

# MINUTES

For the meeting of Parish Council, held on Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022

Meeting Number 22.377

## Public Participation

There was nothing to note from the public.

### 22.377.1 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Bohm (DB), Davis (SD), Stafford Allen (RSA) and Whitfield (RW) were all present. Councillors Donne (HD) and Mullane (NM) sent their apologies prior to the meeting, which were accepted.

Councillor Nigel Simpson was also in attendance for all of the meeting. James Henderson (JH) and Roger Evans (RE) were also in attendance for part of the meeting to provide updates to the Council.

There was one resident from the village and one resident from Bicester in attendance.

### 22.377.2 Declarations of Interest

SD declared an interest in relation to planning application 21/04299/OUT as a neighbour to Reynards Lodge, North Lane.

### 22.377.3 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (DB)

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were discussed with no changes required.

The minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were then moved by DB and seconded by RSA. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

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

### 22.377.4 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (DB)

The minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were discussed with no changes required.

The minutes for the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were then moved by DB and seconded by SD. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

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

### 22.377.5 For Information: Chairs Comment

DB commenced her report to the Council mentioning that the majority of this past month has been taken up with concerns around the oak tree at the top of North Lane and the message from this Council is that the built-up path needs to be removed and the gentler, more rural path should be installed.

Secondly, the planning group worked hard on the Parish Council's final letters of objection to the Inspectorate regarding the Ben Jonson pub and DB thanked the team for their work.

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The power cut this week, as a result of an accident on A34, and the issue over the planned power cuts being delayed raised a concern by a villager who is not on Facebook that information shared on that platform did not reach him and wondered about alternative forms of communication. Whilst the Parish Council are not provided with information relating to utility companies, it raised an interesting communication point which will be investigated further by the Parish Council.

During January, a group of parish chairs met with the leaders of the Planning Policy team with regards to the progress of the Local Plan. The urgency is that several Councils have the pressure of Neighbourhood Plans at the end of their viability regarding housing numbers and need some indication of what is expected. We were told this would not happen for a number of months. The view from the chairs and others we consulted was that we were not 'in the frame' of knowing or discussing future expectation. Hence a letter of concern was sent to Barry Wood, Leader of Cherwell District Council, stating that consultation with parishes was not good enough. Councillors were advised to look at the ongoing survey regarding Parish relationships with Cherwell District Council. There is also a partial review of 1,700 home allocations to run for six weeks – which will need to be looked at.

**22.377.6 For Information:** Clerk report (Clerk)

The clerk highlighted a report provided to the Council which confirmed that the Parish Council had received £635.18 from the Duchy of Cornwall in relation to the rent refund for leasing the playing field and spinney which ceased when the Parish Council purchased the playing field and spinney in November 2021.

Dragon patcher works were completed in January 2022 on the road leading to the Old Police House and the Council have been advised that the repair works on the Bletchingdon verge require a full road closure. The earliest this can be undertaken is May as notice to the streetworks team is required, however, the works are still to be programmed so currently timings are unknown; Oxfordshire County Council will update the Parish Council when they have further information.

**Action:** Clerk to enquire what works to repair verge degradation on Bletchingdon Road may look like.

The clerk confirmed that the documents for phase 1 of the internal audit review for financial year 2021-22 were transferred to our auditors, IAC Audit, on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

The annual village litter pick will be held on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March.

**22.377.7 For Discussion:** Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (SD)

The Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill is a private members' bill with cross-party support of more than 110 MPs and a growing number of local councils around the country. It would enshrine in law a commitment to deliver policy and action in line with the latest science - and with our Government's own ambitions. It is the only proposed legislation which addresses the interconnected crises in climate and nature, with annual legally binding targets to keep us on track.

**Resolution To Approve that Weston on the Green Parish Council will:**

- 1. Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill;
- 2. Write to our local MP urging them to support the Bill, or thanking them for doing so; and
- 3. Notify the Oxfordshire CEE Bill Alliance (Zero Hour Oxfordshire) of this motion by signing the Open Letter: <https://www.ceebillallianceoxon.co.uk>

SD provided outline information on the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill, information on which had been sent to the Parish Council ([www.ceebill.uk/bill](http://www.ceebill.uk/bill)) and discussed at previous Parish Council meetings where it was noted not all Councillors were in agreement over supporting the bill.

The resolution to approve that Weston on the Green Parish Council will:

- 1. Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill;
- 2. Write to our local MP urging them to support the Bill, or thanking them for doing so; and

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3. Notify the Oxfordshire CEE Bill Alliance (Zero Hour Oxfordshire) of this motion by signing the Open Letter: <https://www.ceebillallianceoxon.co.uk>

was proposed by SD and seconded by RSA. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to Notify the Oxfordshire CEE Bill Alliance (Zero Hour Oxfordshire) of this motion by signing the Open Letter.

