

WHITCHURCH ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council on Monday 1st July 2013 at the Village Hall.

Present:

Cllr Harry Butterworth Chairman, Cllr. Keith Brooks, Cllr. Nigel Grove, Cllr. Jim Donahue, Cllr. Harvey Ainley, District Cllr. Pearl Slatter, Jenny Welham Parish Clerk.

In Attendance – Stephen Trinder. Chairman Village Hall Committee, Richard Wingfield TAPAG

1. Apologies for absence

None received.

Not present Cllr. Vincent Aldridge.

2. Declarations of interest.

Councillors are asked to declare any personal interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

3. Public Forum – Opportunity for members of the public to address the Parish Council.

Member of the public Mrs. House, present to speak about planning application she has for her property.

4. Agree Minutes of Annual PC Meeting 13th May 2013.

Approved.

5. County Councillor Report.

The County Councillor Mr. Keith Bulmer, was not present sent his report the next day.

REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS IN THE GORING DIVISION

JULY 2013

SPENDING REVIEW

The Chancellor announced the latest spending review at the end of June for the year 2015-16. There will be a further reduction in government funding for local authorities of 10%. The exact details are not yet known; they should become apparent during the autumn. This will mean further pressures on the Council on top of the £127 million already saved along with the proposed savings of £74 million in the coming 4 years.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Due to sound financial management and achieving our savings targets earlier than expected, the County Council's provisional outturn has a £3m underspend in the £418m budget – a 0.76% underspend.

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Oxfordshire County Council currently provides free school transport above and beyond the statutory national level and higher than our neighbouring County Councils. The Council proposes to end free travel to the designated (catchment) school if the distance from home to school is over 3 miles if aged 8 or over, or 2 miles if less than 8 and of school age, unless this is the nearest school to a child's home address. This would take effect from September 2014 and those children for whom free transport has been agreed before that date would not be affected by this proposed change of policy. This protection would last up until the end of Year 6 for those in primary school and Year 11 for those in secondary school. This will not affect children from families who claim free school meals. **Concessionary travel** and **'unsafe walking routes'** are also being reassessed. The vast majority of children in Oxfordshire will not be affected by the change in policy as most children qualifying for free transport attend their nearest school within the catchment area. This is currently at the consultation stage, but the deadline for responses is close (**5th July**) and will go to Cabinet on 16th July.

To respond to the consultation or for more information see:

<https://myconsultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/HomeSchoolTransport2014/consultationHome>

READING CAMPAIGN

The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council last year to significantly improve Year 2 pupils' reading levels in Key Stage 1, and to develop children's confidence in, and love of reading. Between September and Easter 55 schools have been involved and the effects are remarkable. Results from phonics assessments have started coming in and early indications show pupils are making fantastic progress, gaining an average reading age of 13.9 months – well above the levels achieved last year. More information is available at <http://www.oxfordshirereading.co.uk/>

ARMED FORCES DAY

The County held a flag raising ceremony and salute in the Castle yard of Oxford Castle on 27th June to mark Armed Forces Day on 29th June. Members of the military from across Oxfordshire took part with the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, the High Sheriff and the Chairman of the Council, Councillor Tim Hallchurch, taking the salute.

ADULT SERVICES

Following public consultation from November to February 2013, Cabinet met in June to consider the Older People's Strategy. This plan encourages people to stay healthy as they age and support older people who need help and care. It has been put together by the NHS, County and District Councils, organisations that work with older people and older people themselves. The Cabinet considered and agreed the new pooled budget arrangements with Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG). This will not only mean financial savings it will provide a better, seamless service for the vulnerable. At the July meeting cabinet will assess care home fees following consultation.

DEVELOPERS & INFRASTRUCTURE

The Cabinet is working on new ways of working with developers. On 18th June the Cabinet examined how direct construction of infrastructure might add to our efficiency.

OPERATION BULLFINCH

Following the convictions of seven men in connection with the Bullfinch investigation into child sexual exploitation, the judge passed sentence on 27th June. These ranged from **seven to twenty years (life imprisonment)**. Bullfinch was a joint operation between Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Valley Police. The council hopes these sentences send out a strong message that child sexual exploitation will not be tolerated in Oxfordshire. We would like to praise the courage of the victims for giving evidence in court that has led to these sentences, and we are sorry we did not stop it sooner. We have learned a great deal about how to prevent and disrupt child sexual exploitation, and are working closely with other agencies to root it out. Along with TVP, we encourage anybody who may have been the victim of this kind of abuse - or knows someone who has - to talk to our specialist team in confidence. The Kingfisher team can be contacted on 01865 335276.

