

# *Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council*

**MINUTES** of the Parish Council meeting held in the village hall, Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015, commencing at 8.00pm.

## **PRESENT**

Chairman	Keith Brooks
Councillors	David Bowen Carrie Hart James Polansky Jonathan Steward
Clerk	Felipa House

District Councillor Rob Simister

Public:

Rachel Hatcher

Alex Widdern

## **1. Apologies for absence**

Vice-Chairman Jim Donahue, County Councillor Kevin Bulmer.

## **2. Declarations of interest**

Jonathan (gardening contracts in the village)

**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.

## **4. Agree minutes of Parish Council meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015**

These were approved as a true record.

## **5. District councillor's report**

Cllr. Simister - parking in Henley is free all day every Tuesday & Saturday before Christmas & in Goring every Saturday before Christmas as well.

Notices about waste collections during the Christmas period will be put on bins.

Neighbourhood Plans are becoming increasingly important in order to prevent speculative development & should also include the provision of a 5-year land supply. Funding is available for parishes wanting to create one, as well as a toolkit to help with the process. Cllr. Simister will send information to Felipa & can help should Whitchurch want to do this. He felt it would be worthwhile liaising with other parishes that have already gone through the process or buddying up with another parish in order to share knowledge & defray some of the costs.

Thames Valley Police are carrying out an online survey about cyber-crime. Cllr. Simister will send the link to Felipa should any parishioners wish to take part.

Cllr. Simister will also chase up SODC regarding the Parish Council's wish to buy or lease the area around the Polish church. Keith will send Rob a map to confirm its exact location.

## **6. County councillor's report**

Cllr. Bulmer was not present but had circulated his report to councillors before the meeting. This included information about the Chancellor's Autumn Statement & its impact upon OCC.

## **7. Planning**

**P15/S3568/HH** Bridge Cottages, High Street. New downstairs WC. The Parish Council voted unanimously that the application should be approved.

**P15/S3807/HH** Manor Cottage, High Street. Single-storey conservatory at the rear. The Parish Council voted unanimously that the application should be approved.

A Certificate of Lawful Development was received for The Mill House, High Street, for a proposed single-storey rear extension & additional door openings. No action was required from the Council.

## **8. Finance** Approve payments/note receipts

Monthly salary for Felipa

Expenses from Felipa for mileage, stationery & childcare to attend training (£74.14)

Invoice from Berinsfield Community Business for October grass cutting (£436.32)

Invoice from Nova Press for the November 'Bulletin' (£367.00)

Payment for plumber to mend leak & install new tap in village hall (£166.80).

It was agreed that the Council would pay for Felipa's annual subscription to the SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks). The Council will also pay for a copy of the 'Local council administration' book & some planning guides. Felipa will arrange the purchase of these.

## **9. Village green – report**

Jim submitted a report from the latest Village Green Working Group meeting. It will be discussed fully at January's meeting. This includes a recommendation that the beech hedge between the school & village green be cut, for which a quote has been obtained. The Council approved this action.

Following a query from an earlier Council meeting Felipa contacted the Council's insurance company, who informed her that cover does not extend to groups using the village green. They should therefore have their own insurance cover in place.

## **10. TAPAG**

James & Jim met Mary-Jo Smith of Bozdown Alpacas to discuss the spoil on the Hardwick Road verges. All the relevant authorities have been contacted /are being liaised with & the Council is satisfied that all is in order. The Smiths confirmed that they will cover the spoil & will use topsoil taken from the mound on the village green near the cricket nets. This will probably happen once it becomes colder in order to avoid churning up the village green. The Council agreed that this was appropriate. Jonathan will confirm & liaise with the Smiths.

All gullies along the High Street have been cleared bar one in the Lower Narrows. James has raised this on FixMyStreet.

Carrie & Keith met Keith Stenning, the Area Highways Stewart for OCC. He confirmed that The Cut is a public highway & therefore maintenance responsibility for it lies with OCC. They have no budget for resurfacing but would be happy for the Council to fund it using one of OCC's approved contractors. Keith S. will confirm this in writing. Keith S. also stated that Highways are happy for Castrol to install a large sign at their site to direct lorries if Castrol pay for it. This will also be confirmed in writing. The potholes at the bottom of Whitchurch Hill were also mentioned to him.

Rachel mentioned that she has registered for Community Speed Watch, a voluntary group working with the police to monitor traffic speeds. Volunteers undergo online training & the police supply all the equipment. Volunteers work in pairs & log any speeding. The police then send a letter & warning to the driver. She is hoping to start this initiative in the spring.

Public safety outside The Ferryboat has been raised by Graham Dednum, who is increasingly concerned. Carrie will liaise with Highways about any options there could be for protecting pedestrians.

High Street parking is once again an issue. Carrie will research what can be done.

### **11. Cricket pavilion replacement project**

Ewelme have just finished their new pavilion. Felipa will liaise with their clerk to discuss.

### **12. Residents' issues list** Review/update

Trees near The Old School House have been marked with red paint. This has been referred to OCC Highways.

### **13. Village environment/maintenance**

Collins in Pangbourne will offer the Council a preferential rate for any items bought there. Felipa will set up an account with them. The Council agreed that, once this was done, Jonathan would buy bulbs, plants, compost etc. to enhance the appearance of the High Street. The war memorial survey results showed a majority opting for a full reinstatement. If the full grant is received, there will still be a charge of £6,000 which the Council would share equally with Goring Heath Parish Council.

The 'Whitchurch-on-Thames' sign by the toll bridge has been damaged by an HGV. Felipa is liaising with OCC Highways & Transport.

### **14. Parish Councillor vacancy**

Rachel Hatcher was the only applicant for the vacant Parish Councillor role. The Council voted unanimously to co-opt her once Felipa has established the process for this.

### **15. Village plan**

Keith attended a Town and Parish Council forum. Having a Neighbourhood Plan is the way forward & grants of up to £5,000 are available. He will look at Woodcote's Plan & discuss with them.

### **16. Village hall**

The village hall management committee have all resigned bar Keith. The Parish Council agreed that the village hall should become the Council's responsibility. Felipa will investigate what the process for this should be.

### **17. The 'Bulletin'**

Following some discussion the Council agreed to keep using the current printer of the 'Bulletin' as he has agreed to reduce the cost significantly. Keith will discuss the layout with the printer to ascertain whether colour printing/different layouts are possible. It was felt that it

needs to become more professional & interesting a publication to better represent the village. This would potentially then attract advertising revenue. It will also now be issued on a quarterly basis, rather than bi-monthly.

**18. Environmental issues**

Jonathan has taken over from Keith as the contact for any environmental issues arising in the village.

**19. 2016/17 budget**

The Council unanimously agreed to keep the precept at its current level. Substantial cost savings from monthly items of expenditure are forecast but there are also many items of potential expenditure which the Council would like to see progress within the next year.

**20. 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

A letter from the Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire was received by the Council detailing arrangements being made to celebrate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday during the weekend of 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> June 2016. The Council would like Whitchurch to take part in the celebrations & Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June was agreed as the best date. Felipa will liaise with the cricket club.

David & Keith will be representing the Council at the Henley Standard's Christmas party.

**21. Date of next meeting**

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 8pm.

*Meeting closed at 10.00pm.*

**Signed.....**  
**Chairman**

**Date.....**