**Action:** Clerk to arrange for the Council to send a letter to MP John Howells urging him to support the Bill.

Councillor Simpson highlighted a meeting to be held with The Woodland Trust to help in the protection of rural areas around Kidlington village, which could then be rolled out to other villages. He confirmed that the County Council are focussed on nature recovery in the county and also that an HGVs network is required to be actioned in the county.

### 22.377.8 For Information: Technology Advisory Group update (James Henderson)

JH spoke to Martin at Openreach on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and provided the following information to the Council:

- **Queue overview**
  - Only 3 projects have been approved since last October (according to Openreach knowledge) and there are over 800 projects still in the queue.
  - For the last couple of months, the telecommunication companies have been pruning out the “dead” projects (it’s been so long that some people have changed their minds etc).
  - Martin told JH that we are now literally at the front of the queue.
- **The actual process for pledging:**
  1. Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DMCS) gives approval and the pledging website opens.
  2. People pledge on the website.
  3. **New info:** After pledging, the DMCS sends each pledger a “click here to confirm your pledge” email (to ensure that the pledging wasn’t somehow faked).
  4. When enough of these DMCS “click to confirm” emails get clicked/confirmed, the project goes live.
- **Possible alternative way forward:**
  - **Reminder:** The new scheme broke the DMCS IT system and it has never really recovered.
  - The Government has decided to take a second route to speed things up: Those projects that are not fully pledged by 1<sup>st</sup> April 22 will be put on *pause* for 2-3 months. During this *pause* the rural areas (especially Oxfordshire) will be divided into lots for the telecommunication companies to bid on. If we end up in a lot (there is no guarantee of this) and the bidding is successful, we’ll get FTTP anyway and automatically without having to go down the pledging route at all. After the 2-3 window lot-bidding process has completed, the pledging process will resume.
- **Our next steps:**
  - **We need the DCMC approval (step 1, above) before 1<sup>st</sup> April 22.** If so, we get an extra month to get to *step-4* before we get paused.
  - **If we get past step-1 before 1-April:** We’ll find out the voucher value. If the voucher value is for less than we hoped, Openreach can still plead special-circumstances with the DCMS to get our project through. Martin is prepared to come down and support our marketing by knocking on doors etc.
  - **If we don’t get past step-1 before 1-April:** We may or may not end up in a bidding-lot. If we are in a bidding-lot, Gigaclear (for example) could outbid Openreach which would mean we would be locked into Gigaclear as our provider.
  - **Martin is optimistic we’ll get DCMS approval within 2-3 weeks:**

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JH has heard this message too many times now. JH also mentioned that, with an average of 1 approval/month for the period since October, it is statistically unlikely we will get approval in time. However, he replied that he remains optimistic.

JH confirmed that for the Government to pay the scheme has to go through the DCMS so we have to follow the process outlined above but commented that at least rural areas are the focus.

JH also offered to help with overall village communication, especially for those not on Facebook.

**22.377.9 For Information: Oak Tree footpath update (Roger Evans, RE)**

RE provided an update to the Council on the oak tree footpath:

1. A report is being prepared to go to the Local Authority Ombudsman shortly and a draft will be circulated for comment. Four issues:
  - a. Damage to tree
  - b. Inappropriate design for a Conservation Area
  - c. Not fit for purpose – unpleasant and ramps fail accessibility standards
  - d. Visibility of oncoming traffic greatly reduced
2. The Parish Council has appointed an arboriculturalist to prepare the section on damage to the tree.
3. A meeting was held with Hayden Homes Administrator on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 to brief him on issues and discuss remedial action. Details of planning consent for the alternative path and an ownership map has been sent since as requested. A further meeting is planned.
4. Freedom of Information requests to be sent to Cherwell District Council (CDC) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) shortly in support of our case to the Ombudsman.
5. It was noted that the OCC application to CDC to cut away branches is now going to full planning committee and this will be opposed.

**22.377.10 For Information: District and County Councillor updates**

County Councillor Simpson provided an update on the oak tree footpath and confirmed that the issue now sits with highways, however he is finding engagement difficult and will now raise the issue with Paul Wilson, Highways Group Manager at Oxfordshire County Council.

DB queried if Oxfordshire County Council have a communications policy and would like to recommend, via our County Councillor, that if they do not, one should be put in place.

