



**MINUTES OF MEETING OF WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL**  
**At the Polish Memorial Church Garden at 19:00 Thursday 1st July 2021**

**Members Present**

Chairman	Jim Donahue
Members	Katherine Higley Carrie Leadbeater-Hart Paul O'Grady Diana Smith Jon Steward

**Officers Present:**

Clerk	Jane M. Yamamoto
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**Public and Press:** 4 residents

The meeting started at 19:00.

- 1 **Apologies for absence & Mission Statement** 19:00  
Cllrs Higley, Leadbeater-Hart and Steward arrived at 20:00 and apologised for being late.
- 2 **Declaration of Interests** by Councillors on any items on the agenda  
No declarations were made.
- 3 Public Forum - an opportunity for members of the public to express their point of view on any item on the agenda.
- 3.1 A resident thought a community orchard was a good idea. It would preserve threatened apples species. They also felt that any species considered should be indigenous. 19:10
- 4 Chairman's Announcements 19:15  
White lines have been reinstated on the High Street and all the way up Whitchurch Hill. This is something that we requested OCC prioritise following the tragic cycling accident.

Two areas of no parking restrictions on the north side of the High Street were missed but OCC has asked the road marking contractor to add them. These will be done shortly but their work is impacted by the wet weather.

I am pushing OCC to give us a date for the pedestrian safety trials by the Ferryboat Inn. They previously targeted having this done in May/June timeframe, but this has been missed. They are now targeting early September for a 1 day test run initially to ensure the trial is safe. Mid-August was also an option, but with holidays and school break I don't think that this would be realistic traffic levels.

Councillor Higley has identified some issues with the Manor Road Playground:

- Graffiti on some of the equipment
- The need to remove the hand sanitiser for safety purposes once restrictions are fully lifted 19th July.
- The need to buy a replacement for the litter bin. I would like to raise this as an urgent agenda item to give Cllr Higley the authority to purchase a replacement for up to £250 as our Standing Orders allow.

**Resolution:** The council voted urgent approval of up to £250 for Cllr Higley to buy a replacement for the playground bin.

Please note that I will be on holiday 02-12 July. I will have access to emails but will have an out of office notification on my emails encouraging people to contact our Clerk Jane or Vice Chairman Diana.

5 To approve minutes of the meeting of May 6<sup>th</sup> 2021 and the Annual Parish Meeting of May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**Resolution:** The Council voted to approve the minutes.

6 Planning Applications – to discuss and agree Council’s response to the following: 19:20

6.1 P21/S0844/LB/P21/So842/HH

Thames Bank South, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7DB

Single storey timber orangery (as shown in amended plans submitted May 21, 2021)

**Resolution:** The Council voted to submit a response of no further comment.

6.2 P16/S1956/DIS 19:25

Eastfield House, Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7EJ

The development proposed is partial demolition of care home, Eastfield House, construction of extensions and associated works and change of use of land at the rear of the home from C3 to C2 to provide additional external amenity space.

**Resolution:** The Council voted to submit a response that they noted the objection and await the flood engineer’s report.

6.3 P21/S2667/HH

Cliff Cottage, Hardwick Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7HJ

Proposed link extension following demolition of out building

**Resolution:** The Council voted to support this application.

6.4 P21/S1766/HH 19:30

Hérons Reach, Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7EJ

Proposed house extension and refurbishment

**Resolution:** The Council voted to submit support this application with a flood risk assessment.

6.5 P21/S2675/HH

Byways, Hardwick Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7HH

Addition of new side door and external material changes, and replacement windows.

**Resolution:** The Council voted to submit their support.

7 To receive reports from the representatives of Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council.

No reports were received.

7.1 SODC District Councillor Report – Cllr Dragonetti (Attachment 1)

8 **Finance:** 19:35

8.1 **Resolution:** The following payments were approved for June and July:

<b>Payment</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Clerk salary (June, July 2021)	BACS
Zoom (June, July 2021)	£14.29 DD
Leslie Maynerd (MOWS plants, soil)	£47.00
SODC (Annual licence slipway)	£70.00

OCC (repair of entrance/gate)	£2,193.65 BACS submit to insurance?
Tim Hardwick (trellis at the Triangle)	£92.84 BACS
Claire Connell (Internal Audit)	£280
OALC (Cllr Smith Training)	£60

- 9 Motion to ask Heritage Tree Services to proceed with serving notice on SODC in relation to the proposed work on the beech tree in the Manor Road playground. If approval is given by SODC then approval is also given for Heritage Tree Services to carry out the work as part of our Duty of Care work. It would cost £575 + VAT - Cllr Higley seconded by Cllr Smith 19:40

**Resolution:** The Council voted to approve the motion.

- 10 Community Celebration - Cllr Donahue 19:45  
Cllr Donahue proposed an afternoon community celebration, WOT Unlocked on a date in September, 2021. Local brass band to hire for £250 and volunteers coordinated for cakes and drinks through the Clerk, Jane Yamamoto. The Council could also ask both The Greyhound and The Ferryboat to participate. Cllr Steward offered 2 marquees.

