

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting held in ‘The Old Stables’, Wednesday 12th April 2017, commencing at 8.00pm.

PRESENT

Chairman	Keith Brooks
Councillors	Dave Bowen Rachel Hatcher Jon Steward
Clerk	Felipa House

Public:

Mark & Emma Candlish, Leslie Maynerd, Hilary Jensen, Anna Szczeponek, David Pearson, Wendy Blow, other resident.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr. Bulmer, Cllr. Simister, Cllr. Donahue, Cllr. Huxtable & Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart.

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.

Leslie Maynerd, representing MOWS, stated that she had received verbal agreement from the landowner to cut the trees overhanging the area near the church entrance. She also requested authorisation from the Council to purchase several bags of bark for this area on behalf of MOWS.

Anna Szczeponek stated that she would be happy to help with plans involving the site of the former Polish church.

4. Agree minutes of Parish Council meeting 13th March 2017 & Extraordinary meeting of 4th April 2017

These were both approved as a true record.

5. District councillor’s report

Cllr. Simister was not present but sent his report after the meeting. This included details of proposals for the new unitary council, LEADER funding, rate relief schemes for small businesses, grants for capital projects, grant funding to 16 community groups across the area & information about the draft Local Plan.

6. County councillor’s report

Cllr. Bulmer was not present but had circulated his report before the meeting. This included details of the County Council elections on 4th May, as well as the pre-election period (‘purdah’).

OCC has joined forces with Waze, a free crowd-sourced traffic & navigation app. Waze is a SatNav app with the added benefit of crowd-sourced traffic flow information & OCC roadworks. It is free to download & use (www.waze.com/download).

7. Planning

P17/S0862/HH, 5 Hillside, Hardwick Road. Ground floor rear extension & dormers. One of the neighbours had contacted Cllr. Brooks to express concern about access during the work. Cllr. Brooks has contacted SODC with these concerns & the resident has also written to SODC Planning. The Council unanimously voted to submit 'No strong views'.

P17/S0874/FUL, 'Hopton', Manor Road. Demolition of existing house & construction of replacement house. Cllr. Steward had visited the site & felt that the application was reasonable due to the size of the plot. 1 bat has been found so a licence will be obtained before demolition begins. Concerns had been voiced about the dropped kerb & felling of trees but Mark Candlish explained that planning permission had previously been obtained for the kerb & had been checked again & that the trees were removed due to earlier lack of care. He felt that access to the site was good so there should be no issue with traffic or damage to the road during building work. The Council unanimously voted to submit 'No strong views'.

P17/S0902/HH, 4 Whitchurch House, High Street. Replacement of existing shed with slightly larger shed. The Council unanimously voted to submit 'No strong views'.

P17/S1088/LB, 'The Dower House', Hardwick Road. Further internal alterations. The Council unanimously voted to submit 'No strong views'.

P17/S1169/HH, 4 Old Gardens, Manor Road. New detached garage. The Council unanimously voted to submit 'No strong views'.

8. Finance Approve payments/note receipts

Monthly salary for the Clerk

Expenses for the Clerk for stamps (£14.28)

Invoice from SiteSpider for annual website hosting (£78.78)

Payment to St. Mary's PCC for 'Old Stables' hire (£10.00)

Invoice from Lowther Battram for village hall survey (£695.00)

Invoice from SODC for dog-bin emptying (£50.23)

Expenses for K. Brooks for bulbs (£21.00).

The s.137 limit for 2017/18 has increased slightly to £7.57.

The Council had received the first half of the 2017/18 precept (£12,886.50).

The Council agreed to donate £1,000 to the village hall. The Council also wanted to renew their annual subscription to Community First Oxfordshire (£50) & to donate £150 to the Chilterns Conservation Board's 'Beacons of the past' project. This is a 4-year programme of research, education & conservation activities on hillforts & prehistoric heritage across the Chilterns. The Clerk will disseminate the project information to local interested parties.

