

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting held in the village hall, Monday 4th January 2016, commencing at 8.00pm.

PRESENT

Chairman	Keith Brooks
Vice-Chairman	Jim Donahue
Councillors	David Bowen Rachel Hatcher James Polansky Jonathan Steward
Clerk	Felipa House

Public:

Richard Wingfield

Leslie Prater

Keith Williams

1. Apologies for absence

Councillor Hart, District Councillor Rob Simister, County Councillor Kevin Bulmer.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr. Steward (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.

Keith Williams wished to discuss the Eastfield House planning appeal. Leslie Prater wanted to know more about the proposed tree trimming near the school.

4. Agree minutes of Parish Council meeting 7th December 2015

These were approved as a true record.

5. District councillor's report

Cllr. Simister was not present.

6. County councillor's report

Cllr. Bulmer was not present but had circulated his report to councillors before the meeting. This included information about future grant funding from central Government, which will be even less than anticipated, meaning a further £20 million of savings will need to be made over the next 4 years. As a result of this the subsidy for the 143 bus service will be removed. However, this does not mean that the service will stop. As Cllr. Bowen explained, it depends upon whether Thames Travel deems it to be uneconomic. Cllr. Bowen is closely monitoring the situation &, should the bus service be removed, the Parish Council would be instrumental in trying to find a replacement, such as Readibus.

7. Planning

P15/S4070/FUL Foxglove Manor, Whitchurch Hill. Request for removal of condition 6 from the previous planning approval. The planning application was formerly subject to the Code for Sustainable Homes (CfSH), which has now been ended. The Parish Council felt that the information with which it was provided was too vague to enable it to make an informed decision so asked Cllr. Bowen to contact the relevant SODC planning officer for clarification. The Parish Council unanimously agreed to submit 'No strong views' unless Cllr. Bowen is able to ascertain anything more substantial.

P15/S4260/DIS Hopton, Manor Road. There was only the addition of an arboricultural method statement to their earlier application to raise the fence height. No decision was necessary.

The owners of Eastfield House have submitted an appeal against last year's refusal of their planning application. Cllrs. Donahue & Bowen met local MP John Howell to discuss the issue. The appeal is now at planning inspector level & therefore outside local control or influence. The independent planning inspector will look at all the previous decisions made to check their validity, taking in to account all the previous issues raised. John Howell is happy to reiterate his opposition to the plans but feels that he may have little or no influence now. Keith Williams has already written letters opposing the plans but says Ross Healthcare's appeal is very well structured & put together. He thought that the timing - it was submitted on 23rd December - was quite offensive, giving less time to all those concerned to object. The Parish Council wish to maintain their opposition to the plans. Cllr. Bowen will speak to SODC planning officer Tom Wyatt to ascertain how the Parish Council can best do this. If this is in writing then the Parish Council's previous comments on the plans will be reviewed & Cllr. Bowen will write an objection & circulate to the Parish Council for comments & approval. Cllr. Bowen will also write an article for inclusion in January's edition of 'The Bulletin'. The Chairman will speak to the 'Henley Standard', stating that the Parish Council is putting together a statement, do not support the appeal & are looking at how best to represent the interests of Whitchurch-on-Thames.

Laura Lucas (via email) asked whether the Parish Council could ask SODC to carry out a Conservation Area appraisal on Whitchurch. It was felt that this could be included within the Neighbourhood Plan.

8. Finance Approve payments/note receipts

Monthly salary for the clerk

Invoice from Goring Heath Parish Council for 50% of the cost of the bugler for Remembrance Sunday (£30.00)

Invoice from SODC for the parish election costs (£1,251.81)

Subscription to SLCC for the clerk (£96.00)

The Parish Council agreed that it would be beneficial to have a debit card (subject to financial restraints) only for the purchase of goods or services that cannot be invoiced. The clerk will investigate.

9. Village green

The village green survey results have been finalised after 78 responses were received. Cllr. Donahue has prepared a statement from the Village Green Working Group which includes the survey results & comments. The Parish Council approved the wording of this statement & it will be published on the website.

