

MINUTES

For the virtual meeting of Parish Council, held on Wednesday, 3rd June 2020

Meeting Number 20.353

The Chair opened the meeting and reiterated the rules surrounding a virtual Parish Council meeting for Weston on the Green.

Public Participation

There were no comments from the public.

20.353.1 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Bohm (DB), Davis (SD), Donne (HD), Whitfield (RW), Stafford Allen (RSA) and Mullane (NM) were all present via Zoom call.

There was 1 member of the public present via Zoom call.

20.353.2 Declarations of Interest

There were two declarations of interest, NM in relation to the Southfield Farm development and the other for RSA regarding the Schoolfield.

20.353.3 To Receive and Approve: Minutes of the Virtual Parish Council meeting held on 19th April 2020

The minutes of the Virtual Parish Council meeting on 19th April 2020 were discussed with no changes required.

The minutes for the Parish Council meeting on 19th April 2020 were then moved by DB and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to present minutes to Chair to sign, then file and upload to the web.

20.353.4 For Information: Chairs Comment (DB)

The Chair wished to thank all the volunteers in the village who have worked tirelessly in recent weeks especially the Village Pantry and Post Office for their outstanding work during this crisis. The Parish Council has a duty of care to the village, both the people and the environment and this work has not stopped during the crisis – as will be reflected by the items on the agenda.

This meeting will see the convergence of two of the key projects that have been ongoing for several years – the Traffic Advisory Group work and the Neighbourhood Plan along with a string of issues that are part of the overall vision for housing in the village. The Parish Council would like to thank the traffic group for all the hard work undertaken.

20.353.5 For Discussion: Village concerns (DB)

DB highlighted the key areas of concern as detailed in her report. These included:

Dog killing deer: a list of contacts of who to report things to was provided in the Village News. DB queried if it was possible for the Parish Council to lodge a complaint to the Police themselves?

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RSA questioned whether any Councillor had any first hand experience of the matter to be able to lodge a complaint, none had.

SD suggested there was no reason why the Parish Council can't alert the Police about the issue, not reporting this as a first hand account but reporting it on the basis that we've received a number of complaints from our parishioners.

Action: DB/Clerk to construct a letter to the Police informing them of the concerns received by the Parish Council from parishioners over deer killing.

Footpath issues: footpath warden written guidelines in the Village News.

Changes to edge of schoolfield in relation to paddocks and fences: it was agreed (excluding RSA) that this matter will be sent to Cherwell District Council to give a view on the use of the land as it involves a Councillor.

Action: DB to discuss schoolfield use with Cherwell District Council.

Tree pruning in a conservation area: guidelines placed in the Village News and will be monitored.

20.353.6 For Information: Clerk report to note (Clerk)

The clerk highlighted the report provided to the Council which covered key information on the end of year financial audit process, OCC Highways update, Parish Council meeting dates and the continued closure of the playground.

20.353.7 For Information: Update on the Neighbourhood Plan Examination (DB/SD)

DB highlighted the key points from the report of the Neighbourhood Plan Examination hearing held on 19th May 2020 and attended by DB and SD from the Parish Council and Roger Evans of the schoolfield group.

A strategy between the schoolfield group and the Parish Council had been agreed before the meeting.

Key areas commented on included:

- Cherwell District Council (CDC) changing the additional number of houses required to be built in the village from 38 to 10, which is considered achievable based on the current growth rate in the village.
- Fir Tree Farm and the Green Belt issue. The Examiner did not agree with the view that the site is not allowed to be stated in the Neighbourhood Plan as it is on Green Belt land. He stated that he has seen Rural Exemption Sites on Green Belt proposed for housing in a 'number of Neighbourhood Plans'. Further discussions were had around this site. The Fir Tree Farm site has been gifted to the Parish Council and a signed letter has been sent to the Examiner along with the pre-work for the pre-application.
- Section 52 implications. If CDC enforce a S52 on the land, Pegasus will take them to Tribunal.
- Change of land designation: "encouraging the preservation and management as a potential grassland habitat with passive recreational open space commensurate with the maintenance of a lowland meadow". The schoolfield group agreed that this wording implied a change of use from the current 'agricultural land' designation hence is willing to remove this sentence from the plan. The Parish Council made it clear that any spoiling of the field in any way would be quickly reported to CDC with an insistence to protect the rural feel of the field.

