

### MINUTES OF MEETING OF WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL At the Village Hall at 20:00 Thursday, November 10, 2022

### **Members Present**

Chair Jim Donahue

Vice-Chair Diana Smith

Members Katherine Higley

Carrie Leadbeater-Hart

Frances Parkes
Diana Smith

**Officers Present:** 

Clerk, RFO Jane Yamamoto

Public and Press: Cllr Dragonetti, 5 residents

The meeting started at 20:00.

### 1 Apologies for absence & Mission Statement

20:00

Cllr Brazil provided his apologies. Cllr Leadbeater-Hart sent her apologies for her lateness.

2 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations.

3 **Public Forum** - an opportunity for members of the public to express their point of view on any item on the agenda.

There were no members of the pubic wishing to make any comments.

#### 4 Chairman's Announcements

Cllr Donahue: Chair

20:05

**Local flooding and drainage** - Leigh Travers, SODC Flood Risk and Drainage Engineer, assisted by another SODC engineer, met with John Southey and Richard Wingfield of the Flood Risk Team:

- SODC performed a topological assessment of the watercourse running under the High Street and Eastfield Lane. They will use this information to assess the feasibility of improvements to the watercourse to reduce the risk of flooding.
- The Walled Garden on the High Street Regarding Action PC-190 to review SODC plans to seek restoration of the Walled Garden Pond to its former state, I spoke with Leigh Travers, who confirmed that he asked the owner of the property to do this. However, in his recent visit he stated that SODC has no plans to enforce this. Richard Wingfield and John Southey from our Flood Risk team are satisfied that the current 'narrow channel' form of the pond should not impact flood risk, as long as it stays a viable channel for the village watercourse.
- Greyhound slotted drain cover has now finally been delivered and installed. This was
  paid for by the Greyhound owners, Oak Taverns. The slotted cover allows overflow
  water to be drained down the watercourse under Eastfield Lane in the event that the
  High Street drains become overwhelmed during a flash flood.

**Toll Bridge Access Road widening** – I am continuing to liaise with West Berks on this and they have requested that the Bridge Company provide formal approval for the new consultant to

November 10, 2022 FINAL Page 1 of 8

review the 2016 PBA Options assessment. The current owners of the toll bridge have given their consent.

**Pavilion ownership legal review-** There has been an article on the Village Website that has concerned some residents and members of the Cricket Team. I think the article is clear, but to avoid any misunderstanding, I will reiterate:

- The purpose of the legal review is to confirm if the PC is the legal the owner of the buildings, to determine if we are also responsible for liability insurance of activities in there building as well as health and safety checks of the pavilion including electrical equipment checks, fire safety checks, etc.
- We are not trying to take over ownership, but have been advised that we may already own it and it would be very difficult for any other party to own the building given that the deed in is in our name.
- To be clear it is not our intention to ever discourage cricket playing on the Village Green regardless of who owns the buildings and we are committed to ensuring the appropriate facilities are provided for use by the CC. We can still give the CC commitments for long term use of the buildings for cricket in line with the current agreement.

**Grant for Replacement of Manor Road Playground benches** - has been received for £2,500 from SODC to support improvements to the fence. Well done to Cllr Higley for applying for this and thank you Cllr Dragonetti!

### **Residents Issues:**

- Tree on Muddy lane Resident who lives adjacent to Muddy lane would like to have an Elm tree removed that is largely overhanging their property. As the ownership of Muddy lane is unclear, I intend to raise this to the Countryside Officer who looks after Muddy lane as a footpath. The tree is not large and I don't think its removal should have a significant impact.
- 5 To approve minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council meeting of October 13, 2022.

**Resolution:** The Council voted to approve the minutes.

6 Planning Applications – to discuss and agree Council's response to the following:

20:10

6.1 P22/S3504/LB

Manor House, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7EX

Proposed enlargement and refurbishment of bathroom, including removal and replacement of internal partition wall.

