

## MINUTES

For the meeting of Parish Council, held on Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Meeting Number 19.335

### Public Participation Session

There were five members of the public present. The chair invited members of the public to raise any queries or concerns additional to the agenda. Mr Roper noted that the water is running in the Mill stream and asked whether any work was being commissioned regarding the weir. Cllr Stafford Allen stated that the weir wasn't parish council property and therefore work was not being undertaken in this area. It was noted that it was filled from run off as a result of the snow rather than works undertaken. Mr Roper noted that in previous years the PC has undertaken repairs to the weir to keep the water flowing. He urged the PC to consider whether work was needed in this area to restore the flow of water. The Chair explained that many villagers have commented that this is a feature in the village, she suggested that a collective group of landowners and those who live by the stream could be formed. RSA requested whether the relevant authorities had given permissions to repair the weir.

**Action:** Clerk to investigate whether the permissions to work on the weir, from May/April 2016, sit in the parish council records

**Action:** Investigate next steps once permission issues are clear regarding the weir

### 19.335.1 Apologies for absence

Cllr Graeme Forbes (GF) sent his apologies, as did Cllr Kieran Evans, neither were present. Cllrs Bohm (DB), Daenke (SD), Mullane (NM), Donne (HD) Stafford Allen (RSA) and Whitfield (RW) were present. There were 5 members of the public present. Mrs Jane Mullane, Clerk to be appointed was also present.

### 19.335.2 Declarations of interest

The Chair asked for Declarations of Interest, Cllr Mullane noted his ongoing interest in Southfield Farm and the matter of the appointment of the Clerk.

### 19.335.3 Approval of the minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting were discussed. There was a request to update page 1 to attribute Cllr Carmen Griffiths to OCC. The Clerk committed to updating the minutes. The minutes for the 23<sup>rd</sup> January meeting were then moved by Cllr Daenke (SD) and seconded by Cllr Mullane (NM).

**Action:** Clerk to update the January meeting minutes, present to Chair to sign, then file

**Action:** Clerk to upload January minutes on Village website

### 19.335.4 Chair's report

Cllr Bohm (DB) outlined her Chair's report explaining that it has been a short time since our January PC meeting in which we approved the budget for next year. The timing was very tight because of deadlines with CDC and we have resolved to do our budget process much earlier next year.

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Following on from that meeting, Cllr Bohm explained that she and Cllr Whitfield (RW) had attended an intensive training course on budget planning and as a result Ruth will present a paper this evening recommending some improvements going forward. Our compliance with regulations and process is improving but we have some way to go, hence these specific recommendations are important.

A further development to be discussed this evening, the chair summarised, is the proposal to purchase the playground. DB outlined that she had extended an invitation to the public to come tonight to hear the proposal and ask questions. She emphasised how this is at the heart of how this Council wants to work – alongside the village.

DB continued, explaining that the Neighbourhood Plan is progressing towards Examination with a full report tonight. DB encouraged the Council to support the work that is ongoing in preparing the submission. She also requested that councillors take some time and go over the Policies in the Plan as these should form our Action Plans for the next fifteen years. She explained that councillors will need to sit down as a team and absorb this task and create actionable plans by the year. Finally the chair noted that the Annual Parish Meeting is on March 27<sup>th</sup> 2019. I have invited all the groups within the village to participate in the hope of uniting our vision for WOTG.

#### **19.335.4 Clerk's report**

The clerk opened her report by noting progress was being made against our Action list. Mr Roper reminded the Council that at the last meeting Mr Mick East raised a concern regarding the Weir. Cllr Stafford Allen responded on this to say that he had covered this matter at the start of the meeting.

The clerk confirmed that the Standing Orders, Code of Conduct and Financial Regulations will be reviewed at the March PC meeting.

The clerk went on to confirm that the new salt bins have been relocated as requested, and the new bin installed at the end of Westlands Avenue. She urged the council to continue to encourage residents to use the bins.