- A. **What status does the NP currently have?**
All sections of the NP have been agreed by CDC at Executive level with the exception of the policies around the schoolfield. This means the Neighbourhood Plan must be given considerable weight in any planning application.
- B. **Important considerations for the Parish Council**
The PC is determined to protect the schoolfield but at the same time there are many policies that are important to other and all areas of the village.
- C. **The Cherwell Local Plan Review** commenced in April 2020 with an estimated adoption date of July 2023. Housing numbers for all areas will be reviewed and new targets will be given. Cherwell has signed up to the

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Oxford Growth Plan and so cooperation with increased housing can be assumed. However, there will also be an examination of the categorisation of villages. WOTG has requested that our category A be re-considered. We hope to be reduced to a Category B based on our limited scope for development by the restriction of the green belt and the conservation area in and around the village.

- D. **Review.** All plans which sit 'under the Local Plan' will need to be reviewed based on the expectations of the adopted Local Plan therefore we need to be planning the first review of our Neighbourhood Plan by late 2023.
- E. **Local Green Spaces.** The Examiner queried why the schoolfield isn't designated a local green space. It was explained that we had in one of our drafts but it was refused by CDC on the grounds that we might not achieve it and jeopardise the Neighbourhood Plan result. The Examiner felt that this was faulty and suggested that this could be a way forward. The schoolfield group recommends that we consider adding this designation if the examiner recommends it. If it does not come up in the final paper then we might do this at the time of the Neighbourhood Plan review.
- F. **Non-designated Heritage Asset.** Another recommendation by the Examiner and agreed to by the action group is that we ask for the field to be conferred the status of a Non-designated Heritage Asset by CDC.

SD concluded the discussion saying the turning point for the Examiner was demonstrating sufficient housing growth in the village without the need for extra development; it took pressure off him delivering a site a housing estate could be delivered on. Similarly when we said we were not intending to change the use of the schoolfield from agriculture, just maintain the landscape, again the Examiner didn't feel pressured.

The Examiners report is expected to be published in June 2020.

20.353.8 **For Information:** Actions regarding Affordable Housing to meet Parish housing target (DB)

DB went on to discuss that the recent hearing on the second examination of the Neighbourhood Plan had housing and more specifically affordable housing at the centre of the argument with Lagan Homes. The Parish Council was absolutely clear that a housing development with only two affordable homes and the rest executive style homes was not at all what the village wants or needs. In the confines of the village there is capacity for 10-12 affordable homes.

DB highlighted the possibility of extending the housing at Gallosbrook Way by four homes and has been in contact with Sanctuary to initially discuss the matter. To safeguard the application for this housing, the purchase of the field needs to be fairly swiftly actioned.

This site could be combined with the potential site at Fir Tree Farm. John Miller has stated and confirmed in writing, that he will gift the land at the south east corner of his property to the Parish Council for housing, on the condition that they are affordable homes. The Chair has requested that he file the pre-application so the discussion can begin with the planners at Cherwell District Council.

Advice on the development as well as a list of those who would benefit from the homes needs to be done through the Housing Department of Cherwell District Council – the survey and needs analysis. There would also need to be a tender process.

DB requested the Parish Council's consent to pursue both sites for affordable housing, to get further guidance and then report back to the Council.

RSA commented that housing developments next to the medical centre in Islip and one in Bletchingdon were on green belt land so it is not unusual in the area.

DB highlighted the importance of getting people signed up on the housing register. Information on the process can be obtained here: <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/78/housing-options/225/apply-to-join-the-housing-register>

NM queried whether there is an issue with Sanctuary Housing?

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DB replied that residents are unhappy with the level of service currently provided by Sanctuary given the service charge they are asked to pay.

The Council agreed to pursue the investigation of affordable housing in the village with Cherwell District Council and the appropriate housing associations.

Action: DB to continue conversations on affordable housing with Cherwell District Council and the appropriate housing associations.

Action: Clerk to place the housing register information on the Parish Council website.

20.353.9 Resolution: To Approve End of Year Financial Accounts for 2019-2020 (HD)

HD presented the end of year financial accounts for the Parish Council which have been checked by the finance advisory group. He highlighted that all accounts reconciled at year end.

HD provided the following information in summary:
Total income - £25,969.99
Total expenditure - £18,996.62
Therefore spent 73% of total income for the year.

Precept income - £22,697.70
Other income totalled £3,272.29 (including payments from Cherwell District Council, Councillor Priority fund grant, VAT refund & bank interest)

At the end of the financial year the Parish Council held £41,577.83 in their bank accounts.

