

# MINUTES

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

Meeting Number 22.387

Note for information: Cherwell District Council – CDC, Oxfordshire County Council - OCC

## Public Participation

The owners of the Saint Hill Copse metal business, located close to A34 off B430, attended the meeting to discuss concerns raised at the previous Parish Council meeting regarding their business holding the appropriate licences.

They confirmed that the business has been run up to now using exemptions which are allowed for certain volumes of material. After an extensive period of site clearance and tidying the business is now growing substantially and exceptions are not possible for all items going forwards. The owners confirmed that appropriate permits are to be applied for and they have booked on specific training courses e.g. transport manager course.

RSA highlighted this was a small holding originally and therefore planning consent for change of use on the land is required. The owners confirmed this has not been obtained as yet but it would be applied for shortly.

An offer of help for any work to be undertaken in the village was provided by the owners and confirmed they are community based individuals, which was appreciated by the Council.

The Parish Council thanked the owners for attending the meeting and discussing the raised concerns. It was commented that it was refreshing to be able to speak directly to people to provide a greater understanding for both parties.

The Council will monitor that the appropriate permits and planning consent are obtained.

**Action:** Council to check that the appropriate permits and planning consent are obtained for the Saint Hill Copse site.

### 22.387.1 To Receive: Apologies for non-attendance

Councillors Bohm (DB), Davis (SD), Stafford Allen (RSA) and Miller (JM) were all present.

Councillors Rosser and Mullane sent their apologies, which were accepted.

Councillor Nigel Simpson (Oxfordshire County Council) and Councillors Patrick and Coton (Cherwell District Council) also sent their apologies.

4 members of the public (including Graham Barnett) were in attendance, two for only part of the meeting. James Henderson (JH) joined the meeting part way through.

### 22.387.2 To Receive: Declarations of Interest

SD declared a declaration of interest in relation to planning applications 22/03175/F, 22/03176/LB and 22/03133/LB (Westfield Farm Cottage, North Lane).

RSA has had notification from CDC that planning application (22/01778/F, Robin's Folly, Mill Lane) had been approved although the status has still not been changed on the CDC planning portal.

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**22.387.3 To Receive & Approve:** Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022 (DB)

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were discussed with a minor amendment highlighting that RSA had received notification directly that his planning application had been approved but it was still not on the CDC portal.

The resolution to approve the minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022 was then proposed 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.

**22.387.4 For Information:** Chairs Comment (DB)

DB commented that the by-line of the Parish Council should be ‘Challenges and Opportunities’.

The Parish Council have been burdened with the issue of the Oak Tree Path for far too long. We’ve had another villager expressing concern regarding the danger of the corner of North Lane and the B430, especially with the longer dark nights and mornings. On the other hand, there is excitement about our community transport van.

DB hopes that the Welcome Kit is ‘welcome’ in the homes that will receive it. Yasemin has been helpful in pointing her to the houses with new people. If we share the task of hand delivering them, we can also gather information about interests and experience and also ask for contact details.

A challenge for a group of parish chairs that DB meets with monthly is the disappointing response from Councillor Liz Leffman (Leader of OCC) on a number of issues highlighted by each parish – it took five months to reply and the information was not completely accurate or helpful. A reply asking for a face to face meeting will be sent.

For information the response on a query over the footpath at the top of North Lane was read to the Council and provided here so it is recorded:

*PC Comment: In Weston on the Green a path and railing has been constructed near to an ancient oak tree: this in a conservation area, to the detriment of the health of the tree, in breach of planning conditions, and without consultation with the PC. As a result, the PC have had to spend £1,500 on a consultant’s report in order to get an alternative path approved – money and effort which could have been saved with a little more forethought.*

