

MINUTES

For the virtual meeting of Parish Council, held on Wednesday, 7th October 2020

Meeting Number 20.357

Public Participation

There was nothing to note.

20.357.1 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Bohm (DB), Mullane (NM), Donne (HD), Davis (SD) and Stafford Allen (RSA) were all present via Zoom call. Councillor Whitfield sent her apologies due to illness, which were accepted.

There was 1 member of the public present via Zoom call, attending with regards to the Technology Report item (20.357.20) and Councillor David Hughes joined part way through the meeting.

20.357.2 Declarations of Interest

RSA highlighted his interest in the schoolfield if it was to be mentioned during the meeting. NM declared interests in item 20.357.13 relating to the Clerks salary and Southfield Farm in the planning section (20.357.16).

20.357.3 To Receive and Approve: Minutes of the Virtual Parish Council meeting on 2nd September 2020

The minutes of the virtual Parish Council meeting on 2nd September 2020 were discussed with one change required, on page 2 the mower for the playing field is on indefinite loan, not a donation.

The minutes for the virtual Parish Council meeting on 2nd September 2020 were then moved by DB and seconded by RSA. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

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

20.357.4 For Information: Chairs Comment (DB)

The Chair started her report highlighting that this evening's meeting is testament to the ongoing work of the Parish Council. Although each project is unique there is a thread connecting them – preserving the historic sense of the village whilst embracing technology and the needs of those who wish to remain in the village. The Council are also aware of the needs of many in the district, hence a Food Bank Drive is planned, combined with the Church, from Tuesday 3rd November to Friday 6th November 2020.

The Chair has asked what the technology needs are firstly at our local schools and following that, in the broader district and also for many households in the village. Young people who are not busy and active will, at times, find ways of 'acting out' that is considered anti-social. We are experiencing a certain amount of this behaviour in our playing field and picnic area and the Council is in communication with the Police on this matter.

The Chair is trying to stay up to date with issues that affect the village and is currently taking the centenary webinar series from Community First Oxfordshire. This will be followed by a conference/forum led by the Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Planning Association on the topic of "The Future of Neighbourhood Planning" in the context of the government White Paper, which would have an enormous effect on both the district and the village to manage our own growth.

20.357.5 For Information: Clerk report (Clerk)

The clerk highlighted the report provided to the Council which provided an update on the website accessibility statement placed on the Parish Council's website by the deadline of 23rd September 2020.

An update was also provided on the tree issue on Bletchingdon Road and a summary of a meeting that day with the Highways Inspector.

It was also highlighted that Ardley Football Club wish to use the playing field on Saturdays for a new under 10s team.

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The Council decided to hold a village litter pick on 24th October 2020 and advertising will be placed on the noticeboards.

Action: Clerk to advertise litter pick on PC noticeboard and planter noticeboards.

20.357.6 Resolution: To Approve the draft operational Parish Council budget for FY 2021/22 (HD)

It was highlighted that this is presented as a draft budget and will be represented at the December 2020 Parish Council for final approval, ahead of the precept request in January 2021.

A summary of the key features of the draft budget for FY 2021/22 was provided to reflect the impact of the potential loan agreement for the purchase of the playing field and spinney. It was confirmed that the precept requested for the parish of Weston on the Green would not be increased for FY 2021/22.

As lead for the Finance Advisory Group comments and approval from Councillor Whitfield had already been received and were noted for this item.

The resolution to approve the draft operational Parish Council budget for FY 2021/22 was proposed by HD and seconded by NM. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to provide draft budget as evidence of loan affordability when applying for PWLB loan.

20.357.7 For Information, Discussion & Resolution to Approve: Finance Report to Council and Risk Assessment on purchase of playing field and spinney

HD presented the Finance Advisory Group’s report on the purchase of the playing field and spinney to the Council. Key aspects of the report were covered including the proposal and purpose of the purchase and application for a Public Works Loan Board loan. Financial considerations, loan options and affordability were also highlighted and the finance group recommended applying for a £30,000 fixed rate loan to be repaid by annuity over a 20 year period.

As lead for the Finance Advisory Group comments and approval from Councillor Whitfield had already been received and were noted for this item.

The resolution to approve the Finance Report to the Parish Council on the purchase of the playing field and spinney was proposed by HD and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

The Council went on to discuss the Risk Assessment for the purchase of the playing field and spinney.

DB highlighted an additional risk of flooding to be included on the risk assessment, this will be included but will be presented at the next Parish Council meeting.

As lead for the Finance Advisory Group comments and approval from Councillor Whitfield had already been received and were noted for this item.

The resolution to approve the Risk Assessment on the purchase of the playing field and spinney was proposed by HD and seconded by RSA. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to add Risk Assessment on the purchase of the playing field and spinney to the PC November agenda.