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 3 CONSULTATION

A new area strategy has been developed for our area as part of the third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) which runs from 2011 to 2030. This is updated annually and you are invited to take part in the web-based consultation from July until September. More information on our Area Strategy can be found at <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/area-transport-strategies>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of funds available to local organisations in the Division.

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Councillors Community Budgets

We have continued to fund these popular local funds to support local organisations. If you know of any organisations that might be interested, please contact me or seek further information at <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/councillor-community-budgets>

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Area Stewardship Funding

These are continuing but are now organised differently. I will be meeting with other councillors in my locality on the 10th July to agree how funds will be distributed.

It is used to fund highway issues in particular, but is not available for new projects only Maintenance, although dropped kerbs for disabled access will be counted. I will give a better indication of the sorts of projects that will be available after the meeting. But I anticipate it will be for, weed killing, sign cleaning & clearing, footpath refurbishing (but not tripping hazards, diff fund for that), refreshing white lines etc. if you have any potential schemes please drop me a line.

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Chillout Fund

We have continued a £100,000 fund to support projects for children and young people across the County. More information is available at <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/chill-out-fund-youth-activities-and-projects>

CONTACT DETAILS

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6. District Councillor Report.

Cllr. Slatter reported;

Following 10 years of being Chair of the SODC Planning Committee she had stepped down, the new Chair is Felix Bloomfield.

Cllr. Slater is now the Conservative Whip in SODC, so will be busy, but she will still represent the Parish and her activities in this respect will not change.

Cllr. Slatter had recently been involved in visiting sites who had applied for CIF grant funds over £15K for projects in their parishes. All but 2 parishes had been awarded grants and some had received large sums of £100K. She urged the PC to start planning and fund raising for the new pavilion on the village green as the grant applications for 2014 need to be in by end of April 2014, and funds, planning etc all need to be in place to accompany the application.

SODC are in good financial health so the further cuts that the Government are proposing will not have a major impact on SODC. This situation is due to the good management by the leader of SODC Ann Ducker, Cllr. Slater advised and stated what an excellent job Ann was doing.

Planning - SODC Core Strategy all approved and passed, however there is minimal impact for the parish as no new development as no available sites. Infill development applications will need to be monitored closely.

No news on the Eastfield House application, Cllr. Slatter will keep the PC updated.

Whitchurch Bridge Closure – the Parish are doing well and all contingencies are in place.

Finally, Cllr. Slatter requested that the weeds along the wall opposite her property be sprayed, the Clerk thought this had already been done so will action.

7. Traffic & Pavements Group – report & update.

Richard Wingfield reported;

The bollard outside Wells House is still leaning over. Tapag had placed two cones around the bollard and one has been moved leaving just one. The repair of the bollard has been raised and emails sent, it was agreed to ensure that the County Cllr. Kevin Bulmer be advised and asked to follow this up on the PC's behalf.

The 142 bus service will continue to run during the bridge closure.

8. Village Hall Report

Stephen Trinder reported;

The last committee meeting was 25th June 2013.

Mrs. Jill Bradon was welcomed to the Committee, in replacement of Anna Szczeponek whose interests had made it difficult for her to attend meetings.

The halls affairs continue to run their regular course and it is gratifying that users maintain their bookings in the current difficult economic climate. Bank Balance stands at £1533 this includes an advance payment of £750. The £2000 from the PC is not included.

Signatories for cheques have been extended to include Stephen Trinder and Jill Bradon. A new bank mandate will be auctioned.

The possibility of a temporary surgery on Tuesdays mornings during the bridge closure for residents of Whitchurch and Whitchurch Hill patients is under active discussion. Efforts continue to make provision for responders and an enhanced ambulance service North of the river over this period.

A number of minor remedial tasks, such as the replacement of a water heater and tidying the hall surrounds were agreed. Quotes will be obtained for the completion of the decoration and flooring of the third WC.

9. Planning

No new applications forward.