*OCC Reply: In Weston on the Green, the works related to planning application 13/01796/OUT. I am advised that consultation with the Parish Council was undertaken at the planning application stage. Officers sought to listen to and address local concerns as far as was reasonably practicable within the scope of the permitted planning application. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) objected to this application but requested that if it went ahead, there should be a condition requiring the details of a footway connection to the village to be submitted. The Highway Authority considered strongly that a footway connection was required for safety, if the development went ahead. This condition does not appear to have been applied to the planning permission. Instead the legal agreement required the developer to deliver the scheme under S278.*

*In order to protect the tree the design was drawn up with advice from the County’s arboriculture officer. The path’s construction includes a no-dig solution utilising a permeable block paved surface course across the full length of the root protection area to allow water ingress to the roots of the tree. The arboriculture team have made a number of visits to inspect the tree and are satisfied that it is healthy. Should you have concerns they would be happy to reinspect the tree.*

On the flip side is the great work being done by our District and County councillors who lobby on our behalf with great success.

DB also highlighted the workshops being offered by OALC and Breakthrough Communications on communication topics and commented it would be beneficial for Councillors to attend the appropriate sessions.

DB’s final concern was the energy crisis and the effect on villagers and she would welcome some support in finding ways of helping our most vulnerable. If you are interested in working on this, please contact either DB or the clerk.

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

The clerks report to the Council was noted which confirmed the second instalment of the precept (£11,028.07) had been received into the Parish Council bank account. The balance on the two bank accounts held by the Council was also noted in the report.

Confirmation that the independent financial checks for Q1 FY 2022-23 have been carried out by Councillor Stafford Allen and key documents have been signed and filed.

A "T" sign has been installed by Oxfordshire County Council at the Old Police House/Northampton Road junction, at request of a nearby resident.

The waste at the SSE substation is still ongoing but being pursued by the clerk along with a waste issue in the layby opposite the airfield, due to the bins being removed.

**22.387.6 For Information: Oak Tree footpath update (DB/Roger Evans)**

DB provided the following report from Roger Evans on the footpath at the top of North Lane. Since the October Parish Council meeting two further meetings have been held with CDC and OCC.

OCC Highways are intending to undertake the work of building the new footpath using their Direct Works team. This is contingent on the total cost of the works not exceeding £25k and confirmation that the Direct Works team have capacity. We have stressed the urgency of the situation both on safety grounds and the health of the tree. We have further suggested that the replacement path could be built fairly quickly and the railings which obscure visibility be removed. Demolition of the built structure would follow and remedial work to the tree carried out.

We have also met with Soha Housing to share our concerns regarding the need for a safe path to the village for their residents. They have undertaken to take this up with OCC and CDC.

**22.387.7 For Information: Oxfordshire County & Cherwell District Councillor updates (Councillor Simpson /Councillors Coton & Patrick)**

Due to both OCC and CDC Councillors being unable to attend, any updates provided at a later date via email will be circulated directly to Councillors.

DB discussed the option of submitting an application to the Oxfordshire Councillor Priority Fund on behalf of The Pantry, to fund the improvement to the shop entrance. The works would install a ramp which is required for health and safety reasons as a number of residents have fallen on the existing steps as well as improving accessibility and it would also improve the village space to the front. Further clarity from The Pantry on timelines and funding are required before the application can be considered. Councillors expressed concern that it would benefit a private business; it was however also noted that it is a community hub and provides a community service to a number of vulnerable residents.

**22.387.8 For Information: Works update (RSA/JM)**

RSA highlighted that the playground was inspected on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and the general appearance was reasonable; key points are detailed in the submitted works and playground report.

**22.387.9 Resolution To Approve** the quote from Bicester Tree Services for the recommended felling of trees located in the spinney affected by ash dieback for £1,000.00 + VAT (RSA/JM)

RSA highlighted the report provided to the Council regarding the required felling of 31 trees in the spinney which have been affected by ash-dieback.

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The Works Advisory Group has discussed the quotes received and are recommending appointing Bicester Tree Services for the project; this is based on their competitive quote and past experience of working in the village. The fees for this work will come from the Village Works/Spinney maintenance budget line.