The reserve funds have been identified to be used on a number of key projects for the village, which are currently under consideration:

- Neighbourhood Plan - £7,179.36
- Traffic initiatives - £6,060.00
- Transport initiatives - £2,196.01
- Section 106 money to be used for open spaces - £4,000.00
- Village projects reserve - £8,600.00
- Donations - £995.60
- Councillor Priority Fund – £1,865.00 (now paid to Village Hall and remainder to be paid to the Weston Pantry)
- 3 months Parish Council operating costs for 2020-21 - £10,658.91 (considered good practice)

There is therefore only £22.95 of unidentified reserves.

The resolution to approve the Parish Council End of Year Financial Accounts for 2019-2020 was proposed by HD and seconded by NM. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to add end of year financial accounts 2019-20 to the Parish Council website.

20.353.10 Resolution: To Approve Parish Council Insurance Renewal for FY 2020-21 on a long term 3 year deal with Ecclesiastical Insurance at £552.00 (HD)

HD presented the insurance renewal for the financial year 2020-21 and confirmed it was supported by the finance advisory group. Came & Company provided three different renewal quotes. It was agreed to accept the Ecclesiastical quote on a 3 year agreement at £552.00 per annum (yearly price alteration subject to policy changes, annual inflationary increase, higher rate of Insurance Premium Tax or claims).

The resolution to approve the Parish Council Insurance Renewal for FY 2020-21 on a long term 3 year deal with Ecclesiastical Insurance at £552.00 was proposed by HD and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

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Action: Clerk to confirm approval for insurance cover provided by Ecclesiastical Insurance for 2020/2021 with Came & Company.

20.353.11 Resolution: To Approve Parish Council Donations Policy FY 2020-21 (RW)

RW presented the Parish Council's donation policy for the financial year 2020-21.

SD highlighted that there were some exclusions that could be included to help with clarity e.g. no retrospective applications, not to be used for activities outside the parish, not for political activities. DB agreed that they are all reasonable things to include on an exclusion list.

HD/RSA warned that if have exclusions run risk of precluding people you may want to include. HD also suggested altering 'benefitting the parish' not village.

RW agreed to discuss the exclusions with SD, amend the policy where appropriate, circulate and bring back to the Council for approval.

Action: Clerk to add the amended Donations Policy approval to July Council meeting agenda.

20.353.12 For Discussion & Resolution: To Approve a donation to Cherwell Larder for a sum to be agreed following discussion at the meeting (HD)

A request was received from Cherwell Larder, Kidlington who are supporting households with essential supplies during the coronavirus pandemic.

Whilst this is a very worthy cause, the Council were concerned about donating money to an organisation, located outside of the parish, that was not registered as a charity and therefore did not have a charity bank account to transfer money into.

DB has investigated the option of providing a drop off box in front of the Weston Pantry which could then be delivered for example to the Bicester foodbank.

The Council agreed that they preferred this alternative village solution, providing a donation to the wider community.

The resolution to approve a donation to Cherwell Larder for a sum to be agreed following discussion at the meeting was proposed by HD and seconded by DB. All Councillors unanimously voted against the resolution.

All Councillors agreed to support a foodbank drive in the village.

Action: Clerk to contact Cherwell Larder to inform them of the Councils decision not to support the donation request.

Action: DB/HD to organise a foodbank drive in the village.

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20.353.13 Resolution: To Approve the following invoices for payment (HD)

HD requested approval of the following invoices detailed in the table below. The resolution to approve the below invoices was proposed by HD and seconded by RSA. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

PC Ref	Payee	Purpose	Total payable incl VAT	Budget Line	Amount Remaining in 2020-21 Budget Line
132	Oxford Edens [^]	Grass Cutting – 5 May 2020	£300.00	Works/Playing Field & Highways Grass Cutting	£1,170.00 *
133	123 Connect	PC website hosting renewal	£118.00	IT/Website/Domain hosting	£250.00
134	Came & Company [^]	WotG PC Insurance Renewal (3 year deal)	£552.00	Insurance & Auditing/Insurance	£600.00
135	Oxford Edens	Grass Cutting – 27 May 2020	£108.00	Works/Playing Field & Highways Grass Cutting	£870.00

[^] Pre-approved via email and paid to ensure payment within time limit

*Reflecting combined sum in budget for play area grass cut, Ben Jonson/Stocks & verge cutting B430 & Bletchington Rd

Action: Clerk to update invoice log with approvals.

Action: Clerk to initiative request for payments from Councillors.

Action: Councillors to process online payment requests.

