

# MINUTES

For the meeting of Parish Council, held on Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Meeting Number 22.379

## Public Participation.

There were no comments from the public.

### 22.379.1 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Davis (SD), Stafford Allen (RSA), Rosser (CR) and Donne (HD) were all present. Councillor Davis chaired the meeting from the Village Hall.

Councillors Bohm, Whitfield and Miller attended the meeting via Zoom but as such were not entitled to vote on council resolutions.

Councillor Mullane sent his apologies which were accepted.

Councillor Nigel Simpson from Oxfordshire County Council was also in attendance via zoom along with James Henderson and Roger Evans, the latter two for the initial part of the meeting. Councillor David Hughes from Cherwell District Council joined in person for the latter part of the meeting.

Two members of the public were in attendance.

### 22.379.2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest relevant to this meeting.

### 22.379.3 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 were discussed with no changes required.

The resolution to approve the minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 were then proposed by SD 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.

### 22.379.4 For Information: Chairs Comment

DB provided a chairs comment via zoom. She expressed the Council's gratitude to Councillors Ruth Whitfield and Henry Donne for their service to the Parish Council and by extension to the village of Weston on the Green.

Ruth Whitfield has served as a councillor for four years. She stepped into the Clerk role in a difficult situation and from that point onwards Ruth has worked tirelessly to help the Parish Council meet its formal regulatory obligations including policies and setting the guidelines for our structure. Ruth has since been Chair of the Finance Group and our budgetary procedures were enhanced with the help of the team around her. Ruth has a clear eye for detail and as a result has been able to see the finer detail of many issues.

Henry Donne has served as a councillor for seven years and has been the bedrock of our understanding of the planning process and of planning regulations. The inciteful and articulate objections that he has written to a number of problematic planning applications have resulted in the views of this Parish Council being respected by Cherwell

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District Council. Henry has also served as our Responsible Financial Officer and has a clear eye with issues around budget and financial planning.

DB then welcomed John Miller and Colin Rosser formally onto the Council.

DB has had a meeting of representatives from the Village Hall and St. Mary’s Church regarding the Platinum Jubilee celebrations and it is hoping that both a church service and the official opening of the Jubilee Playing Field, Playground and Spinney will also take place along-side the many wonderful events organised by the Village Hall.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and the suggested theme is volunteers to celebrate the people in the village who volunteer already and to provide an opportunity for new ones. Items from the Welcome Back Fund are also starting to be delivered and the work will continue getting the items in place in the village.

DB mentioned that we have had a reply from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) regarding the letter sent from a group of parish council chairs. The email has been forwarded to officers at OCC and we have been advised to develop a good relationship with OCC Councillors who can facilitate a solution to our concerns.

Finally, DB commented that Neighbourhood Watch week is 30<sup>th</sup> May to 5<sup>th</sup> June and the month of community is June, she indicated that a report on how this will be noted in our community would be beneficial.

SD also reiterated the thanks of Councillors in the Village Hall to RW and HD.

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

The clerks report to the Council was noted which confirmed the payments from the Parish Council bank account and the dates around the May 2022 elections for Parish Councillors.

The Council also thanked all the volunteers who attended the litter pick in March where 20 bags of litter and many bulky items were collected.

**22.379.6 For Information: Oak Tree footpath update (Roger Evans. RE)**

RE provided an update on the latest situation with the oak tree footpath at the top of North Lane.

1. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has now withdrawn its objection to our alternative path.
2. The s278 works (County Highways adoption) have not yet been signed off and OCC has issued a certificate of completion on the condition that the developer:
  - (i) installs the no-dig footpath behind the tree (planning ref: 21/00526/F) and
  - (ii) removes the elevated concrete footpath and reinstates the verge to its previous condition i.e. verge.
3. Hayden Homes planning consent requires that a footpath connection to the village *which is approved by OCC Highways* be provided under a S106 Agreement with Cherwell District Council (CDC). If County Highways are not accepting the elevated section of the path for s278 Adoption as it is not fit for purpose, then it cannot be approved as meeting Cherwell’s S106 obligation. We have drawn this to the attention of CDC and OCC.
4. CDC Development Management did not appreciate that there was a specific off-site planning condition covering work around the oak tree. This was discussed with OCC last Friday and CDC Planning has passed the matter to the CDC legal team together with a copy of our arborist’s report (by Sylva Consultancy).
5. We have asked CDC to make clear to Hayden Homes Administrator that, subject to their legal team’s review, the developer:

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- is in breach of Planning permission (Condition 2 of the Reserved Matters Decision Notice)
- has failed to comply with S106 requirement to provide a footpath to the village which is fit for purpose.