JM confirmed the Bicester Tree Services quote was reasonable and offered to collect and dispose of the wood.

It was noted that the Council would inform the village that the spinney tree works were required (via the Village News) and the work date when known (via PC website/facebook/resident letter). Notices regarding the closure of the spinney children’s play area would also be required.

The resolution to approve the quote from Bicester Tree Services for the recommended felling of trees located in the spinney affected by ash dieback for £1,000.00 + VAT was proposed by RSA and seconded by SD. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** RSA to inform Bicester Tree Services that they have been selected to undertake the spinney tree felling work.

**Action:** Clerk/RSA to highlight to the village/Gallosbrook Way/Church Lane residents of the works to the spinney being undertaken when the date of works is known.

**22.387.10 Resolution To Approve** a spend of up to £500.00 + VAT for the repair to the edging of the North Lane pond to be undertaken by John Miller (RSA)

JM provided a verbal quote of £464 +VAT to fix the rotten wooden edge of the pond in the middle of North Lane comprising:

- Wooden edging/posts - £189 +VAT
- Labour (two men) and machinery - £275 +VAT

A quote for this work of £370+VAT (materials: £110 and labour: £260) had previously been obtained in 2021 and the increased price reflects the price rises of materials.

Once the initial fix has been completed further consideration can be had over installing a permeable edging along the corner of the pond to help prevent the edging collapsing.

The resolution to approve a spend of up to £500.00 + VAT for the repair to the edging of the North Lane pond to be undertaken by John Miller was proposed by RSA and seconded by SD. There was one abstention (JM), it was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** JM to progress with the works repairing the North Lane pond edge.

**Action:** Clerk to provide an update to North Lane pond email group.

JM highlighted that the work on trimming the willows and clearing the ditches on Mr Wilcox’s land will commence soon. The ditches on the other side of this will have also been cleared but it is currently unknown if work on the area owned by Lagan Homes will be undertaken and therefore if the work done will aid in water flow through the village. JM will keep the Council informed at future Council meetings.

The Council was also informed that Lagan Homes are investigating creating paddocks on the School Field by fencing in the footpaths.

**22.387.11 Resolution To Approve** Parish Council Q2 FY 2022/23 financial accounts (SD/DB)

The Parish Councils Q2 accounts for financial year 2022/23 were presented to the Council following their approval by the finance advisory group. A summary of expenditure in Q2 vs budget, bank reconciliation and income details were provided. SD confirmed the Council had received income from Cherwell District Council (half the annual precept payment), Ardley United FC rent and a donation from a resident towards the community bus scheme.

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The budget breakdown of expenditure per category highlighted that so far there had been savings vs budget on election costs and grass cutting, and over spend on donations due to the additional Jubilee donation to the village celebrations organised by the Village Hall.

SD highlighted the reserves currently held by the Parish Council which are allocated to specific projects, this includes a three month contingency for operating costs.

The resolution to approve the Parish Council Q2 FY 2022/23 financial accounts was proposed by SD and seconded by RSA. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to upload the Parish Council Q2 accounts (FY 2022/23) to the Parish Council website.

**Action:** Clerk to send the Q2 financial account information to RSA for inspection.

**22.387.12 Resolution To Approve** the Parish Council appointment of Fair Account as the Internal Auditor for the Parish Council for FY 2022-23 at a total cost of £350.00 (no VAT) as detailed in quotes and report (SD/DB)

The clerk highlighted the key points from the report provided to the Council regarding the appointment of a new internal auditor following the notification that our previous internal auditor, IAC Audit, can no longer undertake the work. The Finance Advisory Group has discussed the quotes received and recommended appointing Fair Account as the Internal Auditor for FY 2022-23 at an annual cost of £350 (no VAT). For this fee they would undertake a standard internal audit at one point during the year and at year end (potentially one remote, one in person visit). The agreed annual fee would also include an advisory service for general, financial matters.