The Parish Council approved the survey's results, indicating that there would be no charge for the football or cricket club so long as combined annual maintenance costs were not above 10% of the total annual Parish Council budget.

The Parish Council approved the revised agreement with AFC. The clerk will send to AFC for their signature.

The beech trees near the school need to be trimmed but it was felt that it would be better to wait until plans for the new pavilion are clearer. The Parish Council previously approved the cost of this work & this approval is indefinite.

Some fencing repairs may be needed soon. Cllr. Steward will obtain any necessary materials from Collins in time for the March working party.

The clerk will confirm the termination of the contract with Berinsfield Community Business for grass cutting within the parish. The clerk will prepare a contract for Cllr. Steward in collaboration with Cllr. Donahue.

10. TAPAG

The Parish Council are keen to repave The Cut. The clerk will contact Keith Stenning to confirm which suppliers should be used & obtain 2 further quotations for the work.

Cllr. Hatcher has completed her SpeedWatch training. Oxfordshire Police do not currently support this scheme, but once she has 3 other trained volunteers she can contact them & request their help with the scheme.

Cllr. Polansky had a meeting with Richard Wingfield & John Southey to discuss surface water issues in Whitchurch. John Southey has produced an in-depth report.

There are some ongoing drainage issues in Eastfield Lane which Cllr. Polansky will talk to Thames Water about. He has also raised issues about the gullies on FixMyStreet again.

11. Cricket pavilion replacement project

A separate meeting to discuss this has been arranged by Cllr. Hart.

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. They believe that the work has been carried out but it is felt that this is not the case. The clerk will investigate.

13. Village environment/maintenance

Cllr. Steward has planted in excess of 600 bulbs along the High Street, with another 600 to plant.

Holding the farmers' market one morning a fortnight at The Greyhound was not felt to be suitable due to parking issues & morning traffic. Cllr. Steward is proposing using The Old Stables instead. Fees from the traders would contribute towards the church's fundraising efforts.

The Manor Road sign has been vandalised. The Chairman will investigate.

The Parish Council would like to invest in bespoke village signs. The clerk will liaise with OCC Highways to ascertain the possibility of this &, if feasible, the appropriate shape, size & location for the signs.

Cllr. Steward volunteered to create a design for the proposed community garden on the old Polish church site. He will ask Martin Wise for his input & a possible quote. Cllr. Steward has volunteered to carry out any ongoing maintenance on the site. He will talk to Tom Wyatt at SODC about the ownership of the land.

14. Parish Councillor vacancy

Following submission of written confirmation of her eligibility for the role, Rachel Hatcher was unanimously co-opted on to the Parish Council.

15. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllrs. Donahue & Bowen discussed this with MP John Howell. He will help to obtain funding for the costs. A referendum date of May 2017 is the goal. Cllr. Bowen will tell SODC that the Parish Council wants to start the process. The Chairman & Cllrs. Hatcher & Steward will also be part of this working group. Both a Community Plan & a Neighbourhood Plan will be produced. Local businesses, landowners & all stakeholders must be involved. Cllr. Hatcher will arrange the inaugural meeting.

16. Village hall

The clerk is meeting Jill Bradon next week to discuss village hall operations. The future of the village hall will be discussed at a separate meeting being organised by Cllr. Hart.

17. Policies & procedures

The clerk will review the Standing Orders before submitting comments to the Parish Council. New Standing Orders should include details of the Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act, a social media code of conduct & a disciplinary & grievance procedure.

18. Parish Council meeting dates for 2016

The Parish Council decided to move the monthly meeting from the first Monday to the first Tuesday of each month. This will take effect from the next meeting.

19. Parish clerk - probation

The clerk has completed her 3-month probationary period. The Parish Council agreed that she had passed & could continue.

20. Dispensation for Cllr. Steward

Cllr. Steward will complete a dispensation request form in time for the next meeting.

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

Cllr. Hatcher will contact Richard Williams to offer her assistance with production of 'The Bulletin'. Various ideas for new features will be discussed.

21. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 2nd February 2016 at 8pm.

Meeting closed at 10.05pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....