

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Council meeting held in ‘The Old Stables’, Tuesday 8th May 2018, commencing at 8.00pm.

PRESENT

Chairman	Keith Brooks
Vice-Chairman	Jim Donahue
Councillors	Dave Bowen
	Sarah Hanfrey
	Rachel Hatcher
	Denise Huxtable
Clerk	Felipa House

Public:

Hilary Jensen, Leslie Maynerd, John Sidhu.

1. Election of Chair & Vice-Chair

Cllrs. Brooks & Donahue had submitted their reasons for wishing to remain/become Chair to the Councillors before the meeting. At the meeting Cllr. Hanfrey nominated Cllr. Donahue for Chair & Cllr. Hatcher seconded this. Cllr. Bowen nominated Cllr. Brooks & Cllr. Huxtable seconded this. Cllrs. Hatcher, Hanfrey & Huxtable then voted for Cllr. Donahue & he therefore became the new Chair.

Cllrs. Bowen & Hatcher had submitted their wish to become Vice-Chair before the meeting. At the meeting Cllr. Bowen withdrew his application. Cllr. Donahue nominated Cllr. Hatcher & Cllr. Hanfrey seconded this. All councillors then voted for Cllr. Hatcher. She therefore became the new Vice-Chair.

Cllr. Donahue thanked Cllr. Brooks for all his achievements, hard work & commitment over the last 3 years, & expressed his desire that Cllr. Brooks continue his work in areas such as village green & village hall.

2. Co-option of new parish councillor

3 applications had been received for the casual vacancy. One person withdrew before the interviews & Cllrs. Donahue & Brooks interviewed the other two applicants. They sent their views & recommendations to the Council before the meeting & the Council unanimously accepted their opinion & co-opted Charles Cotgreave to the Council. The Clerk will email him with the relevant forms & send feedback to the other applicant.

3. Apologies for absence

County Cllr. Bulmer.

4. Declarations of interest

Cllr. Hatcher will step out of the room whilst her planning application is being discussed.

5. 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.

Leslie Maynerd has obtained permission from the church to install a tap outside The Old Stables. The church would like the Council to pay for this (£178). This will be added to the agenda for June's meeting. The Clerk will inform the Council by email of the amount given to MOWS in the last financial year.

6. Agree minutes of Parish Council meetings 13th March & 10th April 2018

The Clerk had amended the March minutes as requested & distributed them before the meeting. Both sets were therefore approved.

7. Receive district councillor's report

Cllr. Simister was not present.

8. Receive county councillor's report

Cllr. Bulmer was not present but had circulated his report before the meeting. Amongst the items mentioned was the fact that OCC have taken delivery of another Dragon-Patcher, which will help to repair potholes much faster & more cheaply. Villagers in Oxfordshire are also working with the county council's trading standards team to report heavy lorries which ignore weight limits on rural roads & bridges; prosecutions & fines have therefore increased.

It is hoped that Cllr. Bulmer will be able to attend June's meeting in person.

9. Review planning applications

P18/S1202/T28, PCP014, Hardwick Road OPP 1 West Lodge. Installation of 1 DSLAM equipment cabinet. This was sent to the Council for information only & required no action.

P18/S1043/HH, 'The Baulk', Path Hill. Replacement of timber pool room. The new structure will be quite hidden so the Council voted unanimously to submit 'Has no objections'.

P17/S3578/HH, 'Prospect House', High Street. Cllr. Donahue stated that he had received notice from the owners that they have withdrawn this application. They will resubmit an application for a smaller structure in due course.

P18/S1163/HH & P18/S1164/HH, 19 Swanston Field. 2-storey side & rear extension. Following some debate & questions to John Sidhu, the Council voted to submit 'Has no objections' to both of these applications, although the vote for P18/S1163/HH was not unanimous.

P18/S1192/HH, 3 Old Barn Cottages, High Street. (Cllr. Hatcher stepped out of the room for the initial discussion, returning to answer questions. She did not vote on the application). Although none of the cottages have installed a larger dormer, all the work will be at the back of the house & therefore not visible from the High Street. The Council voted unanimously to submit 'Has no objections'.

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

Monthly salary for the Clerk & overtime
Expenses for Clerk for stamps & stationery (£13.44)

Expenses for K. Brooks for printer cartridges (£11.24)
Invoice from SODC for annual premises licence (£70.00)
Payment to Brekks Magic for balloon modeller at Royal wedding party (£135.00)
Payment to St. Mary's PCC for 'Old Stables' hire (£15.00)
Invoice from Nova Press for April 2018 'Bulletin' (£343.75)
20% deposit to Wallingford Window Company for new village hall windows (£1,685.40)
400 copies of village plan survey (£270.00)

The first half of the precept has been received from SODC (£12,987.50). More CIL money (£2,171.25) will also be received from 'The Haven' rebuild.

The Council successfully passed its internal audit. The Clerk circulated the auditor's report & the summary receipts & payments document to the Council before the meeting. The Council accepted the internal audit report & the recommendations within it.

The Clerk requested her annual pay rise in accordance with NALC guidelines. This was agreed by the Council, as well as a payment for extra hours worked during the last month for preparation for the audit. Cllr. Donahue will arrange an annual review for the Clerk.