The resolution to approve the Parish Council appointment of Fair Account as the Internal Auditor for the Parish Council for FY 2022-23 at a total cost of £350.00 (no VAT) as detailed in quotes and the report was proposed by DB and seconded by JM. It was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to inform Fair Account of the decision to appoint them as Internal Auditor for the PC for FY 2022/23.

**22.387.13 For Information:** Land Registry have completed the application for registration of the playing field and spinney land purchased by Weston on the Green Parish Council and Office Copy Entries of the Titles held by the Parish Council have been provided (DB)

It was noted that Land Registry have completed the application for registration of the playing field and spinney land purchased by Weston on the Green Parish Council and Office Copy Entries of the Titles held by the Parish Council have been provided and filed.

**22.387.14 Resolution: To Approve** the following invoices for payment (DB)

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

PC Ref	Payee	Purpose	Total (incl VAT)	Budget Line	Amount Remaining in 2022-23 Budget
299	Weston on the Green Village Hall	Village Hall hire for PC meetings (Oct-Dec 22)	£45.00	Meeting Costs/Hire of Village Hall	£120.00
300	Clerk (J Mullane)	Printer ink (Amazon)	£22.93	Sundries/Office administration costs	£185.39
301	Clerk (J Mullane)	Planter noticeboard signs x3 (Keep Britain Tidy)	£108.00	Sundries/Office administration costs	£162.46
302	123Connect Limited	Domain Name Renewal for 2 years	£127.20	IT/Website/domain hosting	£53.80*

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303	Spratt Endicott Limited	Legal fees associated with purchase of playing field & Spinney by PC	£2,123.00	Contingency	£2,520.86
304	Neil Mullane	Community Speedwatch hi-vis jackets x3	£80.19	Village Initiatives/Traffic calming initiatives	£9,322.00

\* Additional unbudgeted SSL certificate for PC website purchased.

It was noted that the solicitor costs (ref 303) for the purchase of the playing field and spinney were as quoted originally rather than as provided in a July 2021 email and highlighted in the October 2021 report to the Council. The Council were satisfied with the level of work undertaken by the solicitor and confirmed the approval of the invoice supplied.

The resolution to approve the invoices detailed in the table was proposed by DB 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.

**22.387.15 For Discussion:** Discuss and agree recommendations from the Planning Group (SD)

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

#### **Building Applications:**

#### **Decision Received – Permitted**

##### **22/01778/F – Robin’s Folly, Mill Lane**

Demolition of existing conservatory and replacement with sun room. Not yet posted as permitted on CDC website.

##### **22/01754/CLUP – Dormers, North Lane**

Addition of solar panel array on the rear roof pitch and flat roof. Certificate of Lawfulness.

##### **22/02571/F – Manor Farm Bungalow, B430 (adjacent to Seeney’s and retail area to east of B430)**

Erection of extension and porch - quite a large sitting/dining room extension to the kitchen on the back of the bungalow with raked ceiling and 2 rooflights on the southern pitch. Application permitted since report was circulated to Councillors.

#### **Decision Received – Refused**

None

#### **Applications Withdrawn**

##### **22/02075/F – Kelberg, Northampton Road**

Existing paddock adjacent to the current parking lot for large vehicles – change of use from agricultural to vehicle trailer parking area – presumably hard surfaced. OCC no objection. **Commented**

#### **Awaiting Decision**

##### **22/02733/F – Milestone Cottage, 3 North Lane**

Single storey ground floor extension and extensive revision of internal space and roof line. Replacement of rear garage with 3 bay structure. **Commented**

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## **New Applications**

### **22/03092/TEL – Shell Layby, A34**

Application by Openreach to install a fixed broadband communications line. Details are minimal but the line (probably fibre) will be ducted from an existing source on the southbound A34 and will be strung over the access slip road to the services via two 10m light poles. Awaiting more information on access to existing infrastructure.

