

# MINUTES

For the meeting of Parish Council, held in Village Hall on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Meeting Number 24.405

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

## Public Participation

A resident commented that the issues of concern discussed at the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 Parish Council meeting regarding a potential development at Stoneyfield (off North Lane) were not minuted in full and they were concerned this could be provided as evidence of public consultation should an application be submitted. The resident asked Councillors if these issues could be included in the minutes before approval.

Councillors commented that the highlighted issues had also been raised with developers at a previous meeting and that it was understood there would be a wider meeting to discuss proposals where further discussion consultation would be available. It was agreed that a summary note would be included to cover off the main areas of concern highlighted to the developer and the approval of the January minutes would be deferred to the March Parish Council meeting.

**Action: Summary note on Stoneyfield areas of concern to be added to January 2024 draft minutes.**

A resident also highlighted an issue of dog walkers not picking up dog waste in the south-east corner of the schoolfield and enquired if a sign could be placed to advise about not picking up dog waste. The Council agreed this was a sensible suggestion and would be actioned.

**Action: Dog litter advice notice to be placed at SE corner of the schoolfield.**

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

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

Councillor Nigel Simpson (Oxfordshire County Council) and Councillor Nedelcu (Cherwell District Council) were also in attendance.

5 members of the public were in attendance.

### 24.405.2 To Receive: Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

### 24.405.3 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (DB)

The approval of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 was deferred until 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 Parish Council meeting. A summary note on the Stoneyfield site will be added to take account of public concerns over any potential scheme.

**Action: Clerk to add approval of 9<sup>th</sup> January PC meeting minutes to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 PC meeting agenda.**

Parish Council Meeting Minutes: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024

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

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

DB commented that we entered 2024 feeling rather despondent about the progress of some of our projects:

- B430 speed limit
- B430 radar speed sign and potential S106 money from Southfield
- Oak tree built up path removal
- OCC Environment department giving us a report on Sainthill Copse
- CDC planning enforcement showing signs of activity at Southfield regarding waste discharge, drainage
- CDC planning department respecting the conventions around a Conservation Zone re: tree felling, and verges being turned into car parks (on North Lane)
- CDC planning department respecting the Neighbourhood Plan in its decisions.

However, things are progressing in February and there has been some movement to be discussed.

Council members will have recently received an update on the East/West rail project. Some progress has been made and DB will continue to push the issue of an adequate bus service from villages to the rail station.

DB also mentioned that there is a vacancy at the Village News for a new finance and advertising volunteer following the retirement of Colin Rosser. DB requested people to help think of villagers to approach who might fit the brief.

The Village Hall welcome drinks event to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024 will also be an opportunity for the Parish Council to look for new councillors.

DB ended by thanking fellow councillors saying they deserve a great deal of praise for their work on behalf of the village over the past month.

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

The clerks report to the Council was noted which confirmed the standard clerk salary payments from the Parish Council bank account.

The clerk confirmed that OCC Highways had patched up the eroded Bletchingdon Road verge with soil and have placed a concrete channel directly into the stream where the verge had eroded close to the road. An additional drainage gully further down the road has also been cut into the ditch to aid quicker runoff. OCC have also cut back some of the vegetation along Bletchingdon Road.

Information on ongoing drainage issues is still awaited.

It was agreed to hold the annual spring clean event on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

**Action: Clerk to advertise annual 2024 village spring clean event.**

**24.405.6 For Information: Update on oak tree footpath (Roger Evans, RE)**

RE provided an update on the oak tree footpath. OCC have now appointed an arboriculturalist to prepare the Method Statement for the demolition of the elevated concrete path. The appointment is via the County’s contractor, Milestone, who will undertake the work. CDC requested in March 2023 that the Method Statement be submitted for approval as a planning application. DB and RE met with OCC, Milestone and the arboriculturalist earlier this month and provided documents to the arboriculturalist, including a photographic record of the construction of the concrete path as there are no construction drawings available. Demolition will be done by hand and severed roots inspected before topsoiling.

<i>Parish Council Meeting Minutes: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024</i>	
Minutes Approved: .....	Dated.....

**24.405.7 For Information:** Interim internal auditor feedback report covering April-December 2023 (DB/Clerk)

The clerk highlighted the key points from the internal auditors interim report which covered the period April-December 2023.

The overall internal control procedures are adequate to meet the needs of the AGAR Practitioner's Guide 2023 and the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015. A series of test checks on the Council's financial records, vouchers, documents, minutes, policies, insurance and assets register were performed to ascertain efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's systems.

Recommendations and advice provided will be considered by the Finance Advisory Group. The end of year internal audit is booked for 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**24.405.8 Resolution To Approve** Parish Council financial accounts covering Q3 2023-2024 (TR)

TR presented the Parish Council Q3 accounts for financial year 2023/24 following their approval by the finance advisory group. A summary of expenditure in Q3 vs budget, bank reconciliation and income details were provided. It was noted that the main expenditure for the Council includes clerk salary, playing field loan, dog bin emptying, grass cutting and playing field/playground works.

