

# *Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council*

**MINUTES** of the Annual Parish Council meeting held in the village hall, Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 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
County Councillor	Kevin Bulmer
District Councillor	Rob Simister

## Public:

Laura Lucas, Richard Wingfield, Terri Lorrimore, Helen Willis, Kate Ireland, Caroline Cresswell, Lis Steward, Bill Lewis, Mrs. Bulmer, Hayley Bowen, Dianne Brooks, Leslie Prater, Wendy Blow, Anne Bradley, Peter Dragonetti, David Pearson, Vera Parham.

## **1. Election of Chair & Vice-Chair**

The Clerk requested nominations for the positions of Chair & Vice-Chair. Cllr. Bowen nominated the current Chair, Cllr. Brooks, & Vice-Chair, Cllr. Donahue. These were seconded by Cllr. Steward. The remaining councillors agreed & Cllrs. Brooks & Donahue will therefore continue in their positions for a further year. Cllr. Bowen thanked Cllr. Brooks for his hard work during the last year.

## **2. Apologies for absence**

Cllr. Hart.

## **3. Declarations of interest**

Cllr. Steward (gardening contracts in the village).

**4. 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.

Many of those present at this meeting wanted to discuss the cessation of the 143 bus service. Wendy Blow asked about the precept amount in Whitchurch & how this could be affected if the Council were to provide funding towards the bus service. David Pearson asked about the level of communication between Whitchurch & Whitchurch Hill regarding this issue. Cllr. Bowen said that he had been in close contact with many Whitchurch Hill residents & was aware of their opinions. Anne Bradley stated that many elderly people in Whitchurch Hill would be completely isolated without a bus service. Cllr. Bowen replied that he had been working very hard on this issue, with one of the possible options being a subsidy for the service until the end of the current financial year, the cost being shared with Goring Heath Parish Council.

Leslie Prater spoke on behalf of Graham Dednum, landlord of 'The Ferryboat', regarding comments made in last month's Council meeting & 'The Henley Standard'. He explained that Graham wanted a formal apology from the Council & from Cllr. Bowen himself. Cllr. Brooks said that the Council had already prepared a statement, which the Clerk will deliver to Graham in the next few days. Cllr.

Bowen stood by his comments, which he had felt would reinforce the ACV application for 'The Greyhound'; they were not intended to be a slight upon 'The Ferryboat'. Lessons have been learnt about communication.

Bill Lewis of 'Saxon Shaw' in Eastfield Lane discussed the letter he had sent to SODC regarding the planning application for 'The Haven'. He feels that it is an overdevelopment of the current site & that the application is more suitable for a high-density, urban area. The proposed new wall would be built within 3 feet of his house & he felt that 1 large house only should be built. Inadequate off-road car parking has been proposed, which is unsafe. It also abuts the conservation area, which should be taken into account.

Terri Lorrimore reported on the recent meeting with PC Barbara Taylor, at which other Hardwick Road residents, Cllr. Brooks & Josh Hall, the PCSO who had issued the tickets, had been present. There are currently about 9 spaces used by those in nearby houses without their own parking. Of these, 7 or 8 spaces are suitable. Residents will send in their car registration details &, if they park in one of these acceptable spaces, they will no longer be ticketed. The curved part of the road from the postbox to the corner, however, is not suitable for parking. A double yellow line or white line with a time restriction (e.g. no parking from 8am-6pm) should be in place there & also outside the art gallery (from Combeside Cottage up to the obligatory stop sign). Terri will send Cllr. Hatcher a plan of that area which can be discussed within the proposed Village Plan. The Clerk will ask OCC Highways for costs of painting double yellow & white time-restricted lines. Terri would like to push for a 5m, rather than 10m, limit from the junction, though, to minimise the number of parking spaces affected, whilst Helen Willis would like to see a residents' parking scheme put in place. Those parking on the High Street further down from the art gallery have been doing so with one wheel on the pavement to allow more room on the road. Barbara stated that a blind eye would be turned to this. It was also felt that regular liaison with the police regarding local issues would be beneficial.

#### **5. Agree minutes of Parish Council meeting 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

It was stated in section 13 of last month's Minutes that the Whitchurch Bridge Company would require reimbursement from the Council for reducing the toll for the bus. This is not the case. The Bridge Company will take no toll for the bus should the service continue & be subsidised by the Council & they will require no payment from the Council for the loss of the toll revenue.

The Council would like to clarify that the views expressed in the ACV application for 'The Greyhound', as stated in section 5 of last month's Minutes, are those of Cllr. Bowen himself & do not reflect the views of the Council itself.

Following these amendments April's Minutes were approved as a true record.

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

Cllr. Simister had prepared his annual report, which will be presented on his behalf by Cllr. Brooks at next week's Parish Assembly. SODC heads the national recycling league table for the second year running. Better & more efficient services have been delivered for the district. This year saw the introduction of kerbside collection of textiles & small electrical goods. SODC's portion of the council tax has been reduced & was frozen for this financial year. It is likely that the district will have to accept some housing from Oxford City Council, which cannot meet its own needs.