It was confirmed that Councillors Hallchurch, Holland and Hughes were all against the oak tree crown lift application and have requested for it to go to planning committee.

A full county council meeting will be held next week covering the budget and the separation of Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council.

Councillor Simpson will enquire with Dave Catling how the application for 30mph on B430 is going for Weston on the Green.

The proposal to relocate Oxford United football club to Stratfield Brake site in Kidlington was discussed. The lease on the clubs current site runs out in 2026 and they are investigating the opportunity to relocate to Kidlington. They wish to lease land for 250 years in order to develop an 18,000 capacity stadium (maximum), sports grounds and other community facilities. The impacts of traffic and parking are of concern to local residents and businesses and community engagement is currently ongoing via the Oxfordshire Lets Talk website.

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**22.377.11 For Information:** Works update (RSA)

RSA highlighted that the playground will be inspected retrospectively.

The hedge fronting Church Lane and around the car park has been trimmed by a contractor. RSA is also working on the moles and placed two rubber grass mats at the entrance to the car park. RSA confirmed he would now purchase and install mats for the North Lane footpath entrance.

RSA is in the process of obtaining quotes to undertake a tree audit in the spinney. The spinney is not within the Conservation Area and therefore it is understood that permission is not required to undertake tree works but they would be required to be done before nesting season.

Pedro Collins from the Environment Agency has agreed to meet RSA (at no cost) to discuss clearing the spinney and highlight what is beneficial for wildlife and safe for children.

RSA is in the process of arranging a works day to be held on the playing field before the end of March. A request has been placed in the Village News and on the Parish Councils facebook page and website.

**22.377.12 For Discussion:** Recruitment drive for new Parish Councillors (DB)

DB commented that two people have come forward and offered their services to the Council as either full councillors or in an advisory capacity. DB will invite them to attend the March Parish Council meeting and the Council can then hold an open discussion at the end of the meeting.

**Action:** DB to invite two potential Councillors to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 PC meeting for a discussion.

**22.377.13 Resolution To Approve** payment of Clerks monthly salary via Standing Order and associated Direct Debit monthly payment to Nest Pensions from 'Parish of Weston on the Green' Barclays Bank account from February 2022 to end of FY 2022-23 (SD)

SD outlined the procedure for paying the parish clerk and the requirement to approve the standing order and direct debit payments until the end of FY 2022-23.

The resolution to approve payment of Clerks monthly salary via Standing Order and associated Direct Debit monthly payment to Nest Pensions from 'Parish of Weston on the Green' Barclays Bank account from February 2022 to end of FY 2022-23 was proposed by SD and seconded by RW. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**22.377.14 Resolution To Approve** that the Parish Council should provide and purchase dog litter bags for village use up to a total cost of £110+VAT for 8000 bags to cover a years supply (RW)

RW confirmed that Cherwell District Council are no longer providing free dog poo bags to villages. Currently bags are distributed to the shop and in the box on the footpath between Westlands Avenue and the Village Hall by Toddy Gould. Toddy has investigated the cost of purchasing bags in bulk and has enquired if the Parish Council would consider purchasing them.

The Council suggested that regular users of the bags from the shop may like to make a Friends donation, however it was agreed this should be the decision of the owner as to the impact on administration time.

The resolution to approve that the Parish Council should provide and purchase dog litter bags for village use up to a total cost of £110+VAT for 8000 bags to cover a years supply was proposed by RW and seconded by RSA. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to provide an update to Toddy Gould regarding the provision or poo bags.

**Action:** Clerk to organise the purchase of the dog poo bags for the village.

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**22.377.15 For Discussion:** The Queen's Jubilee (DB)

DB suggested that now the playing field and spinney are owned by the Parish Council it could be renamed in honour of the Queen's Jubilee.

The Council agreed to name the field 'The Jubilee Playing Field' and install a plaque with a dedication to Queen Elizabeth II.

**Action:** Clerk to check with Deputy Lord Lieutenant on dedication for playing field and if any rules/procedures are required to be followed.

**22.377.16 Resolution: To Approve** Parish Council financial accounts, end Q3 FY 2021-22 (RW)

RW presented the Parish Councils Q3 accounts for financial year 2021/22 following their approval by the finance advisory group. A summary of expenditure in Q3 vs budget, bank reconciliation and income details were provided and confirmed to all balance.

It was highlighted that there is no budget line for the purchase of the playing field as the purchase was expected to be completed in the previous financial year. It therefore appears that the Council has considerable overspent vs budget but if the loan value is removed it can be seen that Council expenditure is comfortably within budget. Two versions of the summary figures provide a clear overview of expenditure including and excluding the purchase amount.