Following on from the January meeting with Highways the Clerk explained that we have reported the growing pot hole on the B430 opposite Brooklyn's Gardens, the pot holes along the access lane to the Ben Johnson, and to the Old Police House. She also confirmed that the deep pot hole on the pavement near the village shop had also been reported. The clerk urged residents who spot other pot holes to report them via Fixmystreet.

On a Highways related matter the Clerk explained that the Council had now established that the land on the B430 opposite the end of North Lane (where the grasses grow high in the Summer) is Highways land. Highways have committed to a tidy up package here which includes reinstatement of the bollards. We await a timeline.

**Action: NM to measure pot holes in Old Police House and send to Cllr Griffiths**

Cllr Daenke noted concerns on the pot holes on the Bletchingdon road. Cllr Stafford Allen noted that this is a national route for cyclists.

**Action: Clerk to log with Bletchingdon PC regarding the pot holes on the Bletchingdon road**

The clerk confirmed that the PC website now includes an up to date Register of Interests from Cllr Stafford Allen, as outlined by the Chair in the January PC meeting. It also includes the budget agreed in the last PC meeting along with the relevant meeting papers for this PC meeting.

The clerk confirmed that the annual village litter pick, part of Cherwell's Spring Clean initiative will take place on Saturday 13th April. Thanks go to Graham Barnett for organising this. Work is underway to consider if there are other activities that should form part of a village spring clean.

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Cllr Stafford Allen suggested that there would be some valuable work to be done on the Oak Tree Pond and the Duck Pond. He was keen to join up the work, which would enable more families to get involved.

**Action:** Clerk to liaise with Graham Barnett and the works team to agree a date which would enable more people to attend

#### 19.335.6 For discussion: Proposals to purchase the Playing Field and Spinney (RSA)

Councillor Stafford Allen introduced the next agenda item, the question of the purchase of the Playing Field and Spinney. RSA explained, in October 2018 during discussion on the Playing Field fence he enquired, at the request of the Parish Council whether the field might be purchased as a permanent facility for the benefit of the village. The Duchy were open to considering an offer for the playing field and spinney. The Duchy suggested an offer in excess of £30,000 plus the professional fees involved in the sale.

RSA outlined the costs associated with the purchase, explaining, he estimated the total professional costs at around £2000 so the PC need to raise £32,000. He went on to explain that he has applied to Cherwell for a £15,000 grant and to Viridor for a £14,000 grant. RSA explained that for both applications he has had to submit forms with a copy of the Lease, Parish Council Annual Returns, and a valuation. This valuation was achieved at no cost with the helpful co-operation of a local estate agent, who said as "amenity land" and not "development land" he valued the plot at very close to the figure requested by the Duchy.

RSA turned to the subject of raising funds. He outlined that there are some Section 106 monies left from the Blacksmith's Close development, He explained that if the two grant applications are successful the PC will be contributing £3K-£4k as a village.

Finally RSA outlined the Playground/Playing field/spinney running cost changes in the event of purchase of the playing field. He explained these were primarily a reduction of rent of £670 p.a. The only increase would be in the inspection of the trees by a qualified tree surgeon every 3 to 5 years (particularly trees along the road) would cost £250-£300 each time. Should a tree need taking down then we are likely to need to find £750 or so.

RSA proposed the purchase, based on his experience of gathering grants for the playground where 26 grants were placed and 7 were successful.

The Chair then opened the discussion up to the floor and asked members of the public or councillors if they have any queries. Len Ricketts stated he thought the purchase a 'no brainer', as it would give control over the land. Cllr Donne raised the issue of whether the PC liability changes if it owns the property, for example if the land was occupied by travellers. Mr Roper noted that the area of the playing field where the coronation seat sits suggested that this belonged to Sanctuary.

Mrs Stafford Allen queried whether the Duchy will replace the fence that they took down when undertaking tree works. The chair outlined that the Duchy had proposed to give £500 to support the replacement of the fence.

RSA committed to follow up with the Duchy forestry team to understand when the follow up works will be undertaken on the poplar trees.

Cllr Mullane suggested that we could approach the purchase of the land as a negotiation, seeking to keep the price down as much as possible. The council concurred.

