



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL
Virtually at 20:15 Thursday 9th April 2020

Members Present

Chairman Jim Donahue

Members Hanna Ferguson
Jean-Marc Grosfort
Katherine Higley
Diana Smith

Officers Present:

Clerk Jane M. Yamamoto

Public and Press: David Bowen, Peter Dragonetti, Richard Wingfield

- 1 Apologies for absence & Mission Statement 20:15
Cllr Steward sent his apologies.
- 2 Declaration of Interests by Councillors on any items on the Agenda
There were no declarations made.
- 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.
- 4 Chairman's Announcements 20:20
 1. Coronavirus support process – The Chairman thanked John Bradon and Lily King, who were coordinating this effort. Residents who require help should contact WOTvolunteers@gmail.com . They are working to coordinate prescription pick-ups 3 times a week (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays) where possible, to make the process more efficient as there are often queues at Lloyds pharmacy. About 50 residents have signed up as volunteers and there have been about 40 logged requests so far. Requests are starting to increase after a slow start. This support is incredibly important to a number of people. We have plenty of capacity for now, so residents should not hesitate to make a request if they need support.
 2. Village Open Spaces –Government instructions are clear that playgrounds should be closed, so the Manor Road Playground has been closed until further notice. The Village Green and other open spaces are still open, but we encourage everyone to be responsible and stay at least two metres apart whilst they are enjoying the fresh air and exercise. Dogs

should be kept on a lead where they may be close to other people in spaces such as the Village Green.

3. Bulletin –The Spring issue of the Bulletin will include information on how to get help from WOT Volunteers as well as information on:

- o SODC service information
- o NHS tips on coping with Coronavirus
- o Summary of key government messages to protect against coronavirus
- o Changes to fete and other activities
- o There will be a need for volunteers to distribute copies – there are normally 6 but not all will be available. Rubber gloves will be made available.

4. There are some new issues raised by residents:

- o Even though working parties were cancelled, the new Fred Phillipson Memorial tree was replanted by Sally and Peter Woolhouse.
- o Hardwick Road drain blockages were raised by a resident and a group was working to ensure CC clears them.
- o 2 residents raised concerns about a deer that was trapped under Coombe Park fence
- o There was a request for inspection/ trimming of Yew trees along Manor Road.

Action - PC-141 -Cllr Donahue said he would forward the contractor quote that Mark Candlish obtained and Cllr Grosfort would get a quote from his contact.

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| 5 | To approve minutes of the meeting of 12 th March 2020
Resolution: The councillors approved the minutes. | 20:25 |
| 6 | Planning Applications | 20:30 |
| 6.1 | P20/S0965/HH
Ash Court, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7ER
Demolition of existing single garage, erection of detached double garage with additional off-road parking and turning space.
Resolution: The Council voted No Objections with comments – recommended usage of permeable ground materials and subject to approval by conservation officer. | |
| 6.2 | P20/S0706/FUL
Bozedown Farm, Hardwick Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7QY
Change of use of land adjacent to the dwellinghouse at Bozedown Farm to residential garden and constructions of a garden room for a purpose ancillary to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse.
Resolution: The Council voted to Object with comments. See Attachment 1 from Cllr Higley. | |
| 6.3 | P19/S0366/FUL
Coombe Park, Coombe Park Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7QT
Replace existing fences to the west side of the driver along Manor Road and metal fences along the boundary of the site with the Heartslock Bridleway to a timber paling fence standing 2.2 meters in height, with associated planting of native hedges.
Resolution: The Council voted to submit No Objections with comments. See Attachment 2 from Cllr Donahue. | |
| 7 | To receive reports from the representatives of Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council. | 20:40 |

7.1 SODC District Councillor Report. See Attachment 3.
See attached.

7.2 OCC County Councillor Report

8 Finance

20:45

8.1 **Resolution: The following payments were approved:**

Payment	Amount
Rialtas annual subscription	£145.20
SODC (Dog bin Q1 2020)	£55.26
Clerk salary (April 2020)	BACS
Jim Donahue expense (Zoom)	£14.39
Clerk expenses (2 printer cartridges)	£33.98
Sitespider.co.uk	£61.10
Azalea Landscapes (posts on Eastfield)	£420

9 Covid-19 Response

20:50

Cllr Donahue reported that Pangbourne Parish Council had also carried on meetings virtually and did not delegate special powers to the Clerk and Chairman/Vice-Chairman. They had allocated £20k for emergency food distribution in case the situation became worse. Goring Parish Council had delegated powers to the Clerk so have less need to plan virtual meetings in the short-term.

Cllr Donahue reminded that Section 137 allowed the council to access £8.32/electoral registered villager (£5,243) for emergency funding. He added that the District Councillor, Peter Dragonetti, advised that a £2000 coronavirus emergency grant was also available to be used by the 3-4 villages in his district.