TR has analysed the budget quarterly and commented that money is being spent wisely, with overspending limited to only a few budget lines (due to increase in costs or additional items) and Q3 expenditure was less than total income up to end Q3. There are some additional items of expenditure to be processed in Q4.

The resolution to approve the Parish Council accounts for Q3 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 Q3 accounts (FY 2023/24) to the Parish Council website.

**24.405.9 Resolution To Approve** parishioner Henry Donne as independent reviewer of Parish Council accounts for FY 2023-2024 (DB)

As part of its internal financial control the Parish Council appoints an independent reviewer of its financial accounts. DB proposed that parishioner Henry Donne should be appointed for FY 2023-2024, he previously held the position of Responsible Financial Officer for the Council.

The resolution to approve parishioner Henry Donne as an independent reviewer of the Parish Council accounts for FY 2023-2024 was proposed by DB and seconded by SD. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to send 2023-24 financial account information to Henry Donne for inspection.

**24.405.10 For Discussion:** Review of community van usage, costs and ongoing funding (TR)

TR provided a review of community van usage and reflected on the added value all the trips that have been undertaken by volunteer drivers. The Council were grateful to those volunteers for giving up their time to support the initiative.

The Council considered the van a worthy asset for the community but highlighted the concern that it will become increasingly costly. The option of asking for voluntary contributions to help with fuel was discussed between the Council and volunteer drivers of the van.

The community van serves an important need in the village and is used widely for hospital visits, therefore the drivers and Council were reluctant to ask those for donations and would rather seek other means of fundraising.

*Parish Council Meeting Minutes: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024*

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

Councillor Simpson indicated he would be happy to consider an application to the OCC Councillor Priority Fund for funding the community van. A member of the parish also offered to donate £500.00.

It was noted that the MOT was free in 2023 thanks to the generosity of Pete Thirtle Vehicle Services in Weston on the Green.

It was also suggested that sponsorship from local businesses may be an option.

The scheme will be promoted at the Village Hall community drinks event in April.

**Action:** Clerk to ensure Graham Barnetts number is the website contact for the community van and in village news.

**Action:** Clerk to draft an application to the OCC Councillor Priority Fund regarding funding the community van.

**Resolution To Approve** renewal of community van insurance for 8 February 2024 – 7 February 2025 up to a total cost of £1,200.00 following review of provided quotes (TR)

The insurance quotes obtained for the community van for 2024-25 were discussed by the Council. The Council considered the QBE quote (via Endsleigh Insurance) to be the most suitable option. It was agreed that legal cover was to be included and the voluntary excess was to be increased to £250. It was noted that any drivers over 70 would be required to be named on the policy.

The resolution to approve the renewal of the community van insurance with QBE (via broker Endsleigh Insurance) for 8 February 2024 – 7 February 2025 up to a total cost of £1,200.00 was proposed by DB and seconded by TR. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to inform insurance brokers of decision over insurance of community van and organise the new insurance cover.

**Resolution To Approve** renewal of DVLA vehicle tax for community van at £290.00 (TR)

The resolution to approve the renewal of DVLA vehicle tax for community van at £290.00 was proposed by TR and seconded by BL. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Continued use of the community van for 2025 to be discussed in November/December ahead of key renewals and budget time.

**24.405.11 For Information:** Playing field & playground update plus updated playground equipment quote (BL)

BL provided an update to the Council on the playing field and playground:

- Brief visual inspection of playground: reported no obvious deterioration aside from that previously referenced.
- The order has been placed with Playdale for the new swing set and maintenance works. The new cost for the swing replacement, following removal of certain items, was £8,403.06 and the updated quote has been circulated to the Council.
- The difference in footprints of the swings meant an additional cost was raised with the Parish Council for a wet pour surface (£589.00), BL discussed the removal of this with Playdale and they agreed to remove the cost.
- There is currently no date for installation (estimated to be around 8-9 weeks), BL will circulate when received and TR will support BL with logistics.
- Playdale require an electrical underground plan ahead of installation.

<i>Parish Council Meeting Minutes: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024</i>	
Minutes Approved: .....	Dated.....

- BL confirmed that the ROSPA inspection of the new equipment can be done by Playsafety, who provide the annual inspection and this will be organised and quote amended nearer the installation time.
- Ardley FC wish to use the playing field for an additional team until the end of the season in May 2024. This is to be discussed further with Ardley and a discussion over the use of the field for next season will also be undertaken.

**Action:** Clerk/BL to investigate obtaining an electrical underground plan on the playing field.

**Action:** BL/TR to inform residents of planned playground works when installation date received.

**Action:** BL to contact Ardley FC to discuss options and requirements for next season.

**24.405.12 Resolution To Approve** spend of up to £450.00+VAT to appoint contractor to undertake audit of trees under Parish Council responsibility (DB/BL)

The Parish Council is required to audit trees under their ownership in the parish, this includes the spinney, the stocks and pond areas.

The resolution to approve the spend of up to £450.00+VAT to appoint a contractor to undertake audit of trees under Parish Council responsibility was proposed by BL and seconded by JM. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to inform contractor of appointment to undertake parish tree audit.