6. CDC Planning also note that the s278 agreement states that the developer covenants:

- (1) to execute the Works entirely at its own expense
- (2) not to cause or permit the occupation of any dwelling before the Works have been completed and
- (3) to complete the Works not later than 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021, which it appears not to have been adhered to.

7. The planning application submitted by OCC on behalf of Hayden Homes/Administrator to lift the crown to provide headroom above the elevated path will go to full planning committee on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Our arborist has commented that as much light foliage as possible should be retained so as not to stress the tree further given the damage caused by the construction of the elevated path. We have asked OCC to withdraw the application given the progress being made all round to implement the alternative path.

RE is booked to speak at the CDC planning committee meeting on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April on the oak tree pruning application.

Councillors highlighted that it appears people have occupied the new housing, apparently the developers would have had to inform the local authority if this was the case.

A query was raised whether there was confidence that the new footpath and demolition of the existing one would be undertaken correctly. RE commented that Hayden Homes would undertake the work otherwise an alternative company would require a planning application. An arborist is required to ensure the work is undertaken correctly and the tree will need an annual inspection and advised that the Parish Council could ask OCC/CDC for a contribution towards costs incurred and future costs.

The Council thanked RE for the immense effort he has undertaken on the work of the oak tree footpath, providing the Council with guidance, a calm approach and great insight on working with the consultant arborist.

**22.379.7 For Information:** County and District Councillor updates (Councillor Simpson /Councillor Hughes)

Councillor Simpson provided an update from Oxfordshire County Council highlighting that consultation dates on the rail freight project have been provided. He has also requested an update from Dave Catling (OCC) regarding the speed limit reduction work on B430.

The first Ukrainian family is moving into the Kidlington area and they are looking at developing a support hub as a place to meet, obtain advice and food from the Cherwell larder. DB highlighted that the Church of England also has a Ukrainian family project but they are apparently not looking at offering any housing in our village as we don't have a bus and asked if Councillor Simpson would highlight this issue to OCC.

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

JH spoke to Martin from Openreach today and provided the following update:

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) have refused to pay ~£180k to lay the fibre spine from Summertown arguing that this can be used for other projects, so should not be fully funded by us. Openreach have responded to explain that most of those cables really are actually for us so should be funded. JH hopes to have this resolved by next week.

The Oxfordshire top-up has crashed with >£ 300k overspend and we will not get enough pledges to pay for the project without the Oxfordshire top up so would have to go down the alternative route. There is an expectation that this will be fixed in the new financial year.

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The DCMS's alternative "Procurement programme" (with areas sold as grouped lots) has been moved back to July/August 2022. The pause date (currently 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022) needs to move back in-line with the delayed alternative procurement plan.

We can open the pledging site at any time, but JH advised it is worth waiting a couple of weeks to get updates on the above.

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

RSA highlighted that the playground was inspected on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and the general appearance was reasonable; key points are detailed in the submitted works and playground report.

The work party on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2022 cleared the footpath at the back of the spinney and at the top of the playing field. In addition clearance was done on the bank of the stream along the roadside and some clearance of brambles on the playing field edge. RSA and the Council thanked the volunteers who helped which has made a great improvement. The work repairing the verge along Bletchingdon Road is also ongoing.

RSA is continuing with the mower maintenance and mentioned that new fencing along the edge of the playing field is still required and will need discussing.

The cycle racks ordered by Cherwell District Council via the Welcome Back Fund have been delivered to RSA for installation.

