

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

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

PRESENT

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| Chairman | Keith Brooks |
| Councillors | Dave Bowen Rachel Hatcher Denise Huxtable |
| Clerk | Felipa House |

Public:

Charles Cotgreave, Leslie Maynerd, PCSO Mark Bell, Dianne Brooks, Hilary Jensen, Richard Wingfield, Geoff Weir, Susan Lee, Roger Pratap (Majesticare), Neil & Julie Huntington.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllrs. Hanfrey & Donahue.

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.

PCSO Mark Bell stated that the ‘Have your say’ meetings will continue & still be held outside the school so that the children can see there is a police presence. He received several complaints about parking in the High Street last week. Damage has been done to Coombe Park, both inside the building & in the grounds. If further damage is done to the Manor Road playground then it will be included within the patrol plan, meaning that someone will walk past every 15 minutes in the evening. Cllr. Hatcher mentioned the SpeedWatch campaign & will exchange information with PCSO Bell. She also mentioned the damaged car that has been parked near the Lower Narrows for several weeks. This has already been reported to the police but PCSO Bell will check whether it is causing traffic issues. If yes, it could be towed away.

Leslie asked whether the party on the village green for May’s Royal wedding was going ahead. The Clerk will discuss the event with Lizzie to ensure that she is happy to organise it & ask what she needs from the Council. The Clerk will then confirm the arrangements to Leslie. The band are planning to play from 3.30 - 5.30 & are happy to produce posters to advertise the event.

Leslie also stated that MOWS will start planting up the boat once the weather improves. She requested a grant of up to £200 to pay for the plants & planters. The Council resolved to grant MOWS this sum of money.

Roger Pratap stated that he was at the meeting as a follow-up to last week’s public meeting. Feedback from the event is being collated & will need to be considered before being disseminated. He said that Majesticare was keen to carry out some quick fixes, mentioned at the meeting, which would improve the site in the short-term. These could include tidying up some of the rubbish/furniture that was visible from the street & putting up hoardings for additional security. Cllr. Hatcher felt that hoardings would be an eyesore, with which others agreed. Roger noted the comment & would await further feedback from the village. He reiterated Majesticare’s offer of presenting its plans to the Council,

perhaps at next month's meeting, for the benefit of those who had been unable to attend last week's meeting. He said that the outbuildings at the back of Eastfield House could also be boarded-up. He explained that a new planning application was definitely going to be submitted, but that there was no definite timeframe for this. (The planning consent previously obtained had ultimately not proved viable). Cllr. Bowen mentioned that a request for an Urgent Works Order had been received. Roger replied, saying he felt that this was more to do with making the building secure rather than restoring it to its former state. Geoff Weir asked whether CCTV could be installed on-site, with security on call in case of any intruders. Neil Huntington stated that, as a minimum, all doors & windows should be made secure in order to protect the building & make it watertight. He also asked for a clarification of the definition of last week's event; was it a consultation, an exhibition or a presentation? If it was the former, would Majesticare therefore respond to the comments from residents? Roger felt that the meeting had covered all definitions. Cllr. Bowen felt that it was clearly an exhibition rather than a consultation.

4. Agree minutes of Parish Council meeting 13th February 2018

These were approved by the Council as a true record.

5. Receive district councillor's report

Cllr. Simister was not present.

6. Receive county councillor's report

Cllr. Bulmer was not present but had circulated his report before the meeting. OCC agreed its budget for 2018/19 & council tax will rise by 5.99%. This will deliver extra money for adult & child social care. There are plans for a 10-year programme to improve the transport network & to release more money for road maintenance. £15,000 will be given to each of the 63 county councillors to spend on priorities in their local area.

More pothole inspections & repairs are being carried out. An extra Dragon-Patcher is in action & almost £1m of extra funding has been received from the Department of Transport. This will be spent on road patching later in the year as this provides longer-lasting benefits & better value for money.

Oxfordshire councils are working together to obtain the public's views on reducing waste & increasing recycling (see www.recycleforoxfordshire.org.uk).

7. Review planning applications

P18/S0263/FUL, 2 West Lodge, Hardwick Estate. Agricultural building to retail organic food. Mr. Tolhurst had given the Council a presentation of his plans at the January meeting. The Council voted unanimously to submit 'No strong views'.

P18/S0312/HH, 'Essendene', Hardwick Road. Single-storey side extension. The Council voted unanimously to submit 'No strong views'.

P17/S4397/FUL, 'Ash Court', High Street (amendment no. 1). Access to the proposed new house had been amended so that a gap in the wall was no longer necessary. Cllr. Hatcher felt that there was still an issue with the safety of vehicles coming in & out of the property. Cllr. Huxtable felt that it might change the profile of the High Street. Cllr. Brooks mentioned that several neighbours had raised objections to the plans. The Council therefore unanimously agreed to refuse the application on the grounds that its scale & bulk would lead to loss of light for neighbouring properties, it was overlooking neighbouring properties & would change the character of the area. Concern was also expressed about parking & traffic safety.