### **22/03133/LB – Westfield Farm Cottage, North Lane**

Resubmission of **22/01292/LB**. Internal remodelling of kitchen and bathroom (ground floor) and retrospective application for installation of EV charge point on the garage wall. Resubmission includes use of limecrete for the floor substructure as advised and retention of the existing beam.

### **22/03175/F and 22/03176/LB – Westfield Farm Cottage, North Lane**

Resubmission of **22/01291/F**. Erection of a pergola canopy to the side of the garage, including solar panels on part of the canopy.

DB spoke regarding the three above applications.

### **22/03148/F – Old Police House, Northampton Road**

Resubmission of permitted development from 2015 (15/01102/F). Erection of a two storey side extension and a single storey rear extension following removal of existing conservatory and rear extension. This will provide a large kitchen/family room on the ground floor and two additional bedrooms on the first floor.

In the 2015 application, concerns over the size of the extension (60% increase in floor area from original; recommended is not more than 50%). However, Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 ‘fallback position’ overruled this – hence proposal was approved. PC did not comment on the 2015 proposal.

SD will investigate if the 2015 Permitted Development Order is still relevant.

### **22/03149/F – Old Byre, Northampton Road**

Erection of a three-bay oak frame open-sided garage with games room above. This is a building of significant scale sited on the property’s eastern boundary (backing on to the B430). This will make a significant visual impact from the road and the scale of it fronting Northampton Road was of concern. Applicant proposes it will provide some reduction in traffic noise (note shared access with Stutchfield).

## **Appeals**

None

## **Tree Works:**

### **22/02918/TPO – Weston Manor**

Replacement of old TPO (relevant for 22/02964/TCA) for two areas in Manor grounds near B430 boundary.

### **22/02964/TCA – Weston Manor**

Management of 25 trees in Manor grounds: reduce height and remove dead wood from 6 oaks in TPO area (see 22/02918/TPO) at front boundary (near pond); fell and grind 3 sycamore, 1 ash and couple of other tree types. All sycamore and ash recommended for removal.

### **22/02993/TCA – Barnacre, Northampton Road**

Management of trees in grounds adjacent to Old Byre and Stutchfield.

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A significant number of trees to be felled/reduced in height. Site is set back from the B430. There will be a visual impact from the road but there are trees left untouched and remaining trees will recover their structure over next growing year.

**22/03131/TCA – North View, North Lane**

Works to trees in Conservation Area. Proposal is to reduce the height of a large Yew sited on the western boundary with Peckers Corner. The tree is overbearing in the small garden and overhangs the boundary. Removal of one of two palm trees to add light to the garden.

**Action:** SD/Clerk to send appropriate planning replies to Cherwell District Council.

**22.387.16 For Information:** Traffic Advisory Group update (NM)

This item was deferred as Councillor Mullane was unable to be in attendance.

**22.387.17 For Information:** Transport Advisory Group update (Graham Barnett, GB)

GB provided an update on the community bus for the village. A meeting has been held with Community First Oxfordshire to discuss potential options. They have advised that it is not classified as a minibus as it has less than 8 seats and it can therefore be used as an adhoc service for the village rather than registering as a community bus scheme. There is no need to hold a D1 licence to drive it. We are waiting for further information from them.

Insurance options are being investigated.

It was agreed by the Council that the Parish Council would be the registered owner of the vehicle and the registered address for where the vehicle will be stored would be DB's. GB will proceed with registering the vehicle and then on receipt of the forms would tax it.

**Action:** GB to register the new community bus vehicle owner as the Parish Council and would then organise taxing it.

DB requested an extension of the meeting to all Councillors – this was agreed.