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20.357.8 Resolution To Borrow: Parish Council to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of £30,000 over the borrowing term of 20 years in order to purchase the playing field and spinney in Weston on the Green

As lead for the Finance Advisory Group comments and approval from Councillor Whitfield had already been received and were noted for this item.

The resolution for the Parish Council to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of £30,000 over the borrowing term of 20 years in order to purchase the playing field and spinney in Weston on the Green was proposed by HD and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the Council. The annual loan repayments will come to around £1,830.

It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.

Action: Clerk to prepare the documents in order to progress seeking the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan.

20.357.9 For Information: Legal update on playing field and spinney purchase. **Resolution: To Approve** for up to £2,000 + VAT for Duchy legal costs to be paid on account now to enable the transaction to progress

One of the transaction stipulations from the Duchy of Cornwall is that the Parish Council pay the Duchy's solicitor fees. Information from the Duchy solicitors indicates that the legal fees are expected to be in the region of £2,000 - £3,000 plus VAT, with disbursements capped initially at £30. If the matter proceeds swiftly and without material negotiation of the draft documents, the fees may reportedly be at the lower end of the estimated range.

The Finance Advisory Group acknowledge that the Parish Council are required to pay the Duchy of Cornwall's legal fees as part of the purchase. It is also acknowledged that the fees are higher than those of the Parish Council's and that they are currently open ended. The Finance Advisory Group has discussed this issue and believes that these costs are inevitable with a purchase of this kind. It has put in place mechanisms to increase transparency of cost and control spend associated with the Duchy legal fees. A more detailed breakdown of controls can be seen in Annex 2, Letter to Spratt Endicott in the Finance Report on the purchase of the playing field and spinney.

As lead for the Finance Advisory Group comments and approval from Councillor Whitfield had already been received and were noted for this item.

The resolution to approve for up to £2,030 + VAT for Duchy legal costs to be paid on account now to enable the playing field and spinney transaction to progress was proposed by HD and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to request payment by Councillors of Duchy legal costs on account to Spratt Endicott.

20.357.10 To note: the previous approval of the legal fee estimate from Spratt Endicott of £500 + VAT to act on behalf of the Parish Council and **Resolution: To Approve** Spratt Endicott's additional overage legal fee quote of £1,250 + VAT

The previous approval of the legal fee estimate from Spratt Endicott of £500 + VAT to act on behalf of the Parish Council in the purchase of the playing field and spinney was noted.

An additional overage requirement from the Duchy of Cornwall has been highlighted as part of the deal which has resulted in an additional overage legal fee quote of £1,250 + VAT from Spratt Endicott. A letter to Spratt Endicott has been drafted (and circulated to the Council) noting the additional fee and understand that the solicitor is unable to comment at this stage on the Duchy's overage clause.

RSA thought this was an excessive amount but comfortable that the Finance Advisory Group had covered this in their discussions.

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As lead for the Finance Advisory Group comments and approval from Councillor Whitfield had already been received and were noted for this item.

The resolution to approve Spratt Endicott’s additional overage legal fee quote of £1,250 + VAT for the playing field and spinney transaction was proposed by HD and seconded by NM. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to send second letter from Finance Advisory Group on playing field purchase to Spratt Endicott.

20.357.11 For Information: Neighbourhood Plan update (DB/SD)

Resolution: To Approve a spend of up to £200 for printing costs for a limited number of hard copies of the Neighbourhood Plan from the Neighbourhood Plan printing budget line.

Resolution: To Approve Neighbourhood Plan website hosting annual fee for FY 2020/21 only, from the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum expenses budget line.

DB highlighted the key points from the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) report and outlined the schedule of outreach to the village via the Village News on the policies of the NP. The key issues in the NP are reflected in the range of Advisory Groups that report to the Parish Council.

The final copy of the NP is being uploaded on the Cherwell District Council website and DB paid SD a huge thanks for editing the document to reflect both examiner’s comments.

The resolution to approve a spend of up to £200 for printing costs for a limited number of hard copies of the Neighbourhood Plan from the Neighbourhood Plan printing budget line was proposed by DB and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: DB to proceed with organising the printing of the required number of hard copies of the NP.

The resolution to approve Neighbourhood Plan website hosting annual fee of £107.86 for FY 2020/21 only, from the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum expenses budget line, was proposed by RSA and seconded by HD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: The payment of NP website hosting fee will be actioned with the remainder of the invoice payments for this month.

20.357.12 For Information & Discussion: Affordable Housing update and **Resolution: To Approve:** Affordable Housing survey to be undertaken in village by Cherwell District Council (DB)

DB presented an update on the affordable housing survey and its development with the Cherwell Housing Department.

The survey is due to go live on 26th October 2020, the results of the survey are important as they will result in additions to the Housing Needs Register which will affect the agreement for future affordable housing in the village.