The resolution to approve the Parish Council financial accounts, end of Q3 FY 2021-2022 was proposed by RW and seconded by RSA. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to upload the Parish Council Q3 accounts (FY 2021/22) to the Parish Council website.

**22.377.17 Resolution To Approve** the following invoices for payment (RW)

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

PC Ref	Payee	Purpose	Total (incl VAT)	Budget Line	Amount Remaining in 2021-22 Budget
244*	Grassmats Limited	Rubber grass mat for playing field x2	£63.89	Works - Playing Field & Spinney/Playing Field Maintenance	£266.50
245	OALC	Clerk training course - Depositing records advice for Parish Councils	£6.00	Staff Costs/Clerk & Cllrs training	£300.00
246	Community First Oxfordshire	Annual Community First Subscription - 1 April 2022-31 March 2023	£55.00	Subscriptions/Community First Oxfordshire	£0.00 ( <i>last years renewal paid in April 21</i> )

\* Invoice already paid to enable purchase and installation, discussed at 5 Jan 22 PC meeting

It was noted that invoice 244 had already been paid in order to enable purchase and installation.

The resolution to approve the invoices detailed in the table was proposed by RW and seconded by RSA. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to update invoice log with approvals.

**Action:** Clerk to initiative request for payments from Councillors and ensure payments authorised.

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**22.377.18 For Discussion:** Discuss and agree recommendations from the Planning Group (DB)

Key planning applications on the planning report (updated 30<sup>th</sup> January 2022) were discussed by the council.

**Building Applications:**

**Decision Received – Permitted**

None

**Decision Received – Rejected**

None

**Awaiting Decision**

**21/01580/F - Kemsley Farm, Northampton Road** - Change of use of land from agriculture to equestrian use. Erection of a building to provide stabling for 36 ponies with associated facilities.

**Commented - Going to Committee 10/2/22**

It was queried if the proposed larger gates off the B430 had the potential to block the bridal path and if so a comment would be required. To be checked with HD.

**21/00873/F – Kemsley Farm, Northampton Road** – Conversion of barn to form a single dwelling house and associated works. This has been altered to remove extension.

**Commented**

**21/03580/TEL & 21/03752/F - Telecommunications Mast, towards A34** - The Installation of 3 x CTIL antenna at 26.7m on re used existing headframe. • The relocation of 3 x EE antenna at 19.0m and 1 x EE 0.6m HP Dish antenna at 20.0m on a new face frame on the tower at 20.4m.

**Commented**

**21/00038/REF - The Ben Jonson Inn, Northampton Road** - Erection of a two-bedroom bungalow (C3) to the rear of the existing public house (Sui Generis), with a new access created off Westlands Avenue following the partial demolition of the boundary wall, and associated parking and landscaping.

**Planning Inspectorate Ref:** APP/C3105/W/21/3278245

**21/00039/REF - The Ben Jonson Inn, Northampton Road** - Partial demolition of the boundary wall to create access for new dwelling proposed under 20/03406/F.

**Planning Inspectorate Ref:** APP/C3105/Y/21/3278250

**New Applications:**

**22/00105/F – Manor Farm Bungalow, Northampton Road** - Single Storey Front and Rear Extensions with Associated Internal and External Works.

**21/04299/OUT - Reynards Lodge, North Lane** - Removal of Condition 11 (no dwelling above one storey height) of 21/02146/OUT - Outline application demolition of workshops, stables and tennis court and erection of three dwellings and conversion of existing building to form a dwelling.

The Council noted concern that changes lodged which come under reserved matters could mean that designs could be agreed without the Parish Council being consulted.

**New Appeals**

None

**Tree Works:**

**New Applications – Case Officer Iain Osenton**

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**22/00112/TCA - Mithian Cottage, Northampton Road** - T1 x Apple, unstable/potentially dangerous - Fell T2 x Apple, dysfunctional timber at base 70% circumference with extensive basal decay - Fell. T3 x Norway Maple, previously reduced with approximately 5 years re-growth, crown reduce to near previous points, removing up to 2 metres.

**22/00124/TPO – Oak Tree, North Lane** - Crown lift to 2.5m over adjacent footpath. Secondary limbs where possible. Limb identified in attached correspondence. - Subject to TPO 04/2018.

**Rejected / Issues**

None

**Action:** HD/Clerk to send appropriate planning replies to Cherwell District Council once HD briefed by Councillors on discussions held at the February PC meeting.

**22.377.19**      **Next Parish Council Meeting:** 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022, 7.30pm

**Meeting Closed:** 21.27

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