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

Cllr. Bulmer had circulated his report before the meeting. In it is mentioned the fact that crime in Oxfordshire has fallen by 33% in the last 8 years. Unitary council proposals are still unclear. 'Oxfordshire Together', which was launched last September, asks town & parish councils to take on some services that OCC can & will no longer be able to provide due to budget cuts. Some of these the

Council already carries out but Cllr. Donahue will investigate this proposal fully to see whether anything more should be done.

## **8. Planning**

P16/S1009/FUL 'The Haven', Eastfield Lane. Demolition of existing house & erection of 2 2-storey houses. Cllr. Polansky stated that the infrastructure is not present on Eastfield Lane for these dwellings. Parking & pedestrian safety would be major issues on what is already a busy road leading to the school. Cllr. Hatcher felt that if this were approved it could set a precedent for the area. The proposal is not in keeping with the area & is overdevelopment of a site; the proposed new dwellings would be very close to 'Saxon Shaw'. The Council voted unanimously to 'Refuse' this application. The Clerk will prepare the letter according to the list of material planning considerations.

P16/S1248/HH 4 Whitchurch House, High Street. Rear & side ground floor extension. The house is grade II listed & a part would have to be demolished & rebuilt. Some trees would need to be felled during the work but these would be replaced. The Council voted unanimously to submit 'No strong views'.

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

Monthly salary for the Clerk

Arrow Accounting £296.70 (annual internal audit fee)

SiteSpider £50.00 (annual website hosting fee)

The Chiltern Society £25.00 (annual membership fee)

Invoice from Steward Grounds Maintenance for April gardening services (£250.00).

The Clerk reported that the Council had passed its annual internal audit. A list of recommendations has been drawn up which she will work on. Reserves have been put aside for the coming financial year. An overview of the Council's financial dealings was circulated before the meeting; Cllr. Brooks will present this at next week's Parish Assembly.

## **10. Village green**

Cllr. Steward has investigated the purchase of a replacement tree for the Philipson family. He will send the link to the Clerk & she will purchase.

## **11. TAPAG**

Cllr. Polansky informed the meeting that the proposed new crossing-point at the tollbooth has been approved. This will be a raised platform with a flat top in a different colour to the road surface. The bridge company hopes that this can be installed in the autumn.

The school has asked the Council whether it could pay for/contribute towards the cost of repairing the road surface outside the school as it has no budget for this. A quote has already been received from Hazell & Jefferies but, at £2,700, was felt to be too high. Drainage outside the school has historically been a problem & it was felt that this would need to be a longer-term plan to be included in the Village Plan. The Clerk will obtain 3 quotes for filling in the potholes only, which the Council felt would be a suitable short-term solution & be happy to pay for. The Clerk will also obtain 3 quotes for 'scalpings' for the school end of Muddy Lane (between the 2 sets of school gates).

The Clerk has asked Hazell & Jefferies whether 'The Cut' could be repaved during the next half-term; she is awaiting a reply.

## **12. Village hall replacement project**

Nothing to report.

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

SODC are currently preparing the lease for the site of the old Polish church & the Clerk hopes to receive this soon.

Cllr. Polansky has received about 35 replies to the village sign survey; the Clerk has received 5. The 6 designs from which elements will be incorporated into the final sign were published on the front cover of the latest 'Bulletin'. The Clerk will purchase tokens for the children which can be presented to them at assembly.

Tim Sheldon from the Hardwick Estate has made some stools to go around the other table in the Maze.

The bench at the end of Manor Road has been completely vandalised. Cllr. Brooks will purchase the wood for the replacement seat & he & Pete Woolhouse will restore it. The Council agreed this plan of action & an approximate cost of £100.

Cllr. Polansky stated that the Allotment Society would like the Council to buy the more expensive gates for the allotment.

The PCC asked the Council's opinion on installing a poster frame outside the Old Stables. The Council agreed this would be suitable.

## **14. Neighbourhood Plan**

It is hoped that the initial meeting for this will produce volunteers for the different sub-groups & glean information from residents about their issues/ideas/hopes for the village. Cllr. Hatcher has created posters for the event to help gather all the information. Flyers have also been produced & will be distributed.

It was decided that the plan should be called the Village Plan; this can mean Community &/or Neighbourhood Plan, according to what arises from residents' wishes.

**15. 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 gazebo or marquee may need to be hired for the Queen's birthday celebration. The Clerk will work with Lissie Steward.

Cllr. Bowen, supported by Cllr. Steward, was extremely keen that the Council vote to show their opinion of supporting the 143 bus. The other councillors, however, felt that they needed more information before committing to spending what could be a large amount of money, which disappointed Cllr. Bowen. In principle the Council would like to support the continuation of the bus service for the remainder of this financial year, which would amount to approximately £6,500. This would be confirmed at next month's meeting once full details were available. The Council asked Cllr. Bowen to determine the exact amount that would be needed & when a final decision needed to be made. Goring Heath Parish Council would also need to approve the payment of half the running cost.

Cllr. Bowen was concerned that his opinion had not been sought by the website editor during the recent discussions about the village pubs. It was felt that perhaps there was not enough liaison between the Council & the website.

The Council then held a short, closed meeting.

**21. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at 8pm.

*Meeting closed at 10.45pm.*

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

**Date.....**