RSA moved that the PC progress towards the purchase of the playing field, based on the proposal that all capital projects are 80% external funded. RSA moved the motion, it was seconded by NM. The council supported the motion with a unanimous vote on the matter.

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**Action:** RSA to follow up with the Forestry team at the Duchy

**Action:** RSA to progress playing field purchase activities

**19.335.7 Resolution:** To approve the appointment of Mrs J Mullane as permanent Parish Clerk (SD)

The Chair welcomed Mrs Jane Mullane to the council and asked her to introduce herself. Mrs Mullane explained that her background has relevant skills to the Clerk's role. She explained that she is an active volunteer and governor at Bletchingdon Primary School, where her two children attend.

The motion was proposed by DB and seconded by SD. It was carried by a unanimous vote from the Council.

**19.335.8 Resolution:** To adopt the recommendations of the Financial Update Memo (Clerk). See paper for full list of resolutions tabled for approval at this meeting

The Clerk explained that, the following financial matters require consideration in preparation for the Year End process, and to set the council in good stead for the coming Financial Year. In the absence of the Finance Lead the proposal below has been put forward by the Clerk.

First issue for consideration was the appointment of an Internal Auditor. The Clerk explained that the Council is required to appoint an internal auditor. An internal audit is required for the financial year 2018/2019. After discussions with OALC it is recommended that the following supplier be contracted on a 1 year arrangement. DB added that she had taken up references and was satisfied with the proposed auditor.

**Resolution:** It is moved to appoint IAC Audit and Consultancy as Internal Auditor at a cost of £195 for the FY 2018/19. The resolution was proposed by RW and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the council.

**Action:** Clerk/chair to progress appointment of internal auditor

Secondly, the issue of the adoption of the annual Risk Register was raised. The Clerk explained that the risk register has been drafted to help the council best understand the risks it faces and to assess whether suitable mitigations are in place. The Clerk sought feedback, comments or changes to the draft risk register. Cllr Donne explained that the risk register was key for the annual meeting of the Parish Council so that this was an important tool for the Council to have.

**Action:** Clerk to note 'approved 6<sup>th</sup> February meeting' on risk register

**Action:** Clerk to publish risk register as pdf on Village website and Dropbox for Councillors

**Resolution:** It is moved to adopt the Risk Register for 2018/19. The resolution was proposed by RW and seconded by NM. It was supported unanimously by the council.

The third item raised was the adoption of the annual Asset Register. The clerk explained that the asset register has been updated to ensure an up to date position on assets is available. The clerk explained that the register photos are still being updated. The Clerk asked for any comments or changes to the asset register. There were none.

**Action:** Clerk to note 'approved 6<sup>th</sup> February meeting' on asset register

**Action:** Clerk to publish asset register as pdf on Village website and Dropbox for Councillors

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**Resolution:** It is moved to adopt the Asset Register for 2018/19. The resolution was proposed by RW and seconded by HD. It was supported unanimously by the council.

The Clerk then turned to discuss the set up of a Financial Advisory Group/Committee. The clerk outlined that, with the appointment of our new Clerk, and our existing book keeper it is important for the probity of the council that robust financial controls are in place to provide the appropriate check and balance. This would include a quarterly check of payments and accounting practices and it is therefore recommended that we establish a Financial Advisory Group/Committee in the same way as we have for other Important areas of the council eg HR.

DB suggested that the Clerk attend Financial Advisory Group/Committee.

HD Financial report to be presented at the Parish Council Annual meeting, therefore progress needs to be made on this quickly.

**Resolution:** It is moved to establish a Financial Advisory Group/Committee who will comprise Graeme Forbes, Henry Donne, Susan Daenke and Diane Bohm, clerk as appropriate. An appropriate terms of reference will be agreed by the PC in due course. The resolution was proposed by RW and seconded by RSA. It was supported unanimously by the council.

Finally, the Clerk turned to the question of a Financial Controls Auditor (FCA). She outlined, to enable effective internal financial controls it is proposed that, on a quarterly basis, a member of the council independent of the Financial Advisory Group/Committee undertakes a review of financial processes, following through a select number of transactions to check due process and accurate accounting. Should any issues arise the FCA would report his findings to the appropriate Advisory group for remediation.