HD highlighted the importance of flagging the survey to neighbouring villages as well.

Action: Clerk to check deadline for Bletchingdon Village News and any other local ones and pass to DB.

The resolution to approve the affordable housing survey to be undertaken in the village by Cherwell District Council was proposed by DB and seconded by HD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: DB/SD/RW to continue working with Cherwell Housing Department on the Affordable Housing Survey.

20.357.13 Resolution: To Approve the increase in Clerks salary on the contracted salary point following the national salary award for local Government services 2020-21 and to pay the backdated amount from April 2019 of £132.60 (SD)

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Following the recent announcement of the national salary award for local government services the clerks pay for the contracted salary point has increased; this is backdated to April 2020. The previous years increase from April 2019 also needs to be included within the back pay as this was not implemented last year. The total backdated amount from April 2019 owed to the clerk is £132.60.

The resolution to approve the increase in clerks salary on the contracted salary point following the national salary award for local Government services 2020-21 and to pay the backdated amount from April 2019 of £132.60 was proposed by SD and seconded by HD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: The backdated clerks pay to be paid as one-off payment by the finance group.

Action: The finance group will alter the standing order with the bank for the clerks pay as approved.

20.357.14 For Information & Discussion: Dog Bin Location Report (HD)

Resolution: To Approve the installation of two new dog bins for the village up to the total value of £650 plus the additional cost (£360.36/year) of emptying the two new bins from the New Dog Litter Bins x2 budget line.

HD presented the report on the potential location of two new dog litter bins to provide additional bin coverage for the village. Two locations were identified, one on Church Lane and the other on North Lane which the Council agreed with. The Church Lane location involves moving a footpath post from behind a fence and may therefore not be achievable but investigations will be carried out.

RSA queried if the quote included fitting which HD commented that it did not but the company supplies a tool for post fixing.

The resolution to approve the installation of two new dog bins for the village up to the total value of £650 plus the additional cost (£360.36/year) of emptying the two new bins from the New Dog Litter Bins x2 budget line was proposed by HD and seconded by RSA. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to action purchasing the two new dog litter bins and look into the possibility of moving the footpath sign off Church Lane.

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

HD requested approval of the following invoices detailed in the table below.

PC Ref	Payee	Purpose	Total payable incl VAT	Budget Line	Amount Remaining in 2020-21 Budget Line
152^	Oxford Edens	Grass Cutting (04/09/20)	£108.00	Works/Playing Field & Highways Grass Cutting	£172.00*
153	Robin Stafford Allen	Works Equipment - Hinge for playing field gate (Turney Agriculture)	£7.29	Works-Playing Field/Playing Field Maintenance	£25.79
154	Robin Stafford Allen	Works Equipment - Diesel for mower (Shell)	£14.16	Works-Playing Field/Mower maintenance	£120.00
155	123 Connect	PC website upgrade to website accessibility compliance status	£150.00	Contingency	£2,222.71
156	Oxford Edens	Grass Cutting (25/09/20)	£108.00	Works/Playing Field & Highways Grass Cutting	£64.00*

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157	Cherwell District Council	Emptying dog bins x4 (summer period, twice/week)	£480.48	Works Highways/Dog litter bin emptying	£479.76
158	Clerk – J Mullane	Stationery (Amazon)	£27.78	Sundries/stationery	£100.00
159	Clerk – J Mullane	SLCC Virtual National Conference Training (12-16 Oct 20)	£30.00	Staff Costs/Clerk & Councillors training	£300.00
160	Diane Bohm	Neighbourhood Plan website hosting for FY 2020/21 (Vistaprint)	£107.86	Neighbourhood Plan/Referendum expenses	£0. Utilise NP reserves of £7179.36

*Reflecting combined sum in budget for playground area grass cut, Ben Jonson/Stocks & verge cutting B430 & Bletchingdon Rd
 ^ Paid in advance to prevent late payment fees.

The resolution to approve the invoices was proposed by HD and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to update invoice log with approvals.

Action: Clerk to initiative request for payments from Councillors.

Action: Councillors to process online payment requests.

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

Key planning applications on the planning report were discussed by the Council.

Building Applications:

Decision Received – Approved

20/01812/F – Petrol Filling Station part of A34 - Formation of new 4no vehicle charge bays and ancillary areas together with plant, and plant compound enclosure. **Commented**

Decision Received - Rejected

20/01866/ADV/LB – Ben Jonson Inn – Two signs to be erected on verge as advertising. **Commented**

Awaiting Decision

20/02180/F – Ben Jonson Inn – Erection of 4 Bed Chalet/Bungalow in garden with access off Westlands Avenue. **Commented Against**

20/02074/F – The Dower House, Church Road – Renewal of already granted application (17/01865/F) for the conversion of garage to dwelling. **Acknowledged App – no change**

20/02212/LB – The Manor Hotel – Internal and External restoration of listed building. **Not Replied**

New Applications

20/02426/F – Land North of Oak View – Erection of stone entrance walls in connection with Southfields Farm development.