- 11 Village Green Working Group Terms of Reference (Attachment 2) 19:50  
**Resolution:** The Council voted to approve the Terms of Reference.

- 12 Community Orchard proposal by Alastair Dunstan 20:00

Sally Woolhouse provided a background partly because she is in WoTHabs and the Green Team. Alastair has heritage apple trees and he would like to save heritage fruit and more specifically, apple trees. She advised that each tree would be different and it was not appropriate to have trees on the Village Green and that the Maze was already a very loved space. It would depend upon the size of the trees and a different mowing schedule would need to be drawn up. Alastair has offered to maintain and prune.

After Sally had led a tour of the Polish Church Memorial Garden site, Charles suggested a picture and map of how it would look and Sally recommended a planting plan was devised. It was proposed to ask residents and the school if they wanted to sponsor a tree and/or as a memorial.

In principle, all thought it was a good idea. Cllr Higley advised that her grandmother, one of the last remaining former residents of the camp, thought it was a lovely idea and that most Polish rural communities had orchards that provided fruit to share amongst its residents.

Cllr Leadbeater-Hart asked if the council should not open up the discussion to consider other uses for the space. Cllr Steward reminded all that the original purpose of the site was for quiet contemplation and wildlife.

Action-176: Cllr Higley to coordinate the consultation on the website, noticeboard, Bulletin, Facebook and immediate neighbours with Alastair on the idea and also if there were other ideas for use of the space.

- 13 To review progress on any open actions from previous Parish Council meetings and agree any revision of actions on the action list.

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| 14 | To confirm the date and time of the next meeting on Thursday, September 9, 2021 at 20:00.   | 21:05 |
| 15 | Parish Councillor application and recruitment.<br>The Council agreed to co-opt a councillor at the next meeting on September 9, 2021. | 21:10 |
| 16 | Confidential discussion for thank you notes from the Parish Council   |       |
| 17 | Meeting closed.   | 21:30 |

## **Attachment 1**

### **Report to Whitchurch Parish Council July 2021 – Cllr Peter Dragonetti**

#### **Council Operations**

The Riverside Pool at Wallingford has now reopened and now has an online booking system, and it is therefore necessary to book a session as if you just turn up it may be full you will be turned away. This link will take you to a timetable etc <https://www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/south-oxfordshire/riverside-park-and-pools/timetable>

The children's splash park there is currently not open because the operator cannot control numbers for Covid safety.

Leisure Facilities across South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse were contracted out, and settlement of the financial impact of Covid created closures has still to be finalised.

Business grants have recently extended to Restart Grants, of which £2.5 million has been paid out by SODC, total SODC grant payments, funded by the government, have been £42.8 million.

The Fraud Team have interviewed several suspected fraudsters under caution, and two cases are being considered for prosecution.

#### **Council Matters**

The Annual Meeting of the District Council resulted in Councillor Jo Robb, who was elected in 2019 for Woodcote and Peppard, being appointed Chair of the Council. Councillor Robb is part of the Green Party group on the council, and is well respected and liked.

#### **Town and Parish Forums**

The first two forums were held recently on Assets of Community Value and on Climate and Ecological Emergency. These were held on line, and enabled participants to learn and join in without having to travel to Didcot or elsewhere. Further forums are planned.

#### **Planning Committee**

As you will be aware, meetings can no longer be online. However, it is only the members of the committee and senior officers who have to be present, and we held our first hybrid meeting last week. At a hybrid meeting, public speakers, for example parish councils or other objectors or supporters can address the meeting through the Teams or Zoom app, which can be very helpful in saving time and expense of travelling to Didcot .

#### **Planning and Parishes**

To improve engagement between the SODC planning officers and parish councils, we are piloting short virtual meetings between planning officers and parish councils, so that matters of concerns can be discussed and hopefully resolved by face to face dialogue more effectively and more efficiently than through a trail of emails which can be really quite time consuming for all. While this is a pilot, it responds to an issue I raised soon after I was elected.

#### **Planning Committee**

There has been a big increase in planning applications: 390 in May, a 48% increase on last year. I think May last year was lower than normal.

As you will be aware, meetings can no longer be online. However, it is only the members of the committee and senior officers who have to be present. At a hybrid meeting, public

speakers, for example parish councils or other objectors or supporters can address the meeting through the Teams or Zoom app, which can be very helpful in saving time and expense of travelling to Didcot

Two applications that were refused by the Committee have subsequently been lost at Appeal. Both dismissed on the harm to the character of the area.

Enforcement continues to have a high workload, including investigating land sale scams where small plots of land without hope of planning are put up for auction.