**Resolution:** It is moved to appoint Councillor Robin Stafford Allen to undertake the role of Financial Controls Auditor. The resolution was proposed by RW and seconded by DB. It was supported unanimously by the council.

Finally, the Clerk outlined a summary of the key steps in the end of year process. She highlighted that all councillor expenses for FY18/19 need to be given to the clerk ahead of the March meeting so that approval can be sought in the March meeting and paid before the end of the financial year. Any outstanding supplier invoices for FY18/19 should be given to the clerk, ahead of the March meeting so that approvals can be sought. Following approval from the PC the Internal Auditor will be appointed and an audit commissioned.

Following this, the year end accounts will be drafted, reviewed and signed off by Council at the May PC meeting. In the June meeting we will need to review the Internal Audit report, then sign off the AGAR and Financial Statement (the end of year accounts), finally we need to notify the External Auditor of our Proposed Audit Route by the end of June.

The clerk outlined the proposed next steps

- Financial Advisory Group/Committee to establish terms of reference
- Financial Advisory Group/Committee to
  - Review current practices and reconfirm roles and responsibilities ahead of year end process, including nomination of village RFO
  - Nominated representative to attend 27th February OALC training on 'The RFO's Year'
  - Draft Internal Controls policy
  - Put in place steps to enable robust Financial Controls for FY 19/20
  - Bank Accounts consolidation
  - Assess how to maximise savings interests in the FY 19/20
- Full Council to discuss and agree package of Standing Orders, Code of Conduct and Financial Regulations at March PC meeting

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**Action:** Financial lead/Clerk to convene Financial Advisory Group/Committee prior to 27<sup>th</sup> March parish meeting

**Action:** Clerk/Governance lead to draft Financial Advisory Group/Committee to establish terms of reference for discussion at meeting

**Action:** Clerk/Governance lead to Draft internal controls policy

**Action:** Clerk/Governance lead to attend 27<sup>th</sup> February OALC training on 'The RFO's Year'

**Action:** Clerk/Finance Lead to draft Financial Advisory Group/Committee agenda to consider when best to discuss

- Review current practices and reconfirm roles and responsibilities ahead of year end process, including nomination of village RFO
- Bank Accounts consolidation
- Assess how to maximise savings interests in the FY 19/20

**Action:** Clerk to add to March PC meeting agenda items on Standing Orders, Code of Conduct and Financial Regulations

**Action:** Governance lead to draft Standing Orders, Code of Conduct and Financial Regulations

**Action:** Finance lead to draft Finance Report for PC annual meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> March

**19.335.9 Resolution:** To approve the purchase of Local Councils Explained, NACL publication for £20 and the invoice for £600 from OCC for 2 salt bins (Clerk).

The clerk requested approval of the purchase of the NACL publication, and the invoice for 2 salt bins from OCC. This resolution was proposed by RW and seconded by RSA. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

For the record the Clerk noted that there had been an error in the approval of the invoice for John Miller engineering last month. Approval had been sought for the cost ex VAT, it should have been inclusive of VAT. The Council accepted this oversight and approved the payment.

HD explained to the room that the PC had moved to an online payment system with Barclays. It requires approval of two councillors and seems to be working well.

**Action:** Clerk to purchase NALC book

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

**Action:** Clerk to update Transparency log of invoices in excess of £100 and place on Village website

**Action:** Clerk to initiative request for payments from councillors

**Action:** Councillors to process online payment requests

**Action:** Clerk to update book keeper on financial activities

**19.335.10 For discussion:** to discuss and agree recommendations from the Planning Group (HD)

Councillor Donne outlined the recommendations from the Planning Group. He explained that the planning report had been discussed at the last meeting so he would focus on highlights from the planning report.

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18/00470/DISC | Discharge of condition 15 (construction method statement of 17/01458/OUT | Land North of Oak View. PC commented – CDC approved with minor alterations on times which Councillor Donne highlighted to the room.

