

MINUTES

For the meeting of Parish Council, held in Village Hall on Wednesday 2nd August 2023

Meeting Number 23.399

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

Public Participation

There was nothing to note in this section.

23.399.1 To Receive: Apologies for non-attendance

Councillors Bohm (DB), Davis (SD), Lanham (BL) and Rowan (TR) were all present.

Councillors Miller and Maxton sent their apologies which were accepted. Councillor Rosser's long term absence was approved at 1st February 2023 Parish Council meeting.

Councillor Nedelcu (Cherwell District Council) was in attendance. Councillor Nigel Simpson (Oxfordshire County Council) sent his apologies.

9 members of the public were in attendance, including 5 residents from the new Southfield development.

23.399.2 To Receive: Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest relating to this meeting.

DB recused herself on item 8 relating to the discussion on a Gigaclear community hub.

23.399.3 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5th July 2023 (DB)

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5th July 2023 were discussed with no changes required.

The resolution to approve the minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 5th July 2023 was proposed 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.

23.399.4 For Information: Chairs Comment (DB)

DB highlighted the good news that the Ben Jonson is open and had been mentioned in the Bicester Advertiser. There has been quite a bit of communication with villagers over a range of issues recently. Some issues have been sorted quickly by sharing information and others raise grave concerns. This is exactly the type of Parish Council we have been working hard to achieve - communicative and supportive.

A food bank drive was held again in early July and when the donations were taken to the Bicester Food Bank it was noticed that the shelves were very empty. One of the volunteers said they had the lowest amount of food on shelves in twenty years – there has been such a huge upswing in demand. News is that they will take fresh food now, if anyone has lots of vegetables/fruit they can't use please pass them DB who will then drop off.

One of Weston's most knowledgeable people on all matters to do with the village, Paula Hessian, took our two most recent councillors on a history walk of the centre of the village. DB passed on the Council's thanks, she was amazing and left us wanting more!

DB ended by thanking the clerk, Jane Mullane, for all the hard work she undertakes as part of the first Local Council Clerk Week which took place from 10 – 14 July 2023.

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23.399.5 For Information: Clerk report (Clerk)

The clerks report to the Council was noted which confirmed the usual clerk salary payments from the Parish Council bank account. The Council also received payment from Ardley United Football Club (£250.00) for the use of the playing field for the 2023-24 football season.

The clerk met the highways inspector recently and discussed the main highway issues in the parish including the overgrown verge/moss/cobblestones on Westlands Avenue, the uneven flyover over A34 towards Wendlebury and drains on B430 and Church Lane . He will return and mark up additional potholes at a later date.

Graham Barnett has successfully applied for a transport grant of £700.00 from Oxfordshire County Council/Community First to be utilised for the community van and therefore the parish has transport available should Ukrainian families require to use it.

DB commented that unfortunately Councillor Maxton has resigned from the Parish Council for personal reasons, the Council thanked him for his support and wished him well.

23.399.6 For Information: Oxfordshire County & Cherwell District Councillor updates (Councillor Simpson /Councillors Coton & Nedelcu)

Cherwell District Council: Councillor Nedelcu highlighted the following items in his monthly update:

- highlighted his concern over the Southfield development and he will discuss the matter with CDC officers
- he is here to support the parish and feels there is already good communication already with the Parish Council
- he confirmed that the CDC planning committee rejected planning application 23/00173/OUT comprising 147 homes in Chesterton.

There was no update this month from OCC.

23.399.7 For Information: Update on oak tree footpath and Schoolfield (Roger Evans)

Roger Evans provided a report for the council on two issues:

Oak Tree Footpath:

Demolition of the elevated footpath has been on hold for almost three months while a desktop exercise to write a method statement for the works is prepared and agreed by all parties. Once it has been signed-off by OCC it will need to be submitted to CDC as a planning application to be determined following an eight-week public consultation period.

The tree is in poor health and we have been advised that oaks do not fare well with heavy loads over their roots. The Parish Council does not think it serves the public interest - nor the interest of the tree - to have such a lengthy delay and have therefore appealed to our District and County Councillors to see if they can encourage officers from both councils to work together in agreeing the method statement without further delay.

DB agreed to email key information on the oak tree footpath to Councillor Nedelcu who will follow up with CDC.

School Field:

Given the rumours circulating about a possible sale of the School Field and following the last meeting, the Parish Council has written to Lagan Homes expressing an interest in acquiring the field on behalf of the village given the field’s landscape and social significance. Lagan Homes stated that their plan was now to subdivide the field into paddocks to be let and that they would keep the planning context under review. The School Field group are due to meet next week.

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23.399.8 For Discussion: Parish community hub location for Gigaclear project (SD)

As part of the Gigaclear fibre to the premises project, Gigaclear will provide free access to a community hub.