P18/S0555/FUL, 'Hopton', Manor Road (variation of condition 2 on P17/S0874/FUL). The Council felt that this was a minor change that wouldn't be seen & they therefore unanimously agreed to submit 'No strong views'.

P17/S4379/FUL, village pavilion. The Clerk has been informed by SODC that minor amendments to the plans are required before they can be submitted. The Council has asked Carrie Leadbeater-Hart whether she can do this.

Cllr. Brooks had received an email from a concerned resident requesting that SODC carry out a Conservation Area Appraisal for Eastfield House & that an Urgent Works Notice (S54) be issued as well. Cllr. Brooks has forwarded this to the district councillor, Rob Simister, & is awaiting his reply. Emails have also been received from other residents concerned about the Majesticare proposals & the senders will forward these to Majesticare independently.

Another resident requested by email that the Council set up a 'local list of non-designated heritage assets' as described in the Government's Planning Guidance, paragraph 39. The Council felt that this would be suitable as a separate workstream within the Village Plan & will ask Cllr. Donahue to start the process.

8. Finance Approve payments & note receipts for the preceding month. Note current bank account reconciliation.

Monthly salary for the Clerk

Invoice from Goring Heath PC for bugler & road signs (£53.18)

St. Mary's PCC for hire of 'The Old Stables' for TAPAG meeting (£15.00)

Invoice from OALC for annual subscription (£143.84)

Invoice from Eldon Tree Surgery for tree-cutting near school (£3,000)

Invoice from OALC for new councillor training (£96.00).

£40 was received in advertising revenue from the 'Bulletin'.

Susan Lee was disappointed with the state of the village green where the tree cutting had taken place. Cllr. Brooks reassured her that it would be tidied by Easter. Residents are welcome to help themselves to wood left there & chippings. Some branches have deliberately been left so that they can be woven through the trunks to create a natural fence.

9. Village green

As discussed in section 3. The Council resolved to pay the full cost (£250) of the band for the Royal wedding party.

10. Village green working group/pavilion

As mentioned in section 7.

11. TAPAG (Traffic and Parking Action Group)

Cllr. Hatcher stated that she had received axle counts from the Bridge company. Data monitoring for 7 days at 2 sites (outside 'Ash Court' & in Hardwick Road) will be set up after the Easter holidays. This spend of £200 + VAT was authorised by the Clerk.

TAPAG are working with OCC & PCSO Mark Bell to investigate permissible short-term solutions to the erosion of verges around the village. Organised parking is the end goal & proposals will hopefully be ready in 4-5 months' time, together with costs.

A local resident carried out a week-long survey of cars parked in the High Street & discovered that some local residents do park there.

Geoff stated that the 20mph speed limit over the bridge would be extended from the Pangbourne side in the summer. He asked whether this could perhaps extend in to the village & if 15mph be possible at school times?

12. Village hall refurbishment project

Charles Cotgreave had sent the Council a proposal for the re-establishment of the village hall management committee. All councillors felt that this was a good idea & it was agreed unanimously.

Charles had also submitted a proposal regarding spending priorities for the village hall. The Council resolved that it would spend up to £10,000 on the village hall for maintenance & refurbishment.

4 quotes for new windows & doors have been received &, following research, Wallingford Windows was felt to be the best provider. The quote for 24 windows in total, plus 2 fire doors at either end of the village hall, is approximately £6,822. The Council resolved to spend a maximum of £8,000 on these items.

13. Village environment/maintenance

The Clerk had circulated the amended village maintenance contract to the Council. Cllr. Brooks will check & approve this. The maintenance schedule can then be published.

The Clerk had requested that some streets be cleaned & OCC has carried this out in Swanston Field, Hardwick Road, Manor Road & Hillside.

Cllr. Hatcher mentioned that one of the TAPAG members has examined all the drains in the village & now has a map of their locations. He is monitoring them to ensure they are cleaned regularly.

The Clerk has received permission from SODC to replace the fence at the old Polish church site. This will be a wooden post & rail structure in exactly the same location as the current fencing. A quote from Arrow Fencing was deemed the most suitable which will cost £1,150 + VAT. The Council unanimously agreed this spend.

14. Village Plan

In Cllr. Donahue's absence Cllr. Hatcher stated that the next step in the process was the open day & the issue of an updated questionnaire.

15. Allotments

Cllr. Huxtable attended the WDAS AGM. The committee remains the same. All plots have been taken & there are 3 people on the waiting list. The tenancy agreement has been amended so that livestock are no longer allowed to be kept there.

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

3 people have expressed an interest in the parish councillor role but nobody has submitted an application yet. Richard Wingfield will advertise the vacancy again on the website.

17. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 10th April at 8pm.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....