Resolution: The Council agreed that, on a case to case basis, any emergency funding could be agreed quickly via email with support from a majority of councillors.

10 Minutes of Meeting – to approve the draft minutes within one week of meeting for website.

20:55

Resolution: The council voted to have the draft minutes published after approximately two weeks after each meeting. The Clerk planned to issue draft minutes within a week of each meeting and councillors should then provide any comments within one week of receiving the draft minutes.

Action PC-142 – Clerk to update the Standing Orders to reflect this change.

11 Village Hall boiler

Cllr Grosfort reported that this issue could wait until later in the year.

12 Village Green additional dog and rubbish bin

21:00

Councillors were generally supportive of having a new dog fouling bin on the Village Green, but were waiting for Cllr Steward to propose a specific location.

Cllr Donahue advised that a resident proposed having a dog bin by the Veg Shed at Hardwick Estate, but was waiting for confirmation from Hardwick Estate that this was needed. This discussion can be deferred until the next meeting.

- 13 Village dogs to be kept on leads – Cllr Steward 21:10
The Government’s advice was to keep dogs on a lead in common spaces.
Resolution: The Council voted to create a sign on the Village Green to remind people to keep their dogs on a lead and to keep to household groups when playing football.
- 14 To review progress on any open actions from previous Parish Council meetings and agree any revision of actions on the action list. 21:20
Action listed was updated.
- 15 The next Meeting on 14 May, 2020 at 20:00 was confirmed to be held virtually again 21:25
pending any further Government advice. The Annual Assembly Meeting on May 28th will be confirmed at a later date.
- 16 Meeting Close 21:30

1) Dogs on leads – Cllr Grosfort said that the Government advice was confusing but he felt that dogs should be kept on leads on the green. Cllrs Smith and Steward both agreed and said that this was not a huge sacrifice. Cllr Ferguson emphasised that the wording was important. Cllr Higley clarified that Government guidelines were not by-laws, but they were recommendations and that only regulations were law. She also reminded all that these guidelines may change as the lockdown continued. For example, if the Government were to temporarily recommend closures of Village Greens.

Resolution: The Councillors approved to place new signage on the Village Green to ask that dogs be kept on leads following Government guidelines.

2) Sport pitches – Cllr Donahue read the OALC guidelines that sport pitches were closed for sports games but Parish Councils did not have to close the entire space. Cllr Smith recommended that a middle course be taken: signage on the green be placed up and the football nets be taken down. No team games should be encouraged but games within own households were fine. Cllr Higley reiterated that the Government did not give legal advice so wording must be careful. She further warned that the Parish Council must be cautious and do what they can; if there was an outbreak of the virus in the village, it may appear that the Council did not do enough to contain the spread. Cllr Donahue asked Cllr Dragonetti what his Parish had done. Cllr Dragonetti reported that their playground was taped up but they had not closed its open space.

Carrie Leadbeater-Hart recommended that the net on the side of the horse field be kept to avoid the ball potentially going over onto the field. Cllr Steward said that the landowner did not have a problem with balls being retrieved.

Resolution: The Councillors voted to approve the removal of the nets and place new signage up to indicate that the cricket and football pitches were closed until further notice. Also, when using the Village Green, to please observe social distancing.

PC-143- Cllr Steward to tape off the cricket nets and take down football nets.

PC-144 - Cllr Donahue would send the specific wording around to the Councillors in an email to be approved prior to the notices being placed around the Village Green and on the village website.

4.2 Visitors 10:40

Cllr Donahue reported that OALC had cleared up this issue. The village was not a National Park and therefore, cannot discourage people walking through the village. OCC specifically stated that the PC has no powers to enforce closure of footpaths and discourage people visiting.

5 Finance:

Resolution: The Council voted to approve the payment of Nova invoice for £405 for the printing of the WOT village bulletin.

6 Planning Applications 10:45

6.1 P19/S0366/FUL

Coombe Park, Coombe Park Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7QT

Replace existing fences to the west side of the driver along Manor Road and metal fences along the boundary of the site with the Heartslock Bridleway to a timber paling fence standing 2.2 meters in height, with associated planting of native hedges.

Cllr Donahue reported that the planning officer, Caitlin Phillpotts, advised that the Council's vote to submit Objections with comments would mean a lengthy delay to the application because it would have to go to a planning committee. Cllr Dragonetti said that there were no facilities to have the public contribute as there were legal hurdles to overcome. Cllr Donahue said that the applicants still needed to comply with the OCC regulations of the width of the highway. Cllr Steward reminded that they had changed it to be a wooden fence.

Resolution: The Council voted to submit No Objections with comments for consideration.

7 Meeting Close

10:50