



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL
Virtually at 20:15 Thursday 14th May 2020

Members Present

Chairman Jim Donahue

Members Hanna Ferguson
Jean-Marc Grosfort
Katherine Higley
Diana Smith

Officers Present:

Clerk Jane M. Yamamoto

Public and Press:

Alistair Aitchison, Chris Allen, Peter Dragonetti, Alex Hilton, Hilary Jensen, Carrie Leadbeater-Hart, Roger Pratap

The meeting started at 20:15.

- 1 Apologies for absence & Mission Statement 20:15
Cllrs Steward sent his apologies.
- 2 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Memberships of Working Groups and 20:20
Committees
Cllr Donahue sent point of contacts for the Working Groups and Committees (see Attachment 1).
Cllr Ferguson volunteered to be the Parish Council contact for Open Spaces matters working with Alexa and the Green Team. Cllr Ferguson also agreed to work with Cllr Donahue on pavement improvement initiatives.
Resolution: The Council voted to re-elect Cllr Donahue as the Chairman and Cllr Smith as Vice-Chairman.
- 3 Declaration of Interests by Councillors on any items on the Agenda
There were no declarations made.
- 4 Public Forum - an opportunity for members of the public to express their point of view 20:25
on any item on the agenda. With the Chairman's permission, a member of the public may express their point of view on specific items of business. Five minutes are reserved per item.
- 4.1 Carrie Leadbeater-Hart asked if TAPAG could be more transparent, for example with minutes of meetings published. She felt that the public was blind-sighted at the consultation meeting by not having the information before the meeting.
Cllr Donahue stated that TAPAG were advising only the Parish Council and not permitted to make any decisions. He also stated that the TAPAG Open Day was an informal consultation prior to the formal OCC consultation and the purpose was to make residents aware of the proposal and solicit their feedback.

Action: Cllr Donahue to ask the PC to reevaluate the level of transparency of the TAPAG and how it operates.

4.2 Alistair Aitchison requested the football nets on the Village Green to be put back up. Unfortunately, there were incidents with broken glass and rusty nails that had been placed on the pitch. This had been reported to the police. The police also said that they did not consider the Village Green to be a football pitch, so it should remain open to the public.

Alistair acknowledged the ongoing issue with the paddock next door to the football pitch. He said that there was damage to the stile as the players were using the fence posts to hold onto while retrieving balls that had gone over the fence. He said that the stile was quite dangerous to use. He added that there was no crossing point now as a temporary fence and sign had been erected to prevent any balls being retrieved. He said that a long-term solution to turn the goal posts to be north/south may now be feasible given that the Village Green's vegetation had receded behind the football pitch. He felt that urgent action needed to take place.

Cllr Smith said that Sports Regulations gave Parish Councils the discretion to place the nets back up.

4.3 Carrie Leadbeater-Hart suggested that the village have a Facebook page. It could be an information spot and not for propaganda. She felt that the Wonderful Whitchurch page had been negative and that the comments on Facebook had been unpleasant.

Alex Hilton reminded all that social media can be unpleasant wherever it was and the best advice was to simply leave the platform. Cllr Donahue stated that a page could be added in the future, however, at the moment, the Village Website was the best place for information and the Clerk was not an experienced Facebook user and did not have the time to update it. Hilary Jensen thought that Cllr Steward had changed the name of the Village Facebook page. Cllr Donahue said that it would be deleted.

5 Chairman's Announcements and Covid-19 Update

20:40

Village Open Spaces –

- As a reminder, the PC held an Extraordinary meeting on the 18th of April and agreed that the nets should be taken down in accordance with national government guidance that sports pitches should be closed, and following guidance received locally from our OALC and OPFA. We issued a statement on the 19th stating:
 - The Parish Council does not believe that that the current government guidance requires the Village Green to be closed.
 - As the Village Green is used by a wide range of residents, adherence to social distancing is important.
 - We want to ensure that all residents and families and especially teenagers will continue to have a safe place for their daily exercise which we acknowledge is very important.

