

Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall, Monday 6th January 2014 commencing 8.00pm.

PRESENT

Chairman	Mr. H. Butterworth
Vice Chairman	Mr. K. Brooks
	Mr. N. Grove
	Mr. H. Ainsley
	Mrs. L. Lucas
District Cllr.	Mrs. P. Slatter
Clerk	Ms. Jenny Welham

1. To receive apologies for absence

Mr. J. Donohue.

2. To receive 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.

Mr. S. Trinder – Village Hall Management. Mr. R. Wingfield – TAPAG. Mr. J. Southee , Mrs. S. Woolhouse – Sustainability Hardwick Rd project. Several other members of the public. One of the members of public requested if it was possible to have a Salt Bin at the top end of Manor Road. This is possible and he was asked to send the details to the Clerk so the Winter Highways team can be contacted. It is likely that the bin will now be provided during the Winter 2014 preparations.

4. To approve Minutes of the PC Budget meeting held on 2nd December 2014.
Approved as a true record.

5. County Councillor's

No report received.

6. District Councillor's Report

Cllr. Slatter reported,

She had received many small items from residents, such as bins, planning etc. Due to the holiday shut down she had been dealing with most of these today the first day that SODC were back.

The sign for Old Gardens has been pulled down, again. SODC have been contacted. However the environment team led by Cllr. Brooks will look at this with a view to getting a more robust repair, SODC have agreed this.

The White Lion Pub at Crays Pond is now closed and the planning application to turn it into a residence has been received by SODC.

Also the pub in Goring that has received planning for a Tesco Express is being strongly opposed and there is an up and coming meeting which Cllr. Slatter will attend.

Cllr. Grove commented that the landlord of the Greyhound Pub in the High Street was retiring due to health issues. He has been told it will remain open, all must be done to support this.

7. Planning

No new applications for consideration.

8. Other Committee Reports

Village Hall

Stephen Trinder reported,

That new lights had all now been installed.

The flooring invoice had been received but was incorrect, he will chase up the replacement invoice so the Clerk can make payment.

No other new business to report.

TAPAG

Richard Wingfield reported,

The following is a list of highways jobs that TAPAG proposes should be discussed with OCC, for implementation while the traffic is light and before it returns with the re-opening of the Toll Bridge.

1. At the Upper Narrows (above the picture gallery), re-paint the faded white lines on both sides of the road. Consider increasing the width of the reserve on the western side to assist those with pushchairs and on buggies. Also, this reserve takes all Thames Path walkers.
2. Restore the sunken kerb opposite the picture gallery, near the 142 bus stop, to improve pedestrian safety. (***IN HAND: work started on this on 6th Jan – thank you Oxfordshire.***)
3. At the Lower Narrows (near the Ferryboat), when the temporary yellow lines are being removed, consider re-aligning the white lines where the yellow ones now are. This would provide a narrower vehicle path and help emphasise to drivers that it is a one-way system.
4. At the southern entrance to the Lower Narrows, eliminate the tapering effect which encourages northbound drivers to proceed when they should not.
5. Between the Ferryboat car park and the Toll Bridge, repair the pedestrian pavement (probably the most heavily used one in the village), particularly where it slopes sideways into the road because of tree roots. There have been cases of people stumbling here.

Also TAPAG propose that the speed bump strip that goes across by the toll bridge is replaced. It is proposed that this be made more into a platform to kerb height to aid pedestrians crossing especially with buggies etc. This has been raised with Geoff Weir and he was not opposed but costs could be an issue. TAPAG asked for support from the PC, who agreed in principle to the project supporting the idea as pedestrian do have to cross the road at some point when walking over the bridge to Pangbourne.

Village Green

Cllr Ainley reported,

A meeting has been arranged to meet with David Bates of Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action Group to discuss possible grant opportunities for the new Pavilion. Cllr Ainley and the Clerk will attend .

The damage to the grasscrete in the VG car park is yet to be repaired.

This was caused by a large lorry delivering items, the grasscrete is not structurally strong enough for heavy lorries this was made clear when installation occurred. The Chairman had spoken to the owner of the new house and he is going to speak to Swallow asking the best way to repair this. The Clerk also to contact Swallow.

Some form of barrier or notice will be required when the Eastfield House development starts to stop heavy lorries using the car park as a turning area.

A small tree needs removing that is obstructing the corner of the football pitch so the white line marking cannot be laid. Cllr Ainley will speak to CC grounds man who reported this and check if he can remove it or if a quote will need to be sought.

9. Finance

Payments for approval.

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Cheque Ref</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
13/12/2013	Wicks-23-Ltd	124	£395	Flooring for Village Hall
13/12/2013	Wicks 23 Ltd	124	£395	VH Floor
16/12/2013	Swiftclik	SO	£29	Box files
27/12/2013	Swiftclik	SO	£71	6xLeverarch,2x ink, 3batteries
01/01/2014	J. Welham	SO	£419	December Salary
01/01/2014	HMRC	SO	£95	Tax on December Salary
06/01/2014	RBS Ltd	125	£128	Accounting software mntrance
06/01/2014	Thames Water	126	£56	PAvilion water 12/9 to 11/12
Total Payments			797.06	

APPROVED.

Noted no receipts.

