the steep part of Whitchurch Hill to clear them and potentially upgrade them.

Residents' Issues

- I agree that Eastfield Lane is in need of resurfacing, and we have raised this to OCC Highways, along with the need to resurface parts of Manor Road and Hardwick Road. The work is not part of this fiscal year's budget, but will be considered for fiscal year 2025/26 which starts in April, so it would work well with timing for the completion of Cedar Lodge.

- A resident raised concerns about resurfacing Eastfield Lane due to construction. I have checked with my contacts at OCC and the Cedar Lodge contractors and they are both in agreement that they are responsible for repairing the highway 'as it was' once construction is completed, which is now planned to be done by March 2025, although they have been doing some repairs and street cleaning where needed on an ongoing basis. Their responsibilities include filling potholes and repairing the verges, but does not include a full resurfacing of the road. The contractor actually filmed the condition of the road before work started to ensure it is clear what condition they need to restore it to. There have been 4 significant construction projects happening on the road for a while now, and a fifth, the Pre-School replacement also recently started. So, it is hard to know who is responsible for repairing what.

APPENDIX 2 – REPORT from DISTRICT COUNCILLOR DRAGONETTI

Planning

Although development is supposed to be plan led, the District Council has to handle speculative developments. Currently there are two big developments that have been put forward, a large warehouse development on the Oxford Green Belt at Waterstock, and a speculative housing development near Shillingford. As there is so much money to be made, developers push these schemes forward and SODC has to devote a lot of resources to handling them.

Street Trading Consultation

A consultation has opened on a review of the Councils Street Trading Policy which was last reviewed in 2011, since when street trading has become more popular. Proposed amendments include updates to charity and community events, single use plastics and guidance on applicants who wish to trade from multiple sites. The consultation is open until 26 November
<https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/legal-and-democratic/review-of-street-trading-policy-consultation-2024/>

Grants

The Capital Grant scheme closed on 2 September, and there were nine applications requesting a total of £231,918 against a budget of £320,000.

The Councillor Community Grant Scheme closes on 29 November; I am aware of one application in this ward, but that is not for the whole of the £5000 that is allocated

Enforcement and Environmental

A restaurant in Wheatley has been incurred costs and fines of £25,000 as it had failed

Household Support Fund

This scheme provides support to people struggling with the cost of living, and residents can contact the Community Hub Team on 01235 422600

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/coronavirus-community-support/help-for-individuals/>

Garden Waste Permit Scheme

There will be a new garden waste scheme next year which will run from a common date, which is why direct debits for the current scheme are odd amounts to take users up to the start date of the new scheme

Crowmarsh Swimming Pool

We had a successful 2024 summer season at Riverside Park and Pools. The outdoor pool welcomed almost 16,000 visitors this season, a significant rise from previous years (up 17.8 per cent compared to 2023) and a testament to the pool's popularity. The newly redeveloped splash pad, proved to be an enormous hit, reaffirming its popularity.

The campsite has continued to be extremely popular. Nearly every weekend saw the campsite fully booked, and there wasn't a night without campers.

Looking ahead to the next season there are plans to expand the site with more pitches and a fully accessible Changing Places facilities will be available at the Camping block toilets.