**24.405.13 For Discussion:** Discuss recommendations from the Planning Group on planning applications (SD)

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

### **Building Applications**

#### **Decisions Received – Permitted:**

**23/03319/ADV - Starbucks, A34 - Signage**

**23/03437/F – Williams Cottage, North Lane - Variation of Condition 2 (plans)**

**23/03435/DISC - Williams Cottage, North Lane - Discharge of Condition 3 (doors & windows)**

**23/03436/DISC - Williams Cottage, North Lane - Discharge of Condition 3 (doors & windows)**

**23/03411/LB – Williams Cottage, North Lane - Internal and external alterations**

**23/03263/LB – The Manor, Northampton Road - Repairs to existing stone tile roof**

**23/03363/DISC – Kelberg, Northampton Road - Discharge of Conditions 4 (external lighting), 6 (Arboricultural Method Statement) and 8 (biodiversity enhancement scheme)**

**23/0329/DISC – Starbucks, A34 – Discharge of Condition 6 (SuDs)**

**23/03126/F – Weston Grounds Farm – change of use to caravan site**

**23/01788/F – New Sarum, Northampton Road – Extension and kerb access**

*Parish Council Meeting Minutes: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024*

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

**Decisions Received – Refused:****23/03300/F – Fir Tree Farm, Northampton Road**

Erection of new dry wood store to serve existing commercial scale wood burner located in adjacent building across yard/access road.

**Awaiting Decision:****23/03531/F – Dower House, Church Lane**

Variation of Condition 2 (plans) of 23/00154/F - Minor revisions to design

**23/03511/DISC – Starbucks, Part of A34**

Discharge of Condition 3 (specification details – turning area/parking spaces) of 22/03709/F)

**23/03383/F – 2 Church Close (discussed Dec 23)**

Two storey side and rear extensions (re-submission of 23/01872/F)

**New Applications:**

**24/00028/F – 20 Westlands Avenue** – proposed loft extension/conversion and garage conversion with associated internal and external works (re-submission of 23/02422/F).

**24/00122/F – 22 Milestone Lane** – change of use from agricultural land to residential garden.

The application proposes to incorporate a further 5m of land on the northern boundary of the development site, which will render the Southfield development northern boundary irregular at the point which is adjacent to Stoneyfield. The Parish Council has made it clear in its Neighbourhood Plan that there should be no further encroachment of residential development to the north of the Southfield site and this proposal would provide a precedent for further incursions. The proposal is to object to this application.

**Appeals:**

None

**Tree Applications**

**24/00161/TPO – Dower House** – Walnut – reduce canopy by 2m

**24/00146/TCA – The Warren, Northampton Road** – Mature walnut – reduce crown

**24/00140/TCA – Williams Cottage, North Lane** – Horse Chestnut – remove. Application subsequently withdrawn. This tree was felled on 7<sup>th</sup> February. The Parish Council previously stopped work on the felling of this tree and highlighted concern over a lack of a planning application. CDC advised that permission was inherent within permission for work on the cottage. However, it was felt that no-one at CDC questioned the report from the consultant of the owner or visited the site given it was in the curtilage of a listed building, in the conservation area and the tree was aged over 80 years.

DB has written to Nathaniel Stock, CDC head of planning to request a meeting to discuss the matter further.

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

SD also highlighted a CDC consultation seeking views on the updated Planning Application Validation Checklist. The validation checklist and appendices are used to identify which plans and documents are required to be submitted with various planning applications. The consultation closes on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

*Parish Council Meeting Minutes: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024*

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

**24.405.14 For Information:** update on Southfield development (DB)

DB highlighted the update note provided to Councillors regarding the Southfield development and thanked Councillor Nedelcu for his ongoing support with CDC enforcement. A residents meeting was held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 where they were planning on discussing another complaint to the developer about the general issues around the communal areas of the development, and a collective approach to try and get the snagging issues addressed.

**24.405.15 Resolution: To Approve** the following invoices for payment (SD)

SD 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
389	Fair Account	Provision of interim audit service (04/23 to 12/23)	£285.00	Insurance & Auditing/Audit Fees	£260.00
390	Clerk (J Mullane)	Community bus vehicle road tax (DVLA)	£290.00	Village Initiatives/Community Bus Scheme	£1,724.28
391	Community First Oxfordshire	Membership subscription 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025	£55.00	Subscriptions/Community First Oxfordshire	£55.00
392	Eric Bohm	Community van fuel	£87.74	Village Initiatives/Community Bus Scheme	£1,434.28

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

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

Councillor Simpson provided a February report which has been circulated to the Council and placed on the Council website.

DB thanked Councillor Simpson for his support on how to move forward on the B430 speed application following the departure of OCC's Dave Catling and for investigating the possibility of the Parish Council receiving some s106 money to go towards a new speed radar device on B430.

**24.405.17 Next Parish Council Meeting Date:** Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 7.30pm (DB)

**Meeting Closed: 21.47**

*Parish Council Meeting Minutes: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024*

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