- Subsequently there were concerns raised by the owners of the paddock adjacent to the field. They were concerned that balls kicked against the fence could risk the safety of the horse in the field.
- The fence was subsequently strengthened by Peter Woolhouse to address this concern. Thanks to our Clerk, Jane and James Norman for discussing the situation with them to help resolve this situation. We also discussed the following with the owners of the paddock:
 - Water bill: The owners of the paddock have agreed to pay the Cricket Club 50% of the Village Green Water bill going forward.
 - **Resolution:** The Parish Council agreed to organise a group to discuss longer term solution to address the situation of the paddock fence and football goal next to the to the paddock. This group should include members of the football club, cricket club, Parish Council, and consult with the owners of the paddock.
- The weekend of the 8th May, the owners decided to put a temporary fence up preventing users of the VG from retrieving balls kicked over the fence. They have said that it needs to stay up until the PC replace the nets.
- It is with regret that Cllr Donahue reported that earlier this week a significant amount of broken glass and nails were found on the area of the east goal post next to the paddock
 - This has happened on at least 2 days in a row. Residents have volunteered to clear it up on both occasions.
 - The incident has been reported to the police. Cllr Donahue spoke to them and they are very concerned with the situation.
 - At least two policemen have visited the Village Green, and it appears that there was more glass on Monday, but it could have been leftover.
 - Cllr Donahue stated that it is hard to express the shock and disappoint that he felt, and read a letter received from a resident that he felt expressed it well.
- Moving forward, the government issued revised guideline that enable everyone to have unlimited exercise activities that came into effect yesterday. Social distancing rules are still in force but the follow changes have been made:
 - Increased range of sport activities were also allowed within households, or by individuals
 - Driving to exercise is now allowed
 - Individuals can meet with one person outside of their home if social distancing is followed.
 - Based on the revised government coronavirus guidance, the Cllr Donahue asked the Council to consider if the football nets should now be put back up.

Chris Allen advised that along with the glass and nails left by the posts, the fence and sign had been damaged. Mr. Allen advised that he had placed a camera pointing at the fence in order to catch the person(s) damaging the fence. The footage was not to be made public. He added that they were happy to take down the sign and the temporary

fence once the nets had been replaced. He asked that a long-term solution be sought for the football posts. Cllr Smith agreed to set up a group for discussion and to review the options. This group would include the football team (the team leaders and the players), the Cricket Club, and the Parish Council. They would consult with the Allens to ensure that a solution was agreeable.

Cllr Donahue raised the option that the nets be put back up and Cllr Smith read the revised guidance. Cllr Donahue asked if the Village Green signage needed to change. Cllr Smith recommended that the wording be changed and that it emphasised that team games should not be played.

Action PC-145– Cllr Smith to set up a group for a discussion to look at long-term options for football posts.

Action PC—146 - Cllr Donahue to send around the wording for the new signage.

Resolution: The councillors voted to approve the football nets going back up with the proviso that if the government guidance changed, this may also need to change.

- 6 To approve minutes of the meeting of 9th April and 18th April 2020 20:55
Change to April 9th Minutes 6.3 to No Objections with comments. Change to April 18th Minutes 6.1 to Cllr Donahue said that the applicants still needed to comply with the OCC regulations of the width of the highway.
Resolution: The councillors approved the two sets of minutes with the changes as outlined above.
- 7 Planning Applications 21:10
- 7.1 P19/S4631/O
Eastfield House, Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7EJ
Partial demolition of existing care home, construction of extension 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 (as amended by additional information received 14 April 2020)
Resolution: The Council voted to Object with comments (Attachment 2)
- 7.2 P19/S4248/FUL
BP Technology Centre Bozedown Drive Whitchurch Hill RG8 7QR
Redevelopment of the site to include demolition of time expired buildings (G, K, M, N, S (all to be fully demolished) and U (part demolition to remove store room) and replacement with a single building (Building H). Refurbishment of existing laboratories (Building D)' (updated contamination report received 10th January 2020 and additional ecological information received 7th April 2020 and additional contamination information received 24th April 2020 & 6th May 2020).
Resolution: The Council voted to No Objections with Comments (concerned with increased traffic).
- 7.3 P20/S0706/FUL
Bozedown Farm, Hardwick Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7QY
Change of use of land adjacent to the dwellinghouse at Bozedown Farm to residential garden and constructions of a garden room for a purpose ancillary to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse.
Planning Decision: GRANTED
- 7.4 P19/S0366/FUL
Coombe Park, Coombe Park Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7QT
Replace existing fences to the west side of the driver along Manor Road and metal fences along the boundary of the site with the Hartslock Bridleway to a timber paling fence standing 2.2 meters in height, with associated planting of native hedges.
Planning Decision: GRANTED
- 8 To receive reports from the representatives of Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council. 21:15
- 8.1 SODC District Councillor Report. See Attachment 3.

8.2 OCC County Councillor Report
Cllr Bulmer sent his apologies.

9 Finance

20:45

9.1 **Resolution:** The following payments were approved:

The Council approved the salary increase from SCP 18-19 for the Clerk. The Clerk was to ensure the Manor Road pillar and the verges as well as the Polish Memorial were covered under the renewal of the insurance policy.