20.353.14 For Discussion: to discuss and agree recommendations from the Planning Group (HD)

HD highlighted the key items in the planning report.

Building Works:

Decision Received – Application Permitted

19/02697/F - Weston Manor Hotel Northampton Road | Variation of condition 1 of 16/02021/F - to allow the continued retention of the existing portacabin for an additional period of one year

20/00541/F - Bay Tree House, 2 Brooklyn Gardens - Construct part two storey and part single storey rear extension; rebuild enlarged front porch.

20/00499/F - Village Pantry and Post Office, Church Road - Change of Use of part of store and shop to café – All Internal changes.

Awaiting Decision

20/00517/F - Lime Walk, Church Lane – Demolition and replacement of 2 storey 1960s side extension. - **There seems to be an issue with the current footpath not in-line with map**

20/00251/F - BP Family Farm Services Part of A34 - Erection of a building to provide a drive-thru restaurant

20/00922/F – 14 Westlands Avenue – Single storey front extension and garage conversion with associated internal and external works – **PC Commented – Support**

20/00763/F – Manor Farm Bungalow, Northampton Road - Removal of condition 9 (occupation of site by caravan, motor caravan or tent) of 00/01162/F – **PC Commented - Restrictions**

Decision Received – Application Refused

20/00585/F – Family Farm House, off A34 - Retrospective - Change of use to guesthouse and ground floor extension to rear of property & internal alterations.

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New Applications

20/01017/LB - Weston Manor Cottage, Northampton Road - Refurbish and extend existing rear extension, alter fenestration and re-roof existing garden stores - (15/02090/LB) – **This is re-application previously approved – 5 years ago.**

20/01265/F - Keepers Cover, Church Lane - Proposed single storey residential extension – **Green Belt Issue – also in Bletchington Parish.**

Do we wish to comment to protect the green belt? Strong preclusion on property from previous planning applications. It was suggested to comment that the Parish Council are generally supportive of the application however, we understand the restriction that is on the property.

20/01005/F & 20/01006/LB Weston Manor Hotel, Northampton Road - Oak orangery to rear of hotel and new roof on Ruperts Cottage – **CDC & Heritage now all over this.**

The orangery would not be seen from the road and has a sympathetic design. Weddings have previously been held in marquees so as this is a specific room it would provide some sound proofing and overall would help the hotel as a business.

Tree Works:

Approved / Completed

20/00331/TCA - The Old Vicarage, Mill Lane

20/00742/TCA - Westfield Barn House, North Lane

20/00652/TCA – Odd Tymes, Northampton Road

20/00650/TCA - St Mary The Virgin Church, Church Lane

20/00208/TCA – Holly House, Church Lane

New Application / Awaiting Decision

20/01234/TCA – Stonehouse, Northampton Road

20/01272/TCA - The Moat, Northampton Road

NB: The hedge has also been removed and the Manor are looking to replant some trees, similar to those along the drive of the hotel.

20/01360/TCA - Rose Cottage, Church Road

Other:

16/02600F – Quick Fit Garage A34 by BP, OX25 3QQ The above app was withdrawn, it has been reported some initial groundworks seem to be underway.

HD has been to visit site and will visit again and send information across to enforcement.

Action: HD/Clerk to send comments on planning applications to Cherwell District Council.

Southfield Farm Development Issue – NM / Clerk

NM has visited the Southfield Farm construction site and spoken to the site manager regarding some of the ongoing issues with the site: start times, lorries queuing, noise from the workers, early deliveries, North Lane access and access to the site/lack of banksman.

The site manager has taken start time piece away and will put signs up regarding the noise.

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Signs have been put up by the site manager to direct deliveries and they will also put a further sign up on B430 and will look at the option of a banksman.

NM has also been in contact with the enforcement officer from Cherwell District Council to highlight parishioners concerns and has highlighted in particular the accessing and exiting of the site. A nearby resident has a CCTV camera pointing at the entrance to the development site so is able to capture pictures of delivery trucks and any access issues. This information will be passed onto the site manager and enforcement.

Enforcement did highlight that an application can be submitted to extend the working hours at the site to support safety measures during the coronavirus pandemic.

NM will continue to liaise with enforcement and the site manager going forwards in order to resolve the issues amicably.

20.353.15 For Information: Update on purchase of playing field and spinney **& Resolution: to Approve** investigating the hiring of a solicitor to take the issue forward (RSA)

RSA confirmed he had been in touch with Nick Mould from the Duchy of Cornwall to confirm that the Parish Council would like to proceed with the purchase of the playing field. Nick Mould reiterated his conditions that the Council would have to pay the Duchy's solicitor fees and the offer for the playing field and spinney would have to be in excess of £30,000.