**Resolution:** The Parish Council voted to support this application.

6.2 P22/S3877/HH

Farthings, Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7EJ

Upward extension to create first floor accommodation, side extension to increase footprint in line with first floor above, internal alterations, replacement windows and doors throughout, replacement roof covering and rendering to part of existing dwelling.

**Resolution:** The Parish Council voted to support this application.

6.3 P22/S3901/FUL

Chair: Cllr Donahue

The Walled Garden House, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7EP

Demolition of existing house and rear outbuildings, replacement by detached dwelling with attached double garage, repair of associated outbuildings adjoining southern site entrance.

**Resolution:** The Parish Council voted to object strongly to the application due to the scale and design of the replacement dwelling whose size and bulk would be visible from many areas of the

High Street. In particular, the proposed height and mass presents significant harm to the heart of the Conservation Area, which is currently an open arboreal garden setting as well as the setting of nearby listed buildings. The application would harm public visual amenity and cause damage to the heritage townscape. The Parish Council also notes inaccuracies in a number of the supporting documents. The significance of and function of the village watercourse and flood defence flowing through the pond and garden at this location is not fully recognised and it is incorrect to say that there is no outfall from the pond. The Parish Council requests a full assessment by the SODC drainage engineers.

- 7 To receive reports from the representatives of Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire 20:20 District Council
- 7.1 SODC District Councillor Report Cllr Dragonetti (Attachment 1)
- 8 **Finance**: 20:25
- 8.1 To approve the payment schedule for November:

| Payment                           | Amount    |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Staff expenditure (November 2022) | £471.80   |
| Scofell (November Invoice)        | £720.24   |
| NAS (Allotments rent)             | £505.42   |
| Herald Graphics (Autumn Bulletin) | £456 BACS |
| British Legion (wreath)           | £23.98 DD |
| SODC (Dog bin Q2 and Q3)          | £904.18   |

**Resolution:** The Council voted to approve the payments for November.

- 8.2 Bank Reconciliation for October 2022
- 8.3 Financial Risk and Management (Attachment 2)

**Resolution:** The Council voted to approve the Financial Risk and Management.

8.4 Financial Regulations (Attachment 3)

**Resolution:** The Council voted to approve the Financial Regulations.

8.5 Internal Controls Policy (Attachment 4)

The Clerk advised that the Internal Auditor recommended that a quarterly Internal Controls Policy be implemented. It must be carried out by a Councillor that is not the Chair or a cheque signatory.

8.6 VAT for the Parish Council

The Clerk reminded the Council that all invoices must be addressed to the Parish Council. Otherwise, the VAT cannot be reclaimed. In the budget, the VAT is included on invoices and then it is balanced with the VAT reclamation.

8.7 Approving Councillors for banking access – Clerk

The Clerk advised that the Council had the Chair and the Clerk with online banking access. There were 4 cheque signatories, however, a cheque had not been written in over 3 years. The Council agreed that there was no need for any additional cheque signatories or online banking access.

Motion that the Parish Council agree to carry out the WoTHabs' plan to restore and to protect the verges on Hardwick Road between the Village sign and the gates of the Hardwick Estate subject to a grant being obtained by the WoTHabs from "Mend the Gap" to do the initial work and approval from Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department. The Parish Council will own and maintain the structure when the work is completed. Cllr Donahue seconded by Cllr Smith