Eric Bohm, as warden and treasurer of St Marys church, presented a case for the church to receive the free hub:

- currently the church has no access to the internet and no 5G signal
- demographics of the congregation has changed dramatically since covid and there is a need to attract a younger congregation which requires internet access
- live streaming of services including funerals/weddings/Christenings which would be beneficial especially for families who have emigrated or are unable to attend
- looking to install a loud speaker system and electronic props
- moving towards a cashless society and an internet connection would support the collection
- increased donations from people visiting the graveyard or walking and stopping for a coffee

The Councillors held a discussion over the potential location. It was noted that the Village Hall had made another arrangement with Open Reach so would not require this upgrade. The shop was also discussed as a location but this was considered difficult as it would be benefitting a commercial business.

It was proposed that the church should be selected as the community hub provided by Gigaclear, all councillors supported this (DB declined to comment on this item).

Action: Gigaclear to be notified of the selection of St Marys church as the community hub.

23.399.9 For Information: Playing field and playground update (BL)

BL highlighted that he has undertaken a visual inspection of the playground and commented there was no obvious deterioration. The Rospa annual inspection is due to be undertaken this month.

Ardley FC are due to mark the pitch out on the playing field for the start of the season towards the end of August. BL will arrange to meet them at the beginning of September to discuss the season ahead and any issues.

BL has spoken to Mark East and a further volunteer would be ideal to support with the grass cutting.

Following the July Parish Council meeting Councillors SD, JM and TR met at the playing field on 23rd July (BL was on holiday) to discuss management of current children's allotment. The discussion held reflected similar discussions between BL and JM previously, that the current location appears to be best option, potentially with an extended area. Discussions were held around making the plot sufficiently large enough so that we may be able to offer villagers small allotment plots in addition to the children's area, which may help with management and maintaining interest in the site. SD provided a report summarising discussions. It requires information regarding level of interest in this project and then as well as progressing fencing would need to consider expenditure on provision of water supply to the site.

It was considered that a wider evaluation of the whole area including the playground, spinney and playing field should be undertaken before any development works are undertaken.

BL has also been investigating possible grant options for the area including grants from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE).

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23.399.10 For Discussion: Discuss & agree recommendations from Planning Group on planning applications (SD)

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

Building Applications

Decisions Received – Permitted:

23/01351/LB – Westfield Farm Cottage, North Lane

23/00725/F – Kemsley Barn (smaller scale, single storey building)

23/00270/DISC – Manor Hotel, B340.

Discharge of Conditions 4 (flooring method statement), 5 service routes method statement), 7 (radiators & flues), 8 (internal joinery), 9 (rooflight details) and 10 (insulation) of 22/01553/LB. Issues relating to Condition 4 (underfloor heating and finish)

23/01455/DISC – Kemsley Farm

Discharge of condition – drainage scheme

Decisions Received – Refused:

None

Awaiting Decision:

23/00994/F – Family Farm, A34 South

Installation of a new Outdoor Swimming Pool (10m x 3m), Associated hard soft landscaping and conversion of existing Outbuilding into a Swimming Pool Plant Building **Commented**

22/03709/F - Starbucks A34

Addition of a drive-through facility and parking changes

The proposal is for the addition of a small serving window with flat roof overhead on the north=west face of the existing building and rerouting traffic in and out of the site. Highways wish to delay decision pending further assessment of traffic safety impact.

Submitted Good Neighbour Guide – includes community volunteer day for employees (?litter picking on A34?) **Commented**

Councillor Nedelcu confirmed that there was now no objection from OCC highways over the Starbucks application.

New Applications:

23/01788/F – New Sarum, Northampton Road

Formation of a two storey side extension to accommodate an annexe, and a single storey extension across the rear of the property and the creation of a dropped kerb to the existing vehicular access.

Appeals:

None

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Tree Works**Pending:****22/02993/TCA – Barnacre**, Northampton Road

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

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.

Commented**22/03631/TCA – Manor Cottage**

Removal of ash on the front boundary and oak on north boundary.

Images show significant damage to front stone wall from ash seedlings and possibly ivy. The wall will need repair.

Permitted:

None recorded

New Tree Applications:

None

Application submitted after planning report had been written:

23/01936/LB - Manor Hotel - new double glazed, frosted glass windows in a stable building to open out into cellar (boarded up currently).

Additional Items**Planning application 21/02930/M106 -Southfield Development**

Application to modify the S106 Deed of Agreement relevant to 13/01796/OUT

Note clause 4 states that the deed is conditional on the implementation of the permitted development and only comes into force on completion.

East West Railway update – progress being made towards Bletchley, at point of installing two new platforms at Bletchley to join with north-south rail line. Future links could be considered potentially leaving line towards Aylesbury and Milton Keynes. It was noted that a flyover/under at the Bicester crossing is still being discussed.

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

23.399.11 For Information: Updates on Sainthill Copse, Stoneyfield (North Lane) & Southfield development (DB)

DB presented items covering the Southfield and Stoneyfield developments and Sainthill Copse.

