

Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall, Monday 1st September 2014 commencing 8.00pm.

PRESENT

Chairman	Mr. H. Butterworth Mr. K. Brooks Mr. V. Aldridge Mr. N. Grove Mrs. L. Lucas Mr. H. Ainley Mr. J. Donahue
Clerk	Ms. J. Welham

1. To receive apologies for absence

Mr. K. Brooks will be arriving late.

2. To receive declarations of interest

None.

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.

Mark Bell PCSO addressed the council to update regarding the Smart Water project. 28 kits have been despatched and 44 replies received so far from resident. For the signage to be placed around the village publicising that the village is covered by Smart Water an 80 percent uptake is required. Mark requested that the PC continue to support the project and keep awareness high with residents.

4. Agree Minutes of Parish Council Meeting 7th July 2014.

Correction to The payment schedule, then Approved as a true record.

5. County Councillors Report

Not present and electronic copy not yet received.

6. District Councillors Report

Cllr. Slatter reported;

The leader of SODC Council Ann Ducker is very ill and currently on sick leave, she has requested that the PC send Ann a card or flowers wishing her well as this will be well received. As a result of this Cllr. Slatter is very busy as she is covering areas during Ann's leave.

The bridge is due to open in September, date to be confirmed, Cllr Slatter asked if any of the PC have been invited to the opening, Cllr Grove said he will speak to the Secretary of the Bridge Company Geoff Weir to find out what the opening plans are once a date is confirmed.

The property Badgers Bosk in the village is on the market and reportedly been sold, Cllr. Slatter cautioned the PC to keep a close watch on this as it is possible that a planning application to develop the area is going to be submitted. Should such an application come forward she requested that the PC meet as a whole to discuss the application and she would like to offer her advice.

Government have changed the policy on infill development and this has increased the number of applications to SODC planning.

Interpretation of the infill policies are difficult but the PC need to be aware so the rules are not disregarded.

7. Planning

No new applications.

8. Other Committee Reports

Village Hall

Stephen Trinder reported;

No issues or concerns.

TAPAG

Richard Wingfield reported,

The priority list for Highways jobs on the High Street has still to be completed. The Clerk has chased these jobs.

The weeds in the upper narrows are very bad and need to be removed as they are obstruction vision for cars. OCC no longer have the budget for this work and it is therefore up to the PC to decide if they can fund weed spraying and removal. It was discussed and suggested that an article be published in the next Bulletin to encourage residents to “do their own frontage” to help keep the weeds at bay. The Clerk to obtain a quote for removal in the Upper Narrows.

Resurfacing of the footpath Eastfield Lane/Swanston Field has been raised, this is long overdue and was scheduled to be done in the 1990's. The Clerk has already registered this with OCC Highways and been told that their Inspector will come and look at the area. No report has been received regarding the inspection so it is unclear if it has been carried out. This matter is still outstanding.

John Southey gave an update on the drainage/flooding, a camera inspection of the culvert is required as it appears to have an obstruction. The area of obstruction has been identified to be between two residential properties. OPC contractor will only camera inspect if the drain is dry, however Dyno Rod will inspect with a camera in a wet drain provided the water is clear. The PC agreed to the cost of the inspection by Dyno Rod up to a maximum of £300. This should then identify the blockage.

John to liaise with the Clerk to action this.

Hardwick Road Project update.

The meeting with the OCC Senior Engineer, Contractor Dan Hazell, John Southey and the Clerk took place on Friday 29th August and it was a productive meeting with a positive response. There is still paperwork to be finalised before the work can proceed however many of the questions regarding the Actual works and technical details were covered. The soak away into the land the PC lease from the National Allotment Society needed some small changes to upgrade it from original plan.

Jeremy requested a formal letter from the PC as the main stakeholder for this work and also advised that OCC solicitors will write to the NAS solicitors requesting an easement for the drainage.

Following the meeting Dan Hazell advised he will need to re-quote from his original quotation dated December 2013, as this is now out of date and also there have been some changes requested following this meeting that add some additional costs for the soak away and also for clearing the scrub and bushes/trees on the proposed footpath route along the top of the verge.

Village Green

Cllr. Ainley reported,

Following the Community meeting alternative designs and re estimate for the Pavilion are being sourced from Homestead and Shraptons. When these are finalised the next step will be to go to SODC for planning permission.

Cllr. Harvey requested from the PC how they would like this process to proceed, The Chairman suggested initially that the proposed plans etc are emailed to all Councillors for inputs and feedback. Depending on timing the new details could be discussed at the next PC meeting in November for final agreement before sending to SODC Planning.

Cllr. Ainley raised the question of the litter bins on the Green as requested previously. The Clerk reported that she had received no replies to her email regarding this from the various committee members asking for information on sizes type of bin etc. So the Clerk had obtained a quotation from Biffa (the SODC Waste Contractors) for the first size commercial bin which was £39.00 per month. This was thought expensive. It was agreed that initially an email be sent to the clubs that use the green requesting that they remove their rubbish etc. If a commercial contract has to be taken then charges for use will need to be made to the clubs. Clerk to Action.

9. Finance

The following payments have been raised since the last PC meeting.

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Cheque Ref</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
16/07/2014	Trevor Franklin Nova Press	SO	£367	Bulletin
16/07/2014	Berinsfield Community Business	SO	£436	Grass cutting June
18/07/2014	M. Zmuda	151	£120	Railing repair Hardwick Rd
18/07/2014	Swiftclik	152	£39	Calour & black cartridges
18/07/2014	Oxfordshire CC	153	£1,500	Fee Hardwick Rd project
01/08/2014	J. Welham	SO	£426	July Salary
01/08/2014	HMRC	SO	£96	July tax
08/08/2014	SODC	154	£50	Dog bins 1/4 to 30/6/14
08/08/2014	Southern Electric	155	£25	Pavilion Electric
09/08/2014	Berinsfield	SO	£802	July Grass cutting
14/08/2014	Playsafety Ltd	156	£89	Playground inspection
15/08/2014	J. Welham	157	£46	Payment for polycarbonate sht
01/09/2014	P. Hollitzer	158	£320	Playground refurb
01/09/2014	K. Brooks	159	£18	Paint for playground refurb
01/09/2014	Jenks Oxford Ltd	160	£1,440	Tree work yew trees Manor Rd
01/09/2014	HMRC	SO	£96	August tax
01/09/2014	Swiftclik	161	£17	2015 Desk and pocket diary
01/09/2014	SODC	162	£50	Dog Bins 1/7 - 30/9/14
Total Payments			£5,939	

APPROVED.

Noted no receipts.

9.1 Quotations/Grants

The Clerk had obtained a quotation from Kings Tree Surgeons for removal of the Cooper Beech tree on the VG that obstructs marking the football pitch to the correct size. The quote included trimming back the low bows on the neighbouring Sycamore Tree. Cost £270. The PC agreed.

Included in this quote was also a quotation for spraying and removal of weeds Swanston Field and the Wall along the High Street opposite the Greyhound Pub. Cost £370. This was agreed, however the weeds along the wall are usually removed by the owners gardener. Clerk to hold this area and ask the contractor to cover the weeds at the Upper Narrows instead, it is hoped the quote will cover this.

11. Environment Group Cllr. Brooks – update

Cllr. Brooks reported, Following the inspection of the playground in Manor Road by RoSPA inspectors last year several concerns arose about the poor condition of the equipment and its effect on health and safety.

Consequently I organised for Peter Hollitzer to spend several days correcting these faults and now the play area looks much better. The Parish Council generously covered the cost of this work.

Another project involved clearing the vegetation around the War Memorial which had become overgrown resulting in a scruffy appearance and also causing the adjacent seat to become inaccessible. Stephen Trinder and myself cleared this area and we gave the seat a coat of preservative to finish it off.