Payment	Amount
Clerk salary (May 2020)	BACS
PAYE for April	BACS
Insurance (Annual renewal)	TBC with updated cover
Huck Nets (football supports)	£122.09
SODC annual premises licence	£70.00

10 Village Green additional dog and rubbish bin.

20:50

Action: The Clerk to find costs to move the bins from the Primary School to the Village Green car park.

11 Yew Trees on Manor Road

Cllr Higley advised that the trees fell into the conservation area of the village. It was therefore, unlawful to do anything to these trees. A qualified person must produce a report to recommend whether the trees needed any work. The report must then be submitted to SODC to provide authorisation. Cllr Ferguson queried the cost of the report.

Action: Cllr Higley to obtain 3 quotations for a qualified person to evaluate the yew trees.

Resolution: The council voted to approve Cllr Higley to obtain 3 quotes.

12 Uplands Wall

21:25

Cllr Higley advised that a resident had asked for this wall to be maintained as it was covered in ivy. Cllr Donahue advised that this issue had been raised previously, however, the wall was owned privately. The Parish Council members suggested that this could be evaluated as part of the work that is plan on the revised Conservation Area assessment.

13 Maintenance of Maze

21:10

Cllr Higley advised that she removed a large quantity of litter from a BBQ on site. Sally Woolhouse had made some signage to request that visitors take their litter home.

14 Parish Facebook Page – people are happy not to maintain this at this time.

Action: The Clerk to ask Cllr Steward to close down the Village Facebook Page.

15 Village Green Fence Repair and Long-term Solution

It was agreed that Cllr Smith would start a group to discuss the options. See 5 above.

16 Village Hall boiler

21:35

Cllr Grosfort had circulated 3 quotations and Premier Heating in Pangbourne presented a lower price for the system. He also recommended that this would be the best time to have the work completed.

Resolution: The Council agreed to fund the Premier Heating quotation for the Village Hall boiler.

17 To review progress on any open actions from previous Parish Council meetings and agree any revision of actions on the action list. Not actions were raised.

18 Resident Issue Update

Resolution: The council approved the publishing of the May 2020 resident issue log provided by Cllr Donahue.

19 The following 3 issues were raised by a resident to Cllr Higley:

19.1 Iron bollard fallen by the VG car park – this has been removed.

19.2 Corner street light on Manor Road and by Manor House not working.

- Cllr Donahue stated that he reported these in January and they are now fixed.

19.3 Village Green damage by lorry wheels ridge is dangerous underfoot

Action: Cllr Steward to roll and fill in ridge.

20 Pavements – Cllr Donahue provided the following update:

21:45

He was pleased to note that we have finally received an OCC grant of £2,000 from County Councillor Kevin Bulmer to be applied to Pavement resurfacing in the Village. This is in addition to £2,100 in CIL money that needs to be spent by 2023

- He spoke to OCC Highway's contact Mark Bostock and he is arranging a pavements walkthrough of Hardwick Road and Swanston field – asked to look at Manor Road as well.
 - o They will ask their contractor Skanska to get three quotes for the work.
 - o As an alternate we could contract the work ourselves using OCC approved contractors. This will likely be cheaper, but OCC may contribute some funds if Skanska is used.
- Ferryboat Pavement: Feedback from Mark Francis (works with Lee Turner) installed the imprint paving and additional road markings (carriageway edge lines & hatching etc) outside The Ferryboat PH many years ago in liaison with the Parish Council.
 - o The Parish Council had requested a full height footway at the time, but the existing ground/property levels meant there would be implications with property thresholds and drainage which resulted in it not being physically viable to install such a footway.
 - o **Action:** Cllr Donahue to get a more detailed explanation of the reason behind the decision on the Ferryboat pavement.

Cllr Donahue has asked about feasibility of improved marking – perhaps in conjunction with the other work TAPAG is doing on this. The previous road markings including hatching both sides to define the vehicle running lane are largely worn off. OCC suggested that if the road markings and hatching were refreshed this will reinforce the existing message. This has been referred to Lee Turner.

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| 21 | Whitchurch Award | 21:50 |
| | Resolution: The Council voted unanimously for the award. The Clerk to advise Laura Lucas of the Winner. | |
| 22 | To confirm the date and time of the Annual Parish Assembly on 28 May 2020 at 20:15. | |
| | Resolution: The Council voted to approved the meeting to be held virtually. | |
| 23 | To confirm the date and time of the next Meeting on 11 June 2020 at 20:15. | 21:55 |
| | Resolution: This was confirmed. | |
| 24 | Meeting Close | 22:05 |