The member of public Mrs. House spoke about her application in Swanston Field. The application for a side extension has been approved. The second application is for rendering the property white, this will be considered by SODC planning in 2 weeks time.

The PC had not received any feedback regarding this application, Mrs, House advised that her neighbours had put up objections.

The PC to consider this application over the next week, Clerk to email details to Councillors.

10. Village Green Committee

Cllr. Ainley had met with the developer Swallow who had built the house and the issue regarding access to the field via the car park had been resolved.

The developer was concerned about the increase in the amount of parking especially at school drop off times, Cllr Brooks stated he had not seen significant volumes. It was agreed to monitor the situation.

11. Finance – To approve payments – Approved.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Cheque Ref</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
<u>Paid</u> 14/05	Nova Press T. Franklin	SO	<u>Paid</u> £367	Parish Bulletin
15/05	Berinsfield Comm Business	SO	£642	April Grass cutting x 3
01/06	J. Welham	SO	£419	May Salary
01/06	HMRC	SO	£95	Tax May
11/06	Berinsfield Community Business	SO	£341	May grass cutting
30/06	BDO	98	£402	External audit 2012-13
01/07	J. Welham	SO	£419	June Salary
01/07	HMRC	SO	£95	Tax June
01/07	A. Aitchison	99	£311	1/2 cost of goals for football
01/07	Mr. P. Hollitzer	100	£72	Instal of goals posts
01/07	K. Brooks	101	£11	Teak oil for benches
		Total	3,171.8	
		Payments		

Noted no new receipts.

12. Environmental Group Report

Cllr. Brooks reported;

Since our last report in May of this year our work has centred around the Village Green which is beginning to look the part with football and cricket being played regularly as well as people using it for other recreational activities such as dog exercising, and general enjoyment of the area.

We have had some issues, which are now resolved which were to do with the grass cutting. The groundsman complained that grass was being left after cutting and this interfered with the playing of cricket. After a word to the contractors this was remedied. The padlock, which secured the gate to the field, was broken by the gardeners but was replaced.

The installation of the benches on the 19th of June did not occur as the person who said they could it backed out shortly before this and has not been in contact since. So I have found a new handyman from the village Peter Hollitzer who has had much experience in building work and he has given me a quote for around £160 for this work and I recommend we accept his offer. Both he and I have already installed the goal posts on the football field and this work has cost £72.00 for Peter's labour. I will be supervising the installation of the benches, which I have spent some time painting with teak oil to preserve them, over the next week.

I also met with Brian Allum from Allum Signs in Woodcote to discuss a possible Village Green Sign production and installation which covered materials and design.

Lastly we were contacted by Laura Lucas from the village who had noticed that a lot of rubbish had accumulated over the fence by the toll bridge in the grounds of Thames Bank.

I contacted Lauren Troake who lives at the property and she kindly allowed us to go in and clear the rubbish and this was carried out by myself, Dianne and Lauren and now looks much better.

After our meeting of the village green committee one of the requests was for a dog waste bin in the car park area. Also a sign in the High Street indicating that the Village Green was down Eastfield Lane.

The new lamp opposite the Greyhound pub has finally been installed and I think makes a terrific addition to the village being close to our new village information board. I hope that in the future we can get more of these up the High Street.

13. Sustainability & Allotments Report

Cllr Donahue reported;

Work on the Maze is ongoing but there have been 155 bricks sold exceeding the target, of the original engraved bricks 77 need replacement. To replace the bricks and install a new pedestal cover will be just under £2000, so the sales profit will cover this expenditure.

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The list will now be verified so the new bricks can be ordered, it is hoped this will be done by mid July and that the new bricks will be in place for the Fete at the end of August.

Cllr Donahue requested that the grass on the Maze be cut as it is very long and that the current 2 cuts per annum are insufficient, Clerk to action.

Hardwick Road project is ongoing, a meeting with OCC highways was beneficial. Cllr Slater requested that Cllr Donahue and the working group contact the new County Councillor Kevin Bulmer to bring him up to date with this project, this was agreed.

14. Other matter for Chairman

The Clerk presented the External Auditor's report and read the one comment. The report and Annual Return were accepted by the Parish Council.

15. To note date of next Meeting Monday 2nd September 2013.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm