

These Minutes are unapproved; they will be approved at the next PC meeting on 10th October 2017

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting held in ‘The Old Stables’, Tuesday 12th September 2017, commencing at 8.00pm.

PRESENT

Chairman	Keith Brooks
Vice-Chairman	Jim Donahue
Councillors	Dave Bowen Rachel Hatcher
Clerk	Felipa House

Public:

Richard Wingfield, Sarah Hanfrey, Charles Cotgreave, Gill Goodwin, Sally Woolhouse, John Bradon & James Norman.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllrs. Denise Huxtable & Carrie Leadbeater-Hart, Cllr. Simister & Cllr. Bulmer.

2. Declarations of interest

None mentioned.

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.

Sally Woolhouse spoke on behalf of WoTHabs regarding the Hardwick Road restoration project proposal. (A detailed project proposal was submitted to the Council before the meeting, which contains further details & information). The project has now been ongoing for 5 years, in which time passing places have been installed & improvements already seen. The next phase is to protect & prevent further damage to the verges, both for biodiversity & amenity value. The verges would be built up & bollards installed to create clear & specific areas for passing. Ideally the work would be completed by late winter or early spring to allow reseeded. Oxfordshire County Council Highways are willing to cede control to the Parish Council via a section 278 lite agreement. Sally stated that the approximate proposed cost of this verge restoration work would be £2,250. WoTHabs would be willing to pay £750 from their funds & asked the Parish Council for the remaining £1,500.

4. Agree minutes of Parish Council meetings 11th July 2017 & 17th August 2017

These were both approved as a true record.

5. District councillor's report

Cllr. Simister was not present.

6. County councillor's report

Cllr. Bulmer had submitted his report before the meeting. This included information about a new daytime service for social care, Community Support Service, which will be delivered from 8 centres in the county.

From October there will be bins for recycling hard plastics (garden furniture, children's toys e.g.) at all of the region's household waste recycling centres.

SODC have been given £6.2 million by the government, which will accelerate the delivery of Didcot's Northern Perimeter Road & in turn assist the development of Didcot Garden Town.

7. Planning

P17/S3086/DID, Hopton, Manor Road. Discharge of planning conditions from previous application. No action required.

P17/S2986/HH, 4 Whitchurch House, High Street. This was confirmation of the plans discussed at last month's Parish Council meeting, to which all had agreed to submit 'No strong views'.

P17/S2998/LB, Hill House, Hardwick Road. Replacement of side gate with wooden door. The Council unanimously agreed to submit 'No strong views'.

The need to potentially move the new pavilion from its current location to the opposite side of the green was felt to require feedback from the village. It was agreed that the latest design, plus an explanation of the change in location, was needed. The Council will ask Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart to provide this & submit it to the website. It was felt that the skate park was no longer a viable idea, but that the MUGA was still under consideration, dependent upon the final location of the pavilion.

8. Finance Approve payments/note receipts

Monthly salary for the Clerk

Invoice from BDO LLP for 2016/17 external audit (£240.00)

Invoice from West Berkshire District Council for bus subsidy April – July 2017 (s.137) (£2,591.35)

Expenses for K. Brooks for printer paper & cartridges (£24.38)

Invoice from S D Wale for installation of tap on village green (£120.00)

Invoice from PlaySafety Ltd. for annual inspection of play area (£92.40).

The sum of £12,886.50 had been received from SODC for the second half of the year's precept.

The external audit review had been received by the Clerk & all was in order for the 2016/17 financial year. The Clerk will display the appropriate information.

OALC new councillor training courses for Cllrs. Hatcher, Huxtable & the new councillor were approved. The Clerk will book these when next available.

Action for Pangbourne Toilets would like to add the Council's name to their plaque detailing benefactors. This was agreed by the Council. The Clerk will confirm to APT.

9. Village green

Cllrs. Brooks & Bowen felt that it would be useful for the Parish Council to purchase a large marquee (approximately 10m x 6m) for the use of the village. This could be used for events on the village green, including the fete, sports day & WhitFest. The cost would be approximately £1,200, but it could be hired out for a small fee which would help to recoup costs. The cricket & football clubs, school & fete organisers have expressed an interest in using this were it available. Cllr. Donahue will raise this idea at the next meeting of the Village Green Working Group.

Cllr. Brooks has received several emails regarding the grass cutting schedule for the village green.

The agreement with the contractor was that it would be cut approximately 12 times a year. Cllr.

Donahue will ask at the next VGWG if it would be helpful for the village to see the grass-cutting schedule. The agreement from 2015 was that up to £2,500 could be spent on the green.

Returfing of the goal mouths is needed & is being organised by Alistair Aitchison. A new tap has been installed on the green to help with watering the football pitch.