HD then raised the matters awaiting decision

18/02066/F | Demolition of redundant concrete barn and erection of 4 dwellings with associated access and amenity | Southfield Farm. HD explained that he'd had good conversations with CDC about this development. The PC have formally commented explaining that the style not in-line with NP and overdevelopment of site. CDC say they have spoken to the architect, are asking for changes to application and will come back to us when they receive another application. HD confirmed that he had noted an interest in Section 106 monies associated with the development.

Mr Len Rickets asked whether the houses built under this application will have access to North Lane. HD explained that this was seen as an extension to the 20 houses and therefore access will be via the B430. NM asked whether we could ask CDC to revisit the Section 106 monies as this development is so closely aligned to the larger Southfield Farm monies. HD agreed that he would pick this up.

**Action: HD to raise with CDC whether the PC can revisit Southfield Farm section 106 monies.**

18/02148/F | Two storey rear extension, reducing height of rear kitchen window and additional flue in roof of extension to west elevation to serve multi fuel stove | The Dower House Church Road This is a re-submission of a lapsed application. PC raised issues on Green Belt, over extension. CDC decision expected 13.2.19. HD also noted that the garage application on this property was currently being appealed by the owners.

HD then moved on to discuss new applications

HD explained that one had arisen since the planning report was issued. He explained that the PC have been recently approached by Fullers regarding building a small accommodation block at The Chequers Public House, Northampton Road. This would be for staff. HD circulated the details of this before the meeting to Councillors. HD recapped that the Councillor's collective view was that as a PC we support businesses, however it is in green belt and is an extension outwards of the village, he explained that the development doesn't fit with the design guidelines of the Neighbourhood Plan and there is visibility from the Oxfordshire Way.

DB explained her concerns that other landowners in the village might want to build on their land if this application was approved. NM asked whether the PC needed to suggest any controls associated with use of the developed space so that it didn't creep into an Air BNB set up. HD acknowledged these concerns and suggested that the next step would be to meet with Fullers representatives and discuss their intentions.

**Action: Clerk to liaise with HD to set up a meeting with Fullers**

**19.335.11 For information:** to receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan (DB)

DB presented an update on the Neighbourhood Plan. She started by explaining that the period of public consultation ended on January 11th, 2019. Cherwell has forwarded 18 representations to us and they are also public on their website.

She continued to explain that they fall into two categories: agree with no concerns and disagree with specific concerns. All of the areas of concern are around planning, housing and zoning. There is no expectation that we should respond to these representations, but it has been usual for Councils to briefly respond and in some cases tweak the plan. Any changes would be minor ones that would not necessitate a further round of consultation.

DB summarised the main representations as follows:

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1	Southfield Farm Site B	<p>challenge to “not being positive”</p> <p>NP desire to build within the village is prejudicial</p> <p>landscape policies are onerous</p> <p>aims to frustrate growth at the edge of the village</p>
2	Cherwell District Council	<p>slight tweaks which are helpful</p> <p>additional suggestions for including Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Sites. Also Meizen Copse, Middleleys Spinney and two unnamed areas.</p> <p>explain calculation of housing numbers would be helpful</p>
3	Lagan Homes	<p>challenge to housing numbers</p> <p>challenge to compliance under existing framework</p> <p>challenge to the School Field as an important green space and a priority habitat to be protected</p> <p>arguments are supported by their ecologist report</p> <p>arguments against the SchoolField as a Landscape Character Area. This is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment prepared by Clews Landscape Architecture Ltd.</p>
4	Lorna Godwin	<p>challenge to preventing housing growth east of B430</p> <p>supports housing on School Field</p>
5	Brown & Co for Lorna Miles	<p>nursery school has not been followed through in the Plan: recommend including such a policy</p> <p>oppose restriction on devl’p on Green Spaces sites and specifically east of the B430</p> <p>challenge lack of consideration of planning applications for more sites in the village</p> <p>too restrictive on edge of village and on internal green space</p> <p>WOTG is a Category A village and as such should include more sustainable housing</p> <p>a number of modifications suggested – all to increase housing</p> <p>challenge to location of village green</p>
6	Thames Valley Police	<p>commend plan and Design Code</p> <p>recommend a specific policy regarding ‘incorporating the principles of ‘Secured by Design’ and wherever possible achieve SBD</p>