10. Environment Group

Cllr. Brooks reported,

The Parish Council was invited by The Chilterns Conservation Board to comment on the draft Framework for Action document and with input from Sally Woolhouse, WOTHABS and Cllr. Jim Donahue Cllr. Brooks put together a few suggestions particularly with respect to the maintenance of verges and these were as follows-

Whitchurch Parish Council would like to express their thanks to the Chilterns Conservation Board for producing the management plan for 2014- 2019. The document is very well written and covers nearly all of the areas which will need management in the future if we are to retain the diversity of habitats in this area of natural beauty.

Although the management of verges is mentioned in the document as an area for the provision of suitable paths for cyclists and walkers we feel that this could be extended to including it as a specific area which requires future conservation and enhancement in view of its importance as a habitat for flora and fauna. To this end we would like to make the following suggestions.

In the 'Landscape Actions' the areas identified for management - 'Support management of trees, woodlands, chalk grassland, commons, hedges, chalk streams and other characteristic landscape features.'

Could verges be added to this list.

Also in the 'Policies' section-

L1 Recognise and manage positively those elements of the landscape that contribute to the overall identity and character of the Chilterns.

The main characteristics of the Chilterns landscape have been created by human intervention. In most cases they need to be managed actively in order to retain those qualities or restore natural characteristics which are in decline e.g. chalk downland, hedgerows, ancient woodlands and chalk streams.

Could verges could be added to this list as well.

This would indicate to authorities who are responsible for the maintenance of verges to do this in a sympathetic way in order to keep their natural beauty and provide a suitable habitat for their inhabitants and maintain diversity.”

A very positive email was received back from the CCB – “*Thank you for sending through the comments from Whitchurch Parish Council. These have been received and saved to our system and will be taken account of in the drafting of the final version of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2014-19. We will send a formal response to the comments once they have been reported to the Chilterns Conservation Board early next year.*”

There has been some damage to street furniture which has been reported to Cllr. Brooks. The street sign for Old Gardens has been removed from its site and needs re-instating, and the hand rail for the steps joining Hardwick Road and Hillside has been hit by a vehicle and needs re-newing. Cllr Brooks proposed the PC pay for a contractor to carry out these jobs. The PC agreed to the repair and quotes to be obtained.

Cllr Brooks would also like to get quotes for some new lights in the High Street by the Ferryboat and outside the Old Stables. Quotes to be obtained.

Stephen Trinder and Cllr Brooks cleared the drains by the school and the grips along Eastfield Lane before the bad weather came and this helped to keep the area clear. The PC thanked them for their hard work.

A water bill arrived and consequently I checked the meter reading and the functioning of the system to make sure there were no water leaks. The reading was very close to that estimated and confirmed that the system is not leaking.

Cllr Brooks stated he was looking forward to lots of projects for this year and in these times of austerity it will be necessary for the parish council to organise work parties to carry out those jobs that in the past may have been someone else's responsibility. A big 'Thank You' to everyone who takes time out of their lives to make Whitchurch a great place to live - too many to list but they know who they are!

11. Sustainability & Allotments

John Southey and Sally Woolhouse reported on behalf of the Hardwick Rd project Group.

Synopsis of the Hardwick Road verge restoration project.

1) re-cap of the project

Problem

Misuse of the verges by the creation of additional passing places, not helped that there are no paved passing places.

Implication

Damage to verges, deterioration of existing passing places.

Solution

Introduce properly engineered passing places and reclaim the verges between. Long term project.

2) current situation

A grant for the construction of two passing places (£6000) + another smaller grant for other related highway work (£2000) and support of Keith Stenning (OCC Highways steward for South Oxfordshire)

The Village entrance work hits numerous targets including :-

- Drainage that OCC can maintain
- Enables a footpath through the Village entrance, (there is none in this section at the moment)
- Formalise two passing places giving line of sight between each other, being the model for future passing places. (the two that have been developed here are now a mud bath.)
- Manage the re-seeding and verge protection

The earthworks to be completed by mid March to give a time window for new growth before the bridge re-opens.

An OCC technician has visited site and is happy for the PC to organise this work providing it meets OCC standards and the PC guarantees it for 2 years. The work is summarised in sketches which were handed round to the Parish Council.

Five Companies have been contacted who have the necessary credentials to do this work and one is chosen based on our confidence that they will do good job. (The quotes were close).

Next steps

Involve local neighbours, receive acknowledgement from OCC, and place the order.

Organise volunteer work for the re-seeding, footpath establishment and re-painting the village gates.

The PC agreed that the project team carry on to completion. The quotations obtained to be sent to the Parish Clerk, with instructions to raise a purchase order..

12. Other Matters for Chairman

The Chairman advised that the National pay scales for the Clerk had been increased by 1%, which came into effect on 1st April 2013. It was agreed to increase the Clerk's salary by the 1% from 1st February 2014.

Cllr. Aldridge asked if any progress had been made with Goring Heath PC regarding the large amount of water on the road at the bottom of Path Hill. The Clerk had not yet followed this up so will action this.

Cllr. Lucas reported that one of the street lamps on the Toll Bridge had some damage, the glass opening fascia to replace the bulb is hanging off and only supported by the bottom hinge. Cllr. Lucas to email the Bridge Company, Geoff Weir and report this, and copy the Clerk and Cllr. Brooks.

13. To note date of the next PC meeting: Monday 3rd March 2014.

Meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Signed.....Chairman/Date.....