# **Whitchurch on Thames**

## **Village Green Working Group (VGWG)**

### **Terms of Reference**

**1/7/2021 – Date of Approval by the Parish Council**



**1. NAME**

The group's name is Whitchurch-on-Thames Village Green Working Group (VGWG).

**2. OBJECTIVES**

The working group has the following objectives:

- TO ASSIST THE PARISH COUNCIL IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ALL ASPECTS OF THE WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES VILLAGE GREEN.
- TO MAINTAIN THE VILLAGE GREEN AS A LEISURE AMENITY, BALANCING THE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF ALL PARISHONERS.
- TO KEEP THE VILLAGE GREEN IN GOOD ORDER AND MAINTAINED TO AN AGREED STANDARD.

**3. RELATIONSHIP TO THE PARISH COUNCIL**

- A member of the Parish Council will sit on all VGWG meetings.
- The VGWG will share all minutes from these meetings with the Parish Council.
- The VGWG will provide updates to the Parish Council in writing and shared with council members ahead of parish council meetings. This should happen at least once a quarter. The updates can be added to the minutes as an attachment.
- The VGWG will seek approval from the Parish Council of all proposals for new ideas prior to any action being taken.
- A budget for VGWG led activities will be allocated by the Parish Council and unless for items less than £250 spend, will seek approval on a case-by-case basis.
- Each December, the VGWG Chairman will submit, to the member of the Parish Council allocated to the VGWG, an annual budget to be included in the Parish Council Budget.
- Parish Council standing orders for Working Groups will apply to VGWG.
- The VGWG will act as the guardian to maintain the Village Green on behalf of the Parish Council.
- The village maintenance contractor should contact the designated point person on the VGWG for any required direction on maintenance of the VG, including changes to the cutting schedule due to weather, etc.



#### **4. MEMBERSHIP**

- VGWG will consist of at least one member of the Parish Council and a number of residents volunteering their time from the village representing the following key stakeholders:
  - WOTHabs
  - The Green Team
  - WOT Cricket Club
  - AFC Whitchurch Football Club
  - Whitchurch Primary School
- VGWG will communicate any change in membership to the Parish Council for approval.
- The Chair of the group will be nominated by the group and appointed by the Parish Council. (This will normally happen at the annual Parish Council meeting but could happen at other times as determined by the Parish Council.)
- A representative of the Parish Council will normally chair the group, but this could also be someone from outside of the Parish Council.
- Membership of the group will be reaffirmed at Annual Parish Meetings unless members wish to resign.

#### **5. STAKEHOLDERS**

- VGWG will liaise with the following stakeholders:
  - Parish Council
  - WOTHabs
  - The Green Team
  - WOT Cricket Club
  - AFC Whitchurch Football Club
  - Whitchurch Primary School

#### **6. MEETINGS**

- VGWG will meet 2 times per year (April and September).
- Minutes for each meeting will be shared with all VGWG members and members of the Parish Council and posted on the village website in a timely manner.
- If members have a conflict of interest they must declare it at the beginning of the meeting.
- Public participation shall not normally be allowed at meetings.

#### **7. GDPR**

All members of VGWG should be familiar with GDPR. Any member responsible for handling personal data is required to have completed basic GDPR on-line training.

## **8. GENERAL**

- Changes to the Terms of Reference are to be approved by the Parish Council.
- Winding up: the Parish Council has the authority to disband the VGWG at any time.
- This Terms of Reference was adopted by the VGWG by approval of the Parish Council.

## **9. EXPENSES AND INVOICES**

- Parish Councillors and VGWG members are responsible for obtaining value for money for items purchased on behalf of the village concerning the maintenance and upkeep of the village green.
- The Parish Council shall ensure, as far as reasonable and practicable, that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates (if works exceed £1,000) from appropriate suppliers.
- All invoices that are £250 and above in one purchase must be approved prior to purchase and the invoice must be addressed to the Parish Council as noted below. Approval for the payment will be made at the next Parish Council meeting.
- Please note that the Parish Council cannot re-claim any VAT from a purchase if an invoice is not addressed to it.
- Residents may be reimbursed for purchases made on behalf of the council provided that the expense has been approved by the Parish Council in the annual budget and are under £250 in one expense.
- Expense claims should be submitted with a receipt with an explanation of the item purchased to the Parish Clerk. The expense will then be reimbursed after the next Parish Council meeting.
- If an expense by a resident is outside the items approved in the annual budget, the expense must be approved before purchase by the Parish Council at the next Parish Council meeting.

Invoices and any queries should be addressed to the Parish Council as below:

Ms. Jane M. Yamamoto, Parish Clerk,  
Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council,  
11 Hillside, Hardwick Road,

Whitchurch-on-Thames, Berkshire, RG8 7HL.  
[Parishclerk.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com](mailto:Parishclerk.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com)  
07876 714 906