**22.387.18 For Information:** Technology Advisory Group update (James Henderson, JH)

JH provided the following update on the fibre to the premises project:

A summary of the last update in May 2022:

- The spine - Openreach were unsuccessful in convincing the DMCA to pay for the spine. They remain convinced the spine should be paid for by multiple (benefiting) projects.
- 'Community' scheme paused pending an alternative procurement program (aka lot-sale).
- Oxfordshire voucher top-up scheme - no new information given the 'community' scheme is on pause.
- We are currently reliant on either:
  - Participating in the alternative procurement programme (aka lot sales) and hope that Openreach is successful in bidding.
  - Benefitting from the alternative procurement plan laying a spine anyway (this is quite possible, but not guaranteed).
- In an update call with a small group in August 2022, Craig Bower (OCC Digital Infrastructure group manager) told us that Openreach had no interest in even tendering in the lot's sale. This is despite Martin Crutchley assuring me that Openreach not only intended to bid, but intended to win. Craig also informed us that Gigaclear were interesting in coming to the village.

A meeting was held with Gigaclear on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

- Gigaclear will be expanding their infrastructure from Kirtlington/Bletchington to Weston on the Green.
- This is entirely self-funded and independent of the lot-sale or Openreach.

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- There is no obligation to join on a Gigaclear contract. You can wait for your existing contract to run out first.
- Will use Openreach's ducts and poles as much as possible. There will be some trench digging and all works will require standard permits.
- Coverage: All of Weston on the Green. The Bletchington/Kirtlington residents who joined our Openreach project are already covered but they chose not to use Gigaclear.
- **Details of Residential Package:**
  - Service is symmetrical (up-speed is same as down-speed)
  - Speeds are 200, 300, 600, 900 Mbps. 200 Mbps is enough for most families: indicated cost from £17/month (competitive)
  - Phone bolt-on is also available. Consider calling-over-wifi (as it is probably free dependant on your mobile contract)
  - Contracts are 18 months
- **Includes:**
  - Free Connection for 95% of installations - each resident would be made aware if/when they show interest. Example of 5% is if a long trench would need to be dug just for that premises.
  - Fibre router (made by Linksys)
  - 4hr backup facility - *this is being confirmed*. Residents advised to check that a battery-backup is included in the package
  - Longer battery backup for the vulnerable - assessed when a premises applies
  - Entry point to the premises can be set (subject to reason) for free. Use this to ensure the entry point is near a power supply for the router and the battery backup.
- One free "community hub" (Business Ultra 900Mbps) - we can choose location, but potentially at the Village Hall. Church may get free service too as part of the hub.
- **Timing:** work could begin from January 2023, premises could be connected as soon as April 2023.
- **Community Engagement:** Gigaclear want to hold some community events in the Village Hall (afternoon and evening), probably early in the new year (2023).
- **Gigaclear will have a monopoly on full-fibre:**
  - As long as Openreach does not implement anything.
  - The offer is currently very competitive but Gigaclear's prices are not guaranteed long term.
- Fibre does not guarantee coverage *within* the home – residents will need to consider their own WIFI coverage.
- Please note this is not an endorsement for Gigaclear by either James Henderson or the Parish Council.
- Gigaclear have informed the Parish Council that they will be notified of all work timings and will liaise directly with residents regarding the project in the village at all times.

**22.387.19 For Information:** Cherwell Draft Local Plan update (SD)

Due to time constraints this item was deferred. It will be added to the December Parish Council meeting agenda.

**Action:** Clerk to add Cherwell Draft Local Plan update to the December 2022 PC agenda.

**22.387.20 For Information:** Submitted report from Bicester Police Rural Community Resilience Group meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and note of next Kidlington & District Community Forum hybrid meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 (Bob Hessian/DB)

Due to time constraints the report will be circulated to Councillors with the draft minutes for information.

**Action:** Clerk to circulate report on Bicester Police Rural Community Resilience Group to Councillors.

**22.387.21 Next Parish Council Meeting Date:** Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022, 7.30pm (DB)

**Meeting Closed:** 22.00

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