20:30

- 9.1 Sally Woolhouse and John Bradon presented the proposed work to be done. (Attachment 5)
  The Chair advised that the Council would have to add the posts to the insurance assets under
  Street Furniture. Although OCC owns the verge and would be responsible for any accidents, the
  Council would indemnify them against any claims for damage to the posts.
- 9.2 A Councillor asked what would happen to the heavily used path. Sally Woolhouse advised that once the work was completed, a more established improved path would be planned.
  Resolution: The Council approved this Motion.
- Motion that the Parish Council choose one of the following options proposed by the Traffic and 20:50 Parking Working Group: (Attachment 6)
  - 1)A "virtual" crossing in the High Street just north of Eastfield Lane with the necessary adjacent parking restrictions.
  - 2)A "virtual" crossing in the High Street just north of Eastfield Lane with the necessary adjacent parking restrictions and heritage double yellow lines at the Eastfield Lane, Manor Road and Hardwick Road junctions to enforce the Highway Code.
  - 3) The 2022 Oxford County Council Highways approved Residents' Parking Plan\*.
  - 4) The 2022 Oxford County Council Highways approved Residents' Parking Plan plus the "virtual crossing in the High Street". Cllr Smith seconded by Cllr Parkes
  - \*This plan could include time limits for non-resident parking at agreed times.
- 10.1 Cllr Smith presented the options that were guided and created based on the village traffic and parking survey performed by TAPWG September 2021.

Cllr Parkes advised that the process to develop the High Street parking options had been transparent and objective. Traffic was now back to 80% pre-pandemic levels based on data provided by the Toll Bridge. In Woodcote, 50-60 houses were planned to be built. Streatley have voted for all day residents' parking restrictions. Taking into account all the factors involved and the feedback from the survey, there was no perfect solution for parking in our village, but the options presented in the motions should bring benefits. Compromise was what the residents of the village already have been doing for quite some time whether they drove or parked on the High Street or were a pedestrian.

John Charlton, OCC Technical Parking Officer, was present at the meeting and was responsible for creating the residential parking plan along with other OCC Highways officers.

He said that the single or double yellow line along the entire length of the High Street was the cheapest and easiest option. The problem was that this approach would offer no off-street parking for residents. The parking bays defined in the Residents Parking Plan recommended in options 3 and 4 would be shared between residents and non-residents. He recommended that a 2 hour maximum parking limit for non-residents was optimum to stop visitors from parking all day. The High Street bus stop needed to be kept because of the school bus that stops there each morning to pick up children. He did not mind which option the PC chose.

Costs for parking permits are currently approximately £100/year with a maximum of 2 permits per household. It was advised that parking on pavements would become unlawful in the near future. If one of the options with the virtual crossing was approved, the village would lose one parking space due to the need for 20m visibility for pedestrians in either direction.

Implementation could take up to 2 years. He said that it was difficult to set a timeline as one could not guess what might come up in the consultation.

10.2 One Councillor asked for 'Do Nothing' as an Option. Councillors advised that the council could choose not to vote for any option.