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		accreditation'
7	Natural England	<p>question compliance to version 2 of NPPF</p> <p>welcome policy E2 to preserve and enhance green infrastructure. Recommend including wording 'that ensures the maintenance of green infrastructure in perpetuity to ensure the environmental and social benefits are maximized'.</p> <p>support the School Field as a key site for biodiversity and note that WOTG is within NE's Bernwood Focus Area and this site is 'the perfect opportunity to enhance the local wildlife associated with the ancient Bernwood Forest'. Support the importance of the Ridge and Furrow and believe it is significant and this should also be preserved in line with any biodiversity enhancements.</p>
88	Oxfordshire County Council	<p>comments on process for reducing speed limits</p> <p>comments on reducing weight limits</p> <p>use of Section 106 funds for the following:</p> <p>encourage schemes to address specific issues and where development is expected how the developer could deliver such projects</p> <p>crossings on B430 are possible but no funding is available. Some types of crossings require relevant surveys and a reduced speed limit</p> <p>footpath improvement should be added to an infrastructure list noting limits of funding</p> <p>cycle path extension would need to be linked to funding and/or done slowly over time</p> <p>parking areas and green verges are dependent on ownership and laterally costs</p> <p>public transportation; consultation on this is welcome</p> <p>range of suggestions for including OCC as having a key responsibility within specific policies</p>
9	Thames Water	<p>encourages liaison with Thames Water and Southfield Farm to discuss infrastructure. TW do not envisage concerns with wastewater networks.</p>
10	Historic England	<p>agree with the Council's view that SEA should not be required in this case in relation to any effect within the area of interest of HE</p>

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DB went on to explain that she has asked the School Field Action Group to support a further report from their ecologist in response to the report in the Lagan Homes rebuttal to the NP. There will be costs associated with this and funds have been raised for this purpose. SD noted that it was of interest that Lagan Homes disagreed with the Ecology reports supported by CDC.

DB highlighted that Natural England are delighted with the work of the NP, they have encouraged the group to strengthen the report to cover the school field 'in perpetuity'.

DB and SD highlighted a number of errors made by Lagan homes in their submission.

Finally DB explained that the NP team will incorporate specific tweaks into a further iteration of the Plan. Several planning objections can be clearly refuted. Other planning objections (Southfield Farm, Manor Farm) will be discussed and run by Roger Evans for further comments. She highlighted that none of the negative comments have introduced matters that have not been discussed. Therefore it was felt that we do not feel that it is necessary to overly delay our progress to Examination. At this point we ask the Parish Council to support this recommendation.

DB closed her report making a motion for the council to support the move for the neighbourhood plan to progress to Examination. This was proposed by DB and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the council.

**Action: DB/SD to progress review of representations**

**Action: DB/SD to progress NP to Examiner as per due process**

**19.335. 12 AOB**

NM explained that there were concerns in the Traffic Group that placing '20s Plenty' on North Lane and Westlands Avenue would encourage speeds up to 20mph. The Council discussed this and concurred that the signs would encourage good speed management along these lanes.

**Action: NM to commission Traffic Group to install 20s Plenty Signs**

DB explained that OALC are running a training course for the RFO, she informed the council that in the absence of the Finance Lead the Clerk and Governance lead would seek to attend.

**Action: Clerk to book training with OALC**

HD reported that he had studied the Cherwell housing strategy. He noted that Cherwell are looking at how to address housing needs to an ageing population, and social and lower cost housing within the villages as a priority. RSA asked whether any of the Expressway housing allocations were noted within the strategy, HD confirmed that it was not.

**Action: Clerk to liaise with HD regarding Chancel Repairs section on the PC website**

It was confirmed that the date of the next meeting is 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

The meeting closed at 21.15

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