The Clerk also suggested that an increase in her hours might be appropriate. This was felt to be quite a large increase in costs by the Council so a compromise was reached whereby the Clerk can work up to an extra 2 hours per week & claim this as overtime. This system will be reviewed in 6 months' time to ascertain whether a permanent increase is required.

11. Village green

Repairs to the football pitch were approved by the Council. These will be approximately £250 + VAT (turf & topsoil).

The Council approved a spend of £100 for items for the Royal wedding party, which the Clerk will purchase. She will also purchase the food items requested by Lissie Steward. This spend was also approved by the Council.

12. Village green working group/pavilion

Cllr. Hatcher stated that although Carrie Leadbeater-Hart would be keen to continue helping with the new village pavilion she is no longer able to do so due to work commitments. She is happy to meet whoever takes on the role to coordinate information. Cllr. Donahue's motion regarding this will be added to next month's agenda.

13. TAPAG (Traffic and Parking Action Group)

Cllr. Hatcher has been in touch with the Bridge Company regarding the extension of the 20mph speed limit. They have been waiting for the village to decide whether this could be extended into the village itself but the Council agreed that Cllr Hatcher should tell the Company to go ahead with their plans for the bridge as agreement for the village will take longer.

Cllr. Hatcher's police contact stated that a 20mph zone in the village would need to be self-enforcing, e.g. with the use of chicanes. If the average traffic speed were to be below 24mph then this lower speed limit might be feasible. The traffic surveys are going in this week. If the bridge speed was reduced to 20mph Cllr. Hatcher thought it was not necessarily the case that the 30mph sign would need to be moved in to the village.

The Clerk will send Cllr. Hatcher the contact details for Mark Francis' replacement. Cllr. Hatcher is also going to receive the agreement from Hardwick Road residents regarding parking at the junction with the High Street.

14. Village hall refurbishment project

Cllr. Donahue had submitted a motion requesting confirmation of the Council's decision to support & maintain the village hall for at least 5 years & and potentially up to 2029. Initiatives to refurbish the hall should be put in place over the next 2-3 years, which will require an increased investment during this period. The objectives of the village hall refurbishment should include ensuring that:

- the building is structurally sound and secure
- it has adequate insulation to keep heating costs down
- it can be promoted as a place for private village events to help defray its maintenance costs (e.g. Camera Club, birthday celebrations, exercise & dance classes, theatre shows). Consideration should be given to attracting users during off-peak hours as well as normal working hours (e.g. nursery, educational services).

Cllr. Bowen seconded the motion & the motion was agreed by the rest of the councillors.

Cllr. Brooks & the Clerk provided the Council with information from the latest VHMC meeting & the Clerk had circulated documents & draft budgets from that meeting.

(Standing orders were suspended so that the meeting could continue as it was 10pm).

The Clerk stated that a 20% deposit had been paid towards the new windows. The contractor will install just one window initially to check the condition of the openings & ascertain any future problems. Installation would then continue every Friday so that no interruptions were made to village hall users.

15. Village environment/maintenance

The signed contract & certificate of insurance have been received from the village maintenance contractor. Cllr. Brooks agreed to remain the point of contact for the contractor.

The new fencing at the old Polish church site has just been erected. Cllr. Brooks & Pete Woolhouse will complete the rest.

The residents' issues list has not been updated for some time. There is now no need to resurface Eastfield Lane, the signs have been installed & the war memorial restored. 2 issues remain where no further action will be possible. The current list will be closed & a new list started for short-term issues which the Clerk will probably maintain. This will be added to the agenda for next month.

Cllrs. Brooks & Bowen left the meeting at 10.15pm.

Cllr. Hatcher had been unable to carry out any research regarding the dog fouling map.

A resident had requested extra weedkilling in Swanston Field. The annual weedkilling will be carried out this week but further weedkilling was not felt to be necessary.

Cllr. Brooks has reported the damage to the pavement in Manor Road near 'Hopton' to OCC. Graffiti in the village has been reported to the police.

16. Village Plan

Cllrs. Bowen & Brooks were unhappy with the wording of the village plan survey, that some of the questions were leading & that it wasn't fully approved by the Council before it was issued. Cllr.

Hanfrey wondered whether the village plan group should be under the Council's jurisdiction. Cllr Donahue asked councillors to review the 'Village Plan Team process & approach' document from November 2017 that describes the relationship between the Council & the Village Plan team which is on the Village Plan portion of the website. He said that he would distribute best practice documentation for community-led plans & provide a summary for discussion at next month's Council meeting.

17. Annual parish assembly

The Clerk requested assistance from the Council for this month's annual parish assembly. This will be arranged by email after the meeting.

18. GDPR

The Council is aware of the requirements & is working towards them.

All councillors should have parish council email addresses & it was agreed that this should be a Gmail account. Training on GDPR is also advised & the Clerk should have her own laptop & external hard drive for Council work. There should be a nominated councillor responsible for any breaches. The Council needs to decide how long it should store information & who will be responsible for dealing with any breaches.

The Clerk will raise these issues again at next month's meeting.

19. Other matters for Chairman & Council to consider Items that arise that are not on this agenda but need discussion & to be proposed for a future agenda

There were none.

20. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 12th June at 8pm.

Meeting closed at 10.25pm.

Signed.....
Chair

Date.....