Chair: Cllr Donahue November 10, 2022 FINAL Page 4 of 8

- 10.3 A Councillor had counted 23 parking spaces in the plan. They would like to see more parking spaces. John Charlton said that 3 spaces were required for the bus stop and any unforeseen blockages on the High Street. There are currently a large number of parking spaces used by commuters during the day that would be freed up in the plan. If single yellow lines were used for the section of road south of Manor Road, then a number of additional spaces could be available for overnight parking.
- 10.4 A Councillor asked about households that might require more than 2 permits. John Charlton advised that OCC would consider a request for more vehicles as part of the consultation process, but that the standard was just 2 per household. Any more vehicles would be adding to the current problem. Cllr Parkes advised that only 9% of respondents from the survey had 3-4 vehicles.
- 10.5 A Councillor said that the parking permit cost may be prohibitive for some residents. Councillor Parkes advised that it could be seen as a good investment.
- 10.6 A Councillor asked what the visibility distance was for the crossing. John Charlton said It was 20 meters in either direction. The village could not have a zebra crossing because of the light pollution. A raised surface had also been discussed, but it would not be within OCC's budget and OCC currently don't recommend lined or raised crossings as it can gives pedestrians a false understanding that cars needed to stop for them. Currently, limited visibility means pedestrians crossing with children had to peep out from parked cars. It was agreed that the PC would speak to the Greyhound Pub owners about the virtual crossing on the car park, but the proposed crossing was on OCC land.
- 10.7 One Councillor asked how OCC would assess increasing parking bays by observing traffic flow and behaviour. John responded by stating that once the traffic bays were in place, OCC would observe how parking and traffic behaved to see if more parking bays could be created. Resident parking times would be agreed by the Parish Council.
- 10.8 A Councillor asked why single or no yellow lines were not considered. John Charlton said that all the areas must be treated and OCC could not allow parking on the road bends in sight lines. People would park there with no lines. He said it was possible to have a combination of double and single yellow lines, but signs would be needed every 60 meters and it was a Conservation Area. Single yellow lines could not be used above Manor Road due to sight lines, but was possible below Manor Road where there were no driveways. With single yellow lines, there would allow about 10 more parking spaces for overnight parking. Down the bottom by The Ferryboat Pub, there would have to be double lines by the narrows. On the approach to the Toll Bridge, they were not necessary as it would be self-enforcing. He explained that if you had no yellow lines, you have no scheme because you could have cars parked all day along the bend. Cllr Smith also added that the lines would be heritage lines, which would be thinner and paler. John Charlton said that he could prepare an updated plan adding single yellow lines.
- 10.9 A Councillor had a problem with the language used in the presentation: they did not feel the traffic problem was a growing problem but had diminishing rates.
- 10.10 A Councillor asked who set the permit numbers per household. John Charlton said that the permit numbers would be set by OCC and that the revenue would go towards the scheme (e.g. traffic wardens). He was not sure how often traffic enforcement officers would come around.
- 10.11 John Charlton said that the plan had previously segregated parking bays, however, one long bay would save maintenance and actually allows more cars to park.

Chair: Cllr Donahue

- 10.12 A Councillor asked how would the Parish Council engage with the residents about the changes?

  John Charlton said that this would be done within the process with an OCC consultation with the residents of the village.
- 10.13 Another councillor asked how many non-residents were parking on the High Street. Cllrs Smith and Parkes said that there were non-residents that were going to Pangbourne for shopping or yoga during off peak times. There are also commuters parking all day from outside the village. The Parish Council could have non-permit holders no return after one hour. All day parking was contributing to the congestion and the traffic flow.
- 10.14 A Councillor said that there was concern amongst residents of the "urbanisation of Whitchurch" with yellow lines. A councillor responded by saying that cars parked up the High Street and congestion was equally a cause urbanising the village.
  - Another Councillor said that after the survey, residents were greatly concerned by how plans would be enforced.
  - Cllr Smith recommended that the current Motion be amended to add the single yellow line where appropriate to allow additional overnight parking.
- 10.15 Motion to amend Motion 10 for Option 4: The 2022 Oxford County Council Highways approved Residents' Parking Plan plus the "virtual crossing in the High Street just north of the Eastfield Lane junction with a revision of the Parking Plan to include single yellow lines in locations which OCC Highways consider are compatible with their safety requirements to allow more on-street parking at certain times of the day. Cllr Smith seconded by Cllr Parkes

  Resolution: The Council voted to support the Option 4 of the motion, as amended.
- To review progress on any open actions from previous Parish Council meetings and agree any revision of actions on the action list.
- To confirm the date and time of the next meeting on Thursday, December 8, 2022 at 20:00. 21:55
- 13 Confidential discussion for thank you notes from the Parish Council
- 14 Meeting closed. 22:00

### Attachment 1

### Report to Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council November 2022 Councillor Grant Scheme

As one scheme closes, another one opens! There will be a second round for applications opening in November – see www.southoxon.gov.uk/grants

#### **Performance of Contractors to SODC**

At the Joint Scrutiny Committee in October, reports were considered on the performance of Biffa (Waste), Carparks (SABA) and Leisure Centres (GLL) in the year to March 2021. Generally our contractors have done quite well, although both waste and Leisure Centres were adversely affected by Covid in various ways. The full reports can be studied at <a href="http://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/documents/g3006/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2020-Oct-2022%2018.30%20Joint%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf">http://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/documents/g3006/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2020-Oct-2022%2018.30%20Joint%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf</a>

#### Oxfordshire says "no, thanks" to the Government's proposed Investment Zones

The Leader of OCC, Cllr Liz Leffman, wrote to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to explain why the County would not be applying for any Investment Zones. SODC's Leader, Cllr David Rouane, had already expressed our views on the matter and a motion put to Council on 13<sup>th</sup> October by the Green Group Leader, Cllr Robin Bennett, was passed with cross-party support.