**Action: Council to discuss fence works at the playing field.**

**22.379.10 Resolution: To Approve End of Year Parish Council Financial Accounts for FY 2021-2022 (HD)**

HD presented the Parish Councils end of year accounts following their approval by the finance advisory group. A summary of expenditure in Q4 vs budget, bank reconciliation and income details were provided.

HD highlighted that the purchase of the playing field and spinney alongside the loan from the Public Works Loan Board has impacted the income and expenditure figures. A version excluding the loan and purchase expenditure has also been provided to reflect the remaining parish income and expenditure.

At the end of FY 2021-22 the Council had £49,532.97 in reserve which has all been earmarked for specific forthcoming projects including playing field and playground development, traffic, footpaths or against certain budget lines. It was also noted that the Council retains 3 months operating costs as standard expected practice.

The resolution to approve the end of year Parish Council financial accounts for FY 2021-2022 was proposed by HD and seconded by RSA. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action: Clerk to upload the Parish Council Q4 accounts (FY 2021/22) to the Parish Council website.**

**22.379.11 To Note: Standing Orders and Direct Debit payments during FY 2021-22 and planned payments for FY 2022-23 (HD)**

HD highlighted the report provided detailing the standing orders and direct debit payments paid during FY 2021-22 and the planned payments for FY 2022-23 including the repayments on the loan obtained for the purchase of the playing field and spinney from the Public Works Loan Board.

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**22.379.12 Resolution To Approve** Report of the Independent and Parish Remuneration Panel on the Review of Parish Members' Allowances for the 2022/2023 Financial Year (HD)

HD presented the report of the Independent and Parish Remuneration Panel on the Review of Parish Members' Allowances for the 2022/2023 financial year received from Cherwell District Council.

Currently Councillors do not take any allowance for undertaking their role and no councillor wished to take an allowance for the forthcoming year. The report also detailed Travel and Subsistence Allowances e.g. details on mileage claims. It was considered that there shouldn't be a cost to being a councillor and should people wish to claim expenses the report provides guidance for the figures to use.

The report summary will be placed on the Parish Council notice board and website.

The resolution to approve the Report of the Independent and Parish Remuneration Panel on the review of parish members' allowances for the 2022/2023 financial year was proposed by HD and seconded by RSA. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to add the Independent and Parish Remuneration Panel report for 2022/23 to the PC website and noticeboard.

**22.379.13 Resolution: To Approve** the increase in Clerks salary on the contracted salary point following the national salary award for local Government services 2021-22 and to pay the backdated salary owed from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 of £140.40 as a one-off payment from the 'Parish of Weston on the Green' Barclays Bank account (SD/HD)

The resolution to approve the increase in Clerks salary on the contracted salary point following the national salary award for local Government services 2021-22 and to pay the backdated salary owed from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 of £140.40 as a one-off payment from the 'Parish of Weston on the Green' Barclays Bank account was proposed by HD and seconded by CR. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to initiative request for backdated salary payment from Councillors as part of the invoice payments.

**Resolution: To Approve** the amendment of the Standing Order for the clerks salary for FY 2022-23 to reflect the amended clerks salary and increase in home working allowance following Government guidance. In addition, approval is sought for the associated amendment of the direct debit to Nest pensions in relation to the clerks pension payments from the 'Parish of Weston on the Green' Barclays Bank account, as detailed and discussed by the HR advisory group (SD/HD)

The resolution to approve the amendment of the Standing Order for the clerks salary for FY 2022-23 to reflect the amended clerks salary and increase in home working allowance following Government guidance. In addition, approval is sought for the associated amendment of the direct debit to Nest pensions in relation to the clerks pension payments from the 'Parish of Weston on the Green' Barclays Bank account, as detailed and discussed by the HR advisory group was proposed by HD and seconded by CR. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Finance councillors to amend standing order for clerks pay and Nest pension direct debit payment.

**22.379.14 Resolution: To Approve** that the Parish Council purchase a new laptop for the Parish Clerk's use plus antivirus software and a Microsoft Office package up to a total cost of £950.00 (including VAT) (RW/HD)

HD highlighted the requirement for a new laptop for the parish clerk as detailed in the report provided to the Council. It was noted that all price options will be evaluated at the time of purchase.