HD thanked DB's Neighbourhood Plan inputs and the Councillors for their comments which included suburban style illuminated sign, manicured look and larger than needed area which would encourage stopping and turning. DB also expressed concern over the potential deviation from the original application. The hedging was to be maintained to act as a sound barrier and potentially could now have two affordable homes looking out straight on Northampton Road.

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20/02428/F – Gargash Manor Hotel – Timber Extension to rear of hotel & New Roof to Rupert’s Cottage (Re-submission of 20/01005/F)

This is a smaller orangery than previous app, out of sight from road, to be used for weddings with 152 covers.

Comments from Councillors included not visible from the front, soundproofing would be better and good to see investment in a business that we would like as part of the village and as long as not destructing fabric of a listed building then is suitable. A slight concern could be additional noise from for example firework displays.

20/02508/LB – Rutland Cottage, Church Road - Conversion of garage to bedroom. Remove garage door and infill with rendered wall and window. Remove existing partition. Form new internal doorway.

It was considered that this would improve the property. As this is a new application HD will send round some comments and request additional time from Cherwell District Council (if required) to discuss again at the next Parish Council meeting.

Action: HD send notes round on planning application for Rutland Cottage and request a delay from CDC if PC require additional time to discuss at the next PC meeting.

Tree Works:

Approved / Completed

20/02057/TCA – re-application (not all TPO)– The Manor Hotel, Northampton Road

New Application / Awaiting Decision – Case Officer Iain Osenton

None

DB highlighted that the Great Wolf appeal is not currently listed on the planning inspectorate site. Following discussions with Chesterton Parish Council it probably will not be on the site until early spring.

20.357.17 For Information: Technology Advisory Group report (DB and James Henderson)

Village resident James Henderson was asked to advise the Parish Council on technology. In recent months there has been increased concern regarding broadband speed into homes despite the Open Reach programme of a number of years ago. The government has now committed to increasing broadband speed in rural areas, including funding. James provided some useful background information to the Council on the existing situation and will undertake some additional research and feed back to the council.

Councillor David Hughes joined the meeting.

NM provided an update on the recent accident on the B430 and the ongoing concerns over the location of the footpath, highlighting historic discussions and that the land is not registered land.

NM to send Councillor Hughes an email with all the key information and a definition of the Parish’s understanding/sense of what constitutes a safe pathway for Weston on the Green village.

Action: NM to send Councillor Hughes an email with all the key information and a definition of the Parish’s understanding/sense of what constitutes a safe pathway for Weston on the Green village.

Councillor Hughes also highlighted that unitary authority discussions have not been as enthusiastically pursued recently and confirmed that despite some advertisements there have been no reductions in services. Savings required are to be made on not carrying out non urgent work and avoiding capital costs on non-essential items.

DB requested an extension to the meeting to conclude the items on the agenda.

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20.357.18 For Information: Works update (RSA)

RSA formally wished to thank Kieran Evans for helping to tidy the surround to the car park and has also thanked the land manager who assisted by removing vegetation on his land when the water flooded the road after heavy rains this week.

John Miller was also thanked for his loan of equipment to move the pile of chippings in the car park.

The playground was inspected on 6th October 2020 and a report has been provided to the Council.

The picnic tables were inspected and are marked following some vandalism, but this has been significantly removed by someone or the heavy rain.

RSA also highlighted the state of water flow around the village and will contact a resident who has previously spoken with DB and was keen to help with the advice on village water management.

Action: RSA to contact a resident who was keen to help with the advice on village water management.

20.357.19 For Information & Discussion: North Lane pond survey results and next steps

The clerk presented an outline of the report detailing the results of the North Lane pond survey and potential next steps in the development of a management plan for the ponds on North Lane.

The resolution to approve the clerk to investigate further professional advice that can help us draw together a future management plan for both ponds in North Lane was proposed by DB and seconded by NM. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

RSA's link to Zoom failed at this point in the meeting.

The resolution to approve we nominate a half day to ask volunteers to help us do this work, allocating £500 of the funds left in the North Lane pond maintenance budget line to cover any costs was proposed by DB and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the remainder of the Council.

The third resolution that we request the Clerk to investigate quotes for carpentry work, with the aim to pay for it from general village maintenance and North Lane pond maintenance budget lines in due course was postponed.

20.357.20 For Information: Traffic Advisory Group update (NM)

NM highlighted that the consultation on the proposed 20mph village street works and 40mph buffer zone on Church Lane have commenced and will run until 30th October 2020.

20.357.21 Next Virtual Parish Council Meeting: 4th November 2020, 7.30pm via Zoom

Meeting closed at 21.51.

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Approved:.....Dated.....