With the change in Government, it is not altogether certain that the Investment Zones will survive in any case.

### **Protecting our Rivers: Bathing Water for Wallingford**

Volunteers have been conducting water quality testing at eight sites along the River Thames from Abingdon Bridge to Nosworthy Way in Wallingford, as part of the Wallingford Bathing Water partnership project led by Thames21 and funded by South Oxfordshire District Council. The test results will form part of an evidence base to support an application to DEFRA for Bathing Water Status at Wallingford Beach, a well-known swimming area that has been enjoyed by local residents and visitors for generations.

### Maximum Taxi Tariffs agreed for Hackney cabs in the District

Hackney carriages operating in South Oxfordshire will, for the first time, have a maximum fare they can charge passengers. Cabinet approved the measure to help ensure passengers, especially those who rely on taxis to travel around such as those on low income or with disabilities, were not priced out of using taxis as the cost of living continues to rise. At the same time, it is hoped the fares agreed will allow taxi drivers to continue to run viable businesses, recognising their overheads are also rising.

We were previously one of only six councils in the country who didn't set a tariff so introducing them now brings us in line with other authorities - the tariff will still be the 16<sup>th</sup> highest in the country.

The fares only apply to hackney carriages as passengers are able to shop around with private hire vehicles to get the best deal, which is harder to do when at a taxi rank or hailing a cab. The fares only apply for journeys within the South Oxfordshire area.

The new maximum fare for a two-mile journey on Tariff 1 will be £8.10, rising to £11.25 for Tariff 3 (applicable from 2am to 5.59am on weekdays and all day Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day). Among the changes was also introducing a new £1.50 charge for additional passengers in vehicles which can carry more than four persons.

### **Local Flooding**

The allocation of responsibility between the County Council, (Highways Authority) and the District Council has been a little confusing, and it has now been agreed that the District Council will handle many of the minor flooding issues that have, up to now, fallen within the County Councils remit. This should simplify both the reporting lines and the speed at which things are fixed.

### Light aircraft noise

Some residents find that some small planes buzzing around on fine days is quite annoying, but it is difficult to spot the registration numbers. There is a website that shows all planes flying at any time, including these ones. I tracked one a few days ago that, in this case, came out of White Waltham, spent a lot of time circulating over the A34 before returning to White Waltham. The website shows the registration of the plane, which in turns identifies the owner. <a href="https://www.flightradar24.com/51.31,-0.89/9">https://www.flightradar24.com/51.31,-0.89/9</a>

Peter Dragonetti

# Hardwick Verge Restoration

### Paper for Parish Council November 2022 John Bradon & Sally Woolhouse, WoTHabs

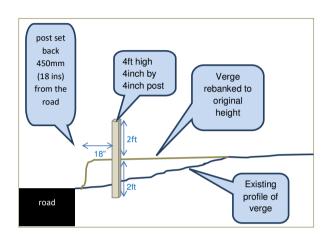
- This joint PC/WotHabs initiative was included in the 2019 Village Plan and the PC's 2022 Action Plan but goes back a long time further.
- There have been two useful developments:
  - We have met the Mend the Gap programme manager several times and are on their list of projects. (Network Rail £2m funding. Few suitable projects)
    - We think we will not need a contribution from PC to get the work done.
    - We will need updated quotes before we can apply for funds so need to agree the spec.
  - Jon Beale from OCC highways is supportive. In October 2021 he met Sally Woolhouse, Jim Donahue and John Bradon. The October, he met Diana Smith and John Bradon and has made suggestions to refined our plans. His input is incorporated into the Works Info documents which we have sent you.
- We need the PC's input
  - To agree to proceed with the specified work.
  - To own the posts (under OCC's Street Furniture guidelines)
- Then we can get Jon Beale's OK, get updated quotes and apply for funding.