The Council's internal audit will take place later in the month. Unapproved 2016/17 figures are now available.

The Clerk had received notification from SODC that the Council is entitled to £2,171.26 as its share of the Community Infrastructure Levy from the construction of the new house on the plot of 'The

Haven'. The Clerk will discuss this with SODC & find out more about any time limits/restrictions that exist regarding the use of the money.

9. Village green

Cllr. Bowen is awaiting a second quote for a MUGA/skating area. He was advised that perhaps this could instead be a pump track, using the mound of earth that's already there. Cllr. Brooks mentioned that he had received several emails from people concerned about the idea of a skate park.

The Clerk had obtained a quote for a new standing pipe at the north end of the village green but this was not quite what was needed. She was asked to talk to the cricket club to see how theirs was installed, as this is what is needed again.

Cllr. Brooks is liaising with the family who wish to plant a memorial tree. This will now be put in the Polish church site instead of the village green.

'WhitFest' is to take place in the afternoon of Saturday 24th June, with the Roy Bailey Big Band, a barbecue, children's entertainers etc. This is to raise funds for the new village green pavilion.

10. Village Green Working Group/pavilion

Cllrs. Brooks & Leadbeater-Hart are working on plans for the new pavilion & hope to be able to submit something soon for planning approval. The plans may allow for a larger building than is actually required, depending upon funds available.

11. TAPAG (Traffic and Parking Action Group)

A TAPAG update will be provided at next month's meeting as their meeting has not yet taken place.

The new Going Forward bus service is now due to start operating in mid-May. Wendy Blow was concerned about its viability & the route. Cllr. Bowen had been on a test drive of the route last week & felt that it was comparable in time with the 143. He feels that the man behind the project is extremely passionate about it & will make it work & is already operating a successful service from Goring. The use of bus passes is encouraged. Timetables are being finalised & it is hoped will be available in time to go out with this month's 'Bulletin'. David Pearson asked what contingency plans were in place should the new service not prove viable. The Council unanimously voted to continue their financial support for the 143 service until the end of July, using s.137 funding. There would therefore be an overlap of 2½ months between the services. The Clerk explained that the Council's s.137 allowance was not enough to subsidise the bus for a full year & she was not willing to use any further monies than those already agreed. The Council explained that they had decided not to try for the General Powers of Competence due to lack of time before a decision had to be made about the bus. The Clerk also mentioned that a parish election would cost approximately £1,500. Cllr. Brooks urged everyone to support the new bus service.

12. Village hall refurbishment project

Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart is looking through the survey that has been received from Lowther Battram & will report her recommendations.

13. Village environment/maintenance

The new village maintenance contractor, Azalea Landscapes, is due to start work this week.

WoTHabs are to visit the Polish church site again & give their advice. Any plans for installation of e.g. benches/seats must be checked with SODC beforehand. A gate might need to be installed to prevent access out of hours. Villagers could perhaps be asked to donate plants/seeds for the site.

Images for the new village sign have been received & were approved by the Council. The sign format now required has been changed. The Clerk will liaise with Caroline & assist her where necessary. The Council agreed to pay her a small amount as a token of thanks.

Cllr. Brooks is still investigating the provision of a Brown Chilterns AONB sign.

The Allotment Society have notified the Clerk that the treehouse on the allotment site has been demolished.

14. Village /Neighbourhood Plans

Open days to discuss & show the Neighbourhood Plan have been arranged, details of which will be in this month's 'Bulletin'. A resident has suggested that the Council challenge SODC regarding the planning numbers given for Whitchurch, which could now be up to 10%.

15. Additional meeting dates

Next month's meeting will be the Annual Meeting. The Annual Parish Meeting will take place at 7.30pm on Thursday 25th May in the village hall. The Clerk will circulate an invitation to all interested parties.

16. 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

Nothing was mentioned.

17. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 9th May 2017 at 8pm.

Meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....