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The resolution to approve that the Parish Council purchase a new laptop for the Parish Clerk's use plus antivirus software and a Microsoft Office package up to a total cost of £950.00 (including VAT) was proposed by HD and seconded by SD. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to purchase laptop for Parish Council work.

## 22.379.15 Resolution To Approve the following invoices for payment (HD)

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

PC Ref	Payee	Purpose	Total (incl VAT)	Budget Line	Amount Remaining in 2021-22 Budget
250*	OALC	Annual membership renewal subscription (2022-23)	£150.00	Subscriptions/OALC Subscription	£147.00
253	WotG Memorial Village Hall	Village Hall hire for PC meetings (April-June 22)	£45.00	Meeting Costs/Hire of Village Hall	£240.00
254	Clerk (J Mullane)	Dog poo bags for village supply x8000 (Eco Hound)	£123.84	Village Works/General village maintenance	£700.00
255	Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association	Annual subscription fee 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023	£45.00	Subscriptions/ Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association	£42.00
256	Oxford Green Belt Network	Annual membership subscription 2021-22	£15.00	Subscriptions/Oxford Green Belt Network	£15.00
257	WotG Memorial Village Hall	Village Hall hire for annual parish meeting (27/04/22)	£15.00	Meeting Costs/Hire of Village Hall	£195.00
258	Oxford Edens	Grass cutting 25/03/22 (playground, stocks/Ben Jonson)	£228.00	Village Works/Village contractor grass cutting	£4,200.00

\*Re-approval as requested incorrect payment amount of £250.00 at 2 March 2022 PC meeting

It was noted that the invoice for the OALC annual membership renewal (PC Ref 250) was a re-approval as the incorrect payment amount of £250.00 had been requested at the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 Parish Council meeting.

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

## 22.379.16 For Discussion: Discuss and agree recommendations from the Planning Group (HD)

Key planning applications on the planning report (updated 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022) were discussed by the Council.

### **Building Applications:**

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

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

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

#### **Decision Received – Rejected**

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

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

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

**22/00413/F - Home Farm House, Church Lane** - Proposed single storey front and rear extensions with two storey side extension, addition of dormer window and new pitched roofs to existing dormer window. **Commented**

**22/00460/DISC – Unit 8, Manor Farm, Northampton Road** – Discharge of condition 3 of 21/02281/F

### Tree Works:

**22/00400/TCA - Dormers, North Lane** – This application went in during early Feb. The PC were made aware of it by applicant and chased CDC in mid-March as was not on portal. 24<sup>th</sup> March a letter was sent out – no ability to comment due to delayed time frame. Whilst the application is not contentious – we have ‘gently’ made CDC aware that we are not happy with the situation.

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

**22.379.17 For Information:** Traffic Advisory Group update

It was noted that the traffic speed survey on B430 had been undertaken and we are waiting for the results.

The Community Speedwatch system has now changed and in order for us to successfully report speeding motorists all volunteers must now be registered on the system and have taken the online training. The Council thanked Graham Barnett for co-ordinating the new system with volunteers.

**22.379.18 For Discussion:** Stop the Arc campaign request for Parish Councils to submit a freedom of Information request to Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities regarding Ox-Cam Arc (SD/DB)

SD highlighted that the Parish Council received an email from Stop the Arc asking if Parish Councils could submit a freedom of information request to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities on one of 5 areas regarding the Ox-Cam Arc. DB to enquire of Stop the Arc if there is an area that hasn't been requested and then proceed with that one.

**Action:** DB to contact Stop the Arc regarding the Freedom of Information request.

**22.379.19 Next Parish Council Meeting Dates:** To be Confirmed

**Annual Parish Council Meeting:** date to be confirmed (to be held between 9<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022)

It is proposed to move the next Parish Council meeting and Annual Parish Council meeting to 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022 to account for the 2022 election result. It is further proposed to move 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022 Parish Council meeting to 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022, subject to the village hall's availability.

**Action:** Clerk to check Village Hall availability for new Parish Council meeting dates and report back to the council.

DB thanked Councillor Hughes for his considerable support over the oak tree footpath and ahead of the planning committee meeting tomorrow.

**Meeting Closed:** 21.19

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