# **Gradual Erosion of Verges**



- Many wildflower & grass species- worth protecting.
- Proposal should help rather than hinder drivers & cyclists.
  - Shortening rather than removing passing places
  - Posts with reflectors to make it easier to see the next passing place
  - Better drainage, Potholes filled

### The Proposal



- 22 areas needing posts and re-banking
- 153 metres total length re-banked
- 33 cubic metres of top soil
- 29 wooden posts with reflectors
- Aggregate to fill potholes, etc.
- Clearing out grips to improve drainage
- Seeding



John Beale (OCC Highways) has reviewed and marked where posts & grips should go

## What we would like to agree today

- Do you still want to support the project?
- Is the Parish Council willing to fulfil the OCC requirements on street furniture which say a Parish Council should own the posts:
  - maintain posts when they need replacing.
    - Posts cost £500. Likely life 10-20 years (pressure treated with post protectors). Annual cost equivalent ~ £35.
  - Use the PC Public Liability Policy to indemnify Oxfordshire County Council for up to £10M for any incident involving the posts.

Note: We can agree later how to manage the project.



### Notes giving more information for Councillors about Parking Proposals.

### 1. "Virtual" Crossing (see attachment for plan)

Initially there will be no white lines on the road as present legislation does not allow for this without belisha beacons. There is a dropped kerb opposite the Greyhound. The "virtual" crossing would be from this to a white lined path outside the pub on Highway land. This would lead round to the north side of Eastfield Lane considered to be the safest route for pedestrians entering the Lane. The area would be resurfaced to allow white lines to be painted. The crossing will reduce the available parking by one space to allow clear sight lines each side of the "crossing".

### 2. Non- Resident Parking. 2022 Approved Parking Plan (see attachment)

If the Plan is chosen residents joining the scheme will be able to obtain permits for visitors. Deliveries vans are allowed to park on double yellow line for unloading.

To allow other non-residents to park some areas could be subject to time limits chosen by us, eg permits holders only 8am-6pm or whatever is chosen. This would stop commuter parking which has increased significantly since lockdown.

### 3. Estimated Costs

Costs are in two parts, TRO's (Traffic Regulation Orders) which are the same for each option, and, Lining and Signage.

| 1. TRO's | £3320 |
|----------|-------|
| Lining   | £2000 |
|          | £5320 |

### 2. Same cost as 1.

For 1,2 & 4 OCC would fund the cost of the "crossing" through existing budgets.

| 3. | TRO's   | £3320 |   |
|----|---------|-------|---|
|    | Lining  | £2500 |   |
|    | Signage | £1500 |   |
|    |         | £7320 | (Additional signage for one longer parking bay) |

4. TRO's £3320 Lining £2000 Signage £1000 £6320

Costs as at Nov. 2022. TRO's are fixed but Lining is subject to final design and detailed costing from contractor.

There is no guarantee of financial help from OCC but the Parking Team may bid for developer funding in the next financial year.

Our PC Budget 22/23 has an amount of £7200 for traffic and parking improvements plus £2500 for pedestrian safety

### 5. Consequences

There could be consequences to carrying out any of these options. Many of these have been explored. The most obvious one is that of restricting non-resident parking on the High Street. This may push non-resident onto other roads, principally Eastfield Lane and possibly Manor Road. If this happens it will need to be dealt with in the future. Doing nothing now may also have consequences.

### 6. Next Steps if an Option is chosen

The Parish Council will apply to OCC for the chosen option to be carried out. OCC will scrutinise the application and hold a Public Consultation for the Village and wider area. Residents of the High Street will be sent a letter inviting their comments while other residents will be informed through the normal channels for such consultations.

When completed the changes will be reviewed by OCC at a later date to verify their effectiveness.