10. Village green working group/pavilion

As discussed in point 9. above

11. TAPAG (Traffic and Parking Action Group)

Cllr. Hatcher stated that there had been good support for July's meeting. Suggestions made for improving traffic & parking included : 20mph limit in the High Street, 'Stop' signs in the Narrows, bollards outside the Ferryboat, residents' parking permits, white lines, yellow lines, time restrictions for parking & mini roundabouts at the High Street junctions with Manor Road & Eastfield Lane. Investigations into all these suggestions are now underway. The next meeting will take place within the next month. Charles wondered whether the residents' parking permit scheme might just move the problem elsewhere in the village. Cllr. Hatcher mentioned that SODC were currently no longer accepting requests for these as they had had too many & there were a lot of costs associated with them.

12. Village hall refurbishment project

BP Castrol will be having an internal meeting about local facilities & will contact the Clerk afterwards.

The faulty water heater has been replaced. A new volunteer within the Council to head this up is needed following Jon Steward's departure.

13. Village environment/maintenance

Cllr. Donahue explained that the colours for the new village sign had been agreed with the sign company, as well as installation details (new poles & cement). The final quote is awaited & installation will hopefully take place shortly.

The trees on the left-hand side of the school entrance need to be cut back. Cllr. Donahue ideally wanted them to be trimmed & thinned out. Gill explained that it would actually be better if they were cut back to hedge height, as this would encourage growth & let in more light. Most of the trees there are not of great interest & doing so would help the more valuable trees to thrive. (There are some trees with TPOs there). Gill had discussed this matter with the Forestry Officer in the past & was quoted over £2,000 then; James Norman has offered to cut them free of charge. The Council asked that WoTHabs write a short article describing the need for such action so that villagers are not alarmed by the work. All Councillors were in agreement with the proposal to drastically cut the trees. Cllr. Brooks will coordinate.

The chain-link fence along one side of the Polish memorial garden is broken. The Council would like to replace this with a wooden fence. Quotes will be obtained for the work. The Clerk will liaise with SODC to ensure this meets the conditions of the lease agreement.

Cllrs. Brooks & Bowen have been helping to drive the community bus & reported that it was currently not being used enough to make it viable long-term. They urged everyone to use it, even if only for a short journey. Bus times will be published in the 'Bulletin' from now on. Cllr. Brooks will ask for residents' suggestions of improvements to the service which he can then pass on to Going Forward buses, as some residents have stated that the bus times are inconvenient.

The play area was recently surveyed & was generally safe. The report mentioned a few minor improvements which could be made; the Clerk will raise these at next month's meeting to see whether these could be carried out by village volunteers.

14. Village /Neighbourhood Plans

At the last meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan steering committee in July it was felt that the Neighbourhood Plan required a great deal of effort with no immediate tangible benefits for the village. The consensus was that it should be put on hold & greater emphasis & work put in to the

village plan instead, where changes can be made & benefits seen. The last plan was in 2009 & it is hoped that the new version will be finished & published by the end of 2018. It will include MOWS, TAPAG, village green users, WoTHabs, village hall refurbishment etc. Cllr. Donahue recommended that the structure of the village plan steering committee be established. Councillors voted unanimously to put the Neighbourhood Plan on hold, resurrect the village plan & for Cllr. Donahue to set up the steering committee. Sarah stated that much had been learnt from work done to date on the neighbourhood plan, especially about planning rules & flood plains, AONB etc. in the village. Charles mentioned that the Council should check any deadlines or time limits for the neighbourhood plan in case it was needed in the future.

15. Hardwick Road verge improvements (WoTHabs)

Cllr. Bowen was not confident that the work could be carried out for the price mentioned by Sally. However, the councillors voted unanimously to provide up to £1,500 towards the project. The Council asked WoTHabs to provide 3 quotes for the work.

16. Listing of village walls

Some walls in the village are already listed, such as that outside the Old Stables. If they are listed then, if damaged, they have to be repaired to their original state & appearance. Cllr. Bowen will investigate, following recent accidents in the village.

There will be a 'Have your say' meeting with PCSO Mark Bell on 22nd September at the school, at which residents can express any concerns they may have. Residents are urged to attend.

17. Recording of Council meetings

Cllr. Bowen was quite keen that recordings of meetings be made. Cllr. Hatcher wondered whether recording would make visitors feel uncomfortable. Richard Wingfield felt that recording of events raised issues of trust & would feel uncomfortable to any visitors. A vote was held but councillors were not in agreement. No off-the-record comments will be allowed in future.

18. Parish councillor vacancy

3 applications were received for the vacancy. All 3 candidates were interviewed by Cllrs. Brooks & Donahue, who recommended Sarah Hanfrey for the position. Cllr. Brooks proposed her & the other councillors all agreed. She was unanimously co-opted & welcomed to the Council.

18. 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

The Clerk mentioned that the standing orders need to be reviewed & finalised. She will add to the agenda for October & distribute them once more.

19. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 10th October 2017 at 8pm.

Meeting closed at 9.55pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....