A solicitor has been identified (via a recommendation from an existing professional in the village) to work on the project, Philip Horn at Plainlaw Solicitors. are looking into the level of work required to assist and can then provide a price for their services; it is expected to be between £1,200-£1,500.

HD confirmed that the Council could approve the solicitor cost upto £1,500 + VAT and if the fees were above this level then the request would need to come back to the Council for approval.

The resolution to approve hiring a solicitor to take the issue of purchasing the playing field and spinney forward (upto a total cost of £1,500+VAT) was proposed by RSA and seconded by HD.

Action: RSA to investigate the costs for Plainlaw Solicitor to act on purchase of playing field/spinney and confirm actions with the Council or bring the costings back to the Council if above £1,500+VAT.

20.353.16 For Discussion & Resolution: to Approve Traffic Group recommendation for changing speed limit on Church Lane to 20mph at a total cost of £5,416.43 + £445.29 VAT (Total of £5,861.72).

NM highlighted the report on altering the speed limit on Church Lane to 20mph which had previously been circulated to the Council.

RSA thought the report and costings were set out well and looked good. HD and DB also agreed that the progress was good and the signs looked great.

SD queried if there would be any painted 20 signs on the road, to which NM replied that they wouldn't be any but there would be a slow section by the churchyard.

The resolution to approve the traffic advisory groups recommendation for changing the speed limit on Church Lane to 20mph at a total cost of £5,416.43 + £445.29 VAT (Total of £5,861.72) was proposed by NM and seconded by HD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

SD asked if the 20mph limit would be extended to the other lanes in the village.

NM replied that it could be an option but have to do them all separately and would need to be guided by residents on those lanes.

Action: NM to confirm Parish Council agreement on 20mph speed limit with Oxfordshire County Council to enable them to proceed to the consultation phase.

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20.353.17 For Discussion & Resolution: to Approve Traffic Group recommendation for additional signage works in the village at a cost of £1,159.87 + £231.97 VAT (Total of £1,391.84).

NM highlighted the report on additional signage works in the village which had previously been circulated to the Council.

RW highlighted an issue on the wording on a sign which NM would feedback to Oxfordshire County Council.

The resolution to approve the traffic advisory groups recommendation for additional signage works in the village at a cost of £1,159.87 + £231.97 VAT (Total of £1,391.84) was proposed by NM and seconded by HD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: NM to confirm Parish Council agreement on signage works in the village with Oxfordshire County Council to enable them to proceed.

20.353.18 For Discussion & Resolution: to Approve proposal for traffic safety option on B430 (NM)

NM has obtained the advice of Dave Catling, Technical Officer from Oxfordshire County Council Highways on the replacement of the bollards on B430, adjacent to North Lane following their damage from an accident.

Dave Catling's view is that the bollards serve a limited/no purpose as they offer no protection and don't really provide any significant warning. If we wanted wooden one's they would need to be cut three quarters through so if a car hit them then they would just fall over and not cause injury to the driver. If we were putting them in for security/protection then they would have no effect. His suggestion is that we install a double sided chevron on both sides of the road and similar to the one on the North Lane junction. His opinion is that the chevrons provide a much better warning system to motorists than a few bollards as they denote a sharp deviation in the road.

This will be at no cost to the village and the new bollards will be removed.

RW viewed the chevrons as not village friendly and suggested putting a bend sign further up the road. DB preferred the wooden ones.

SD commented in her experience that a sign was needed on the approach into the village and HD/RSA agreed that any sign/device would be better on right hand side as enter the village.

HD queried if this could be discussed further when the footpath was built from the new housing development.

NM will discuss the chevron/bollard matter further with Dave Catling from OCC and also talk to the nearby residents.

Action: NM will discuss the chevron/bollard matter further with Dave Catling from OCC and also talk to the nearby residents and bring back to the Council when the footpath is underway.

RSA highlighted two other items for the Council's attention:

- the mower for the field has broken down and required fixing so an invoice may be submitted from J Miller for the repairs.
- the willow on Bletchingdon Road has been identified as rotten and is at risk of collapse. The Duchy have informed us it is not their land and so the matter is currently with Highways, Oxfordshire County Council.

20.353.19 Next Virtual Parish Council Meeting: 1st July 2020, 7.30pm via Zoom

The meeting ended at 21.40

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