There has been rather lot of rain recently which has resulted in lots of stones and loose gravel being washed down and accumulating at the entrance to Manor Road. This is a hazard to both cars and pedestrians so I removed it. At the same time I noticed that there was much organic debris under the seat and along the wall by the notice board. Having cleared it all and put it in sacks this was collected by SODC contractors who had been contacted by the Clerk.

I attended the Henley Rural Neighbourhood Action Group meeting at Wallingford Police Station which was chaired by Inspector Mark Harling of Thames Valley Police who provided an update on rural crime in the Thames Valley. Much of this is opportunistic crimes relating to theft from outbuildings and farms as well as dog thefts, and hare and deer coursing. In relation to this the Parish Council was asked by PCSO Mark Bell to deliver leaflets offering Smartwater kits at greatly subsidised prices.

This substance can be used to mark items and hence discourage burglars from taking items from buildings where they know it is being used. Laura and myself distributed the leaflets throughout the village. The kits can be ordered from smartwater@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk.

Lastly I had a meeting with Alistair Aitchison, from Whitchurch FC, at the village green to look at a tree which is causing a health and safety problem to those playing football due to its close proximity to the pitch. The tree could cause serious injury to someone and a solution must be found as soon as possible. Alistair will be putting forward various alternatives which can be used to solve the problem and these can be discussed by the Parish Council.

12. Sustainability & Allotments

Cllr. Donahue report,

Allotments:

No new PC related changes to the allotments to report.

Whitchurch Maze Committee

New picnic table planned for Maze from fallen Oak on Eastfield lane.

Tim Sheldon Hardwick estate volunteered time and skills.

James Norman volunteers tractor to move to maze.

Path Hill Outdoors volunteering time to build benches.

WOTHabs Hardwick Road Verges Project:

Waiting for meeting with OCC to discuss required drawings and forms, see minute above under TAPAG.

War Memorial:

Requested quotes for War Memorial Cleaning.

Investigating grant for cleaning, but may be too small.

Initial quote is £1600 – suggest splitting cost with Goring Heath PC. This was agreed as a good approach.

PAWS:

Iain Tolhurst of Tollhust Organic Farming talking at Pangbourne Village Hall –Thursday 25th Sept, 8pm.

Apple Day event at Maze on Sunday 19th October – potential BBQ to celebrate the new picnic table, 2 - 6pm. Bring your windfall apples!

13.Other Matters for Chairman

The Chairman raised the matter of the defibrillator for the phone box. This seems to have support, however the County Councillor has not replied to the Clerk advising if he is going to give any Community Grants funds towards the cost of a unit. More information regarding the use, battery life etc is required before the PC are comfortable to go ahead with this project, should the funds be forthcoming.

Richard Wingfield TAPAG advised the Polish Chapel has been demolished, but a large manhole has been left open which is dangerous, and piles of rubbish are in the area. This land is owned by SODC so they need to be advised and requested that the area be made safe and cleaned.

Cllr. Brooks had been approached by a resident requesting that a hedge be planted along the front of the new fence that had been erected coming up to the Toll Bridge. This was not agreed by the PC as if a hedge was planed it would then need to be maintained and would obstruct the owner of the fence from treating the fence.

Cllr. Lucas requested if more litters bins could be installed, one near the Toll Bridge and one on Hartslock Bridleway. She will send photos of the two areas to the Clerk so a request can be made to OCC Highways.

Cllr. Brooks reported many of the allotment plots appear to be uncultivated, approximately only 25% of the plots look used and productive. It was agreed that he and Cllr. Donahue would make a survey and check with the allotment committee if there is a waiting list and what measures are in place for untended plots and report back to the PC.

The hedge on the village green needs to be cut, several Councillors have noted this. The Chairman agreed to check with Sally Woolhouse the degree of cut required, he said he could cut it, but will advise.

14. Note date of next meeting Monday 3rd November 2014.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm

Signed.....Date.....