Southfield Development:

DB highlighted concern over the application to sign off the Southfield development. DB and SD held a meeting with some existing Southfield home owners who shared their experiences of the development and who have encountered an enormous amount of defects with their houses including structural issues.

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DB has also received a copy of a surveyors report from a prospective buyer of a property at the Southfields development which indicated over 200 snagging issues including a faulty garage roof.

DB has since contacted the Development Management and Enforcement teams at CDC to highlight the concerns. CDC has replied to say they are deeply concerned over the remarks and will respond when they have investigated the issue further alongside the Building Control Manager.

Residents in attendance at the meeting outlined their concerns in two key areas:

- 1. Issues with the houses individually
- 2. Issues with the development in general

The developer/administrator is now not communicating or working anymore. Legal advice has been sought but the difficulty lies in the fact there is no one to sue (not the developer as in administration or the builder as not a direct contact).

There is therefore concern over signing off the development when there are so many unsolved issues.

Stoneyfield (North Lane):

Further to previous discussions a developer has now provided a proposal plan for the site to accommodate seven houses but with the access and egress off North Lane, adjacent to the sunken house rather than via the Southfield development. DB wished to alert councillors that a planning application potentially may be submitted.

The importance of the Neighbourhood Plan going forwards was highlighted as key to shape how the village develops.

Sainthill Copse:

The salvage business off Northampton Road was highlighted as not having the appropriate business permits towards the end of 2022 with further concerns highlighted over contamination from the site at the May 2023 Parish Council meeting.

DB has since written to CDC to enquire over permits for the business, CDC confirmed that there is no record of an application to run a business from the site and the issue was to be raised with OCC, who would then keep the Council informed.

The business has reportedly now ceased trading from the site but there are still concerns over continued contamination of the site. DB will update the Council when additional information becomes available.

23.399.12 Resolution: To Approve Parish Council financial accounts covering Q1 2023-2024 (TR)

TR presented the Parish Council Q1 accounts for financial year 2023/24 following their approval by the finance advisory group. A summary of expenditure in Q1 vs budget, bank reconciliation and income details were provided. Over spend in budget categories was highlighted but overall expenditure was as anticipated.

The resolution to approve the Parish Council accounts for Q1 FY 2023-24 was proposed by TR and seconded by BL. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to upload the Parish Council Q1 accounts (FY 2023/24) to the Parish Council website.

23.399.13 Resolution: To Approve Councillor Maxton to undertake quarterly independent financial checks of Parish Council accounting systems from Q2 2023 until advised otherwise (DB/SD)

Due to Councillor Maxton’s resignation this item will be reconsidered.

Action: Clerk to add independent financial checks to a future agenda.

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23.399.14 Resolution: To Approve the following invoices for payment (DB/SD)

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

PC Ref	Payee	Purpose	Total (incl VAT)	Budget Line	Amount Remaining in 2023-24 Budget
360^	OALC	Training - Finance for Councillors (7/9/23)	£36.00	Staff Costs/Clerk & Councillors Training	£400.00
362*	Oxford Edens	Grass cutting 03/07/23 (playground, stocks/Ben Jonson)	£250.80	Village Works/Village Contractor Grass Cutting	£2,674.00
363	Clerk (J Mullane)	RAC annual membership (2023-24) for community van	£32.00	Village Initiatives /Community Bus Scheme	£1,896.43
364	Clerk (J Mullane)	Key cutting for playing field (Timpson)	£33.50	Village Works/Playing field maintenance	£300.00
365	Clerk (J Mullane)	Bin for playing field (Glasdon)	£204.19	Village Works/Playing field maintenance	£266.50
366	Oxford Edens	Grass cutting 19/07/23 (playground, stocks/Ben Jonson)	£250.80	Village Works/Village Contractor Grass Cutting	£2,423.20

It was noted that invoice ref 362 to Oxford Edens had already been paid to avoid late payment fees. It was also noted that an error had been made on ref 360: approval was received at 5th July 2023 Parish Council meeting for £30.00 (amount excluding VAT), the actual amount to be paid including VAT was £36.00.

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

23.399.15 For Information: Community van analysis of use and cost (TR)

TR provided an overview of usage and costs for the community van with estimations for the remainder of the year. There is currently no charge for using the van. The current estimated cost/mile of the community van is £0.56.

The van had been used regularly and is certainly an asset for the community, many of the trips undertaken are to hospital/doctor appointments. TR noted that credit should be given to the volunteers as it is a large commitment to undertake. A plea for additional volunteer drivers has been placed in the next village news edition.

A discussion will be held by the finance advisory group regarding the ongoing funding of the community van ahead of budget setting for next year.

Action: Finance advisory group to discuss the ongoing funding of the community van.

23.399.16 Next Parish Council Meeting Date: 6th September 2023, 7.30pm (DB)

Meeting Closed: 21.28

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