

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting held in ‘The Old Stables’, Tuesday 13th February 2018, commencing at 8.00pm.

PRESENT

Chairman	Keith Brooks
Vice-Chairman	Jim Donahue
Councillors	Dave Bowen Sarah Hanfrey
Clerk	Felipa House

Public:

Charles Cotgreave, David Maynerd.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllrs. Hatcher & Huxtable & Cllr. Bulmer. Cllr. Leadbeater-Hart has resigned from the Parish Council due to work commitments but will continue to help with the new pavilion project. The Clerk will advertise the vacancy immediately.

2. Declarations of interest

None were given.

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.

David Maynerd stated that the Roy Bailey Big Band would charge their usual rate of £250 to play at May’s planned Royal wedding party. He suggested that the timing & date of the event should be carefully considered & whether a nominal entrance fee should be charged. He had also produced a draft poster for the event.

David Maynerd was concerned about the level of dog fouling still taking place in the village, despite the prevalence of signs. He mentioned the idea of a DNA checking system, which would compel each dog owner to have a DNA profile of their dog, thus leading to a dog register within the village. It was felt that this idea was a little too complex for the village & that the Parish Council did not have the relevant powers to enforce any subsequent punishments.

4. Agree minutes of Parish Council meeting 9th January 2018

These were approved as a true record.

5. District councillor’s report

Cllr. Simister was not present.

6. County councillor’s report

Cllr. Bulmer was not present but had circulated his report before the meeting. This included details of proposals being submitted for OCC’s forthcoming budget, an outline Housing and Growth Agreement with Government, the termination of OCC’s contract with Carillion & extra funding to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children living in Oxfordshire.

7. Planning

P18/S0124/DIS, 'Hopton', Manor Road. This related to a discharge of conditions under the earlier planning application & no input was therefore required from the Council.

8. Finance Approve payments/note receipts

Monthly salary for the Clerk

Expenses for the Clerk for stamps (£6.72)

Invoice from Nova Press for the January 'Bulletin' (£343.75)

Invoice from NSALG for annual membership renewal (£66.00)

Invoice from SODC for dog-bin emptying October – December 2017 (£50.23)

Invoice from Kingdom Signs for 2 new village signs (£927.22).

The Clerk recommended that the internal auditor previously used by the Council be instructed again for the 2017/18 audit. The Council agreed this appointment. The Clerk & Chair signed the agreement, which the Clerk will send to the auditor.

The Clerk had circulated the assets register, financial regulations, review of effectiveness of internal audit & risk management policy to the Council before the meeting. These were all approved by the Council.

The Clerk had revised the standing orders to incorporate changes suggested at the review meeting held in November. This had also been sent to the Council for review. It now requires final sign-off by the Council.

9. Village green

Cllr. Bowen felt that the Parish Council should cover the costs of the proposed Royal wedding party, with attendees asked to bring along a plate of food to share. Cllr. Donahue suggested that information stalls about the village plan & pavilion should be there. Cllr. Brooks asked David Maynerd whether the Maynerds & Lissie Steward would be willing to organise this event; David will confirm by next month's meeting. The Clerk will check the village green calendar to ascertain the availability of the green for that weekend.

10. Village green working group/pavilion

There has been a delay with the submission of the planning application for the new pavilion. The Clerk will liaise with Carrie Leadbeater-Hart & SODC to resolve this. Cllr. Brooks asked Cllr. Hanfrey whether she would like to take the lead on this project. She will decide by next month's meeting. It was felt that it would be better to obtain large amounts of money first (grants, e.g.) before launching any local appeals for fundraising.

11. TAPAG (Traffic and Parking Action Group)

Cllr. Bowen has been investigating OCC's FixMyStreet & it seems that the status of issues raised is often incorrect. There seems to also be a lack of co-ordination between SODC & OCC. Cllr. Bowen will continue to pursue the matter, but made it clear that he is doing so independently rather than as a councillor.

12. Village hall refurbishment project

As part of a village plan sub-group Charles Cotgreave & Jean-Marc Grosfort have been doing a lot of research on potential improvements to the village hall & believe the village hall management

committee should be re-established in order to deal with all the issues. Charles will prepare a proposal for inclusion at next month's Council meeting.

Cllr. Hanfrey voiced concerns about the recording of decisions made by the Council & its role in things in the village, e.g. refurbishment of village hall. She felt that it was often not clear what had been agreed & that items were sometimes discussed & agreed informally rather than being properly noted. This led to a lengthy & heated debate with the Chair. Councillors finally agreed that the Clerk would make the agenda more specific in future to ensure that councillors are aware in advance of which agenda items are for information only or which require a decision. In the latter case the councillor proposing the item should prepare some background information to be circulated before the meeting to ensure that councillors have the relevant details in advance to ensure an informed decision.

13. Village environment/maintenance

The last 2 village signs have been installed & look very attractive.

The Clerk is still awaiting permission from SODC to install a new fence at the Polish church site.

Cllr. Brooks will reply to an email from a resident concerned about street cleaning. The Clerk was asked to request a village street clean. Cllr. Brooks will also talk to the owner of The Walled Garden House about the large hole that still remains in the wall.

Cllr. Brooks mentioned that PCSO Mark Bell will hopefully be able to attend some future meetings so that residents & the Council can discuss their concerns with him in person.

The Clerk had received an email from a resident regarding parking & subsequent erosion of verges in Manor Road. The situation is perhaps being exacerbated by builders' vans parking where they shouldn't. Verges in the village generally are being damaged by traffic, particularly in the winter, but the question of ownership remains. Cllr. Hanfrey mentioned that OCC will allow posts to be erected on verges to protect them if the posts are of the correct height & material.

The Clerk had amended the village maintenance contract after last month's meeting. The Chair has made some further amendments & will forward the revised document to the Clerk, who will finalise it & send it to the Council. The contract will include an extra cut for St. Mary's churchyard in the summer as requested. The maintenance schedule fits in with the cricket fixtures. Once finalised the schedule will be posted to the website. Cllr. Donahue proposed that Cllr. Brooks be given the authority to sign-off an additional 3 cuts annually to those in the contract. This was unanimously resolved.

Cllr. Brooks attended a meeting with Cllr. Simister & representatives from Majesticare this week, where the company presented their plans for Eastfield House. They intend to demolish the existing structure & erect something purpose-built. Majesticare will liaise with Cllr. Brooks to arrange an open day at the village hall to show villagers the plans.

14. Village Plan

Cllr. Donahue showed the Council a copy of the village plan timeline. The sub-groups are revisiting work from the 2009 Plan as well as looking at current & new issues; for example he recently met OCC to discuss Muddy Lane. OCC advised that if the mud were to be scraped off the path this would make a huge difference. Cllr. Donahue will organise a working party to do this. Scalpings could then be put down & examples of these were shown.

15. Governance processes

Cllr. Hanfrey's short discussion paper to review governance processes & agree initial actions was postponed & will be added to next month's agenda.

16. 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

Nothing was mentioned.

17. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 13th March 2018 at 8pm.

Meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....