

Wheatley Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 6th MARCH 2017 IN THE MERRY BELLS HALL AT 7.30pm

Councillors: P Bignell, R Bell, J Carr, S Coleridge, P Gregory, R Harding, P Hood, T Newman, G Stephens, A Walkey, P Willmott

Officer: The Assistant Clerk - Annette Richards

Also present: County Councillor Anne Purse and 10 members of the public

Before the start of the meeting, Cllr Walkey announced he intended to hand in his resignation in three weeks' time.

132. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE had been received from Cllrs A Davies, T Davies, and I Roberts

133. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Willmott as a member of the Wheatley Playing Field Trust.

134. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 9TH JANUARY 2017 – were agreed as a correct and accurate record.

135. MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 20TH FEBRUARY 2017 – were agreed as a correct and accurate record

136. UPDATE OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9TH JANUARY 2017

5.1. Minute 78 (ii) – vehicle activated signs - Messagemaker have repaired the lower Ladder Hill sign which had been gathering condensation inside the screen

5.2. Minute 78(iv) – review of the PC's Standing Orders - these are now in the final version and will be reported at the May meeting

137. THE MINUTES of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on the following dates were received

6.1. Wednesday 11th January 2017 – circulated previously

6.2. Wednesday 8th February 2017 – circulated previously

138. THE MINUTES of the meeting of the F&GP Committee held on the following date were received

7.1. Monday 23rd January 2017 – circulated previously

7.2. Monday 20th February 2017 – circulated with this Agenda

139. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE STAFFING COMMITTEE

Cllr Harding reported:

- The new Clerk, Michelle Legg, has formally accepted the position and has signed a contract.
- he had received her first reference and was awaiting the second
- the Clerk will be starting on Mon 3rd April [Note: this has since changed to Tues 4th April]
- the Staffing Committee was in the process of reviewing terms of employment and drawing up draft approval and disciplinary procedures with the input of OALC HR Advisor Beth Osbourne
- he has enrolled the PC on-line with the Pension Regulator

140. TO DISCUSS THE QUOTES FOR REPAIRING THE ROCK FALL AT THE CHURCH ROAD RECREATION GROUND AND AGREE NEXT STEPS

Three companies had been contacted in January to provide tenders before the 1st March, two had been received. Cllr Carr and Bell expressed concern that this item should be discussed confidentially. The Vice-Chairman agreed that this agenda item should be covered at the end of the meeting without the public present.

Cllr Gregory proposed and Cllr Willmott seconded the proposal. This was **Resolved:** *under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph X of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, namely private contractual matters.*

After discussion of the tender, it was proposed by Cllr Newman and seconded by Cllr Carr that the consultants GWP should be asked to assess the quotes against the specification to check that they cover all aspects of the work required. This was **Agreed.**

Cllr Willmott reported regarding the Heras fencing around the rock face:

- he had contacted the company who rent the fencing to enquire about the PC purchasing rather than hiring the fencing. This will mean substantial savings in the long-term and the fencing could then be reused in the future
- it had been agreed at the last F&GP to buy the fencing, so Cllr Willmott will contact the company to confirm the purchase

141. TO CONSIDER THE 2017 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Vice-Chairman reported that the general feeling about last year's meeting was that it was too formulaic and there was no opportunity for discourse with the general public.

Cllr Hood suggested:

- community group stalls set up around the hall so the public could interact with the groups
- each group would submit a brief update paragraph to be compiled in a single report paper and not read out reports

Cllr Newman agreed with this and suggested:

- the public should have a longer Q&A time

- it should be held in a bigger venue such as the Primary School because it was crowded in the Merry Bells Hall last year
- panel set up so the public can ask questions

Cllr Bell suggested:

- community groups should give their reports a week before the meeting
- during the meeting the public should be able to question councillors from the Parish, SODC and OCC.

Cllr Newman proposed and Cllr Bignell seconded that the format should be:

- a mix of fair stalls for local community groups
- a panel consisting of Chairpersons of the Parish Council's committees, Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Leaders, SODC and OCC councillors to answer the public's questions

This was **Agreed**.

After discussion, it was considered that a weekday evening would be best, with an earlier start at 6pm for the community stalls and then the meeting proper to start at 7.30pm.

Cllr Hood to liaise with the primary school for dates in May. The date to be published in the next Wheatley Newsletter.

142. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE MAPLE TREE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Cllr Purse reported:

- a small steering group had been set up along with a wider group of interested parties
- OCVA is involved in legal help to set up a trust
- as well as the grant from Wheatley Parish Council, OCC have given a grant of ten thousand pounds per year, for the next three years
- more fundraising will be required to cover costs of premises and equipment
- started meeting with other CCs to devise common policies

Cllr Stephens said that Wheatley should be very proud of its support of The Maple Tree CC.

143. TO CONSIDER MATTERS RELATING TO THE WHEATLEY PLAYING FIELD TRUST (WPFT) AND HOLTON PAVILIONS

Cllr Willmott reported:

- Kevin Heritage from Wheatley Park School was now attending as the WPS nominated trustee, taking over from the former Headteacher
- Anne Davies will be stepping down in May as PC representative on the WPFT and consideration should be given her replacement
- the Commercial Properties Standard Enquiries form has been passed over to the Parish Council's solicitor for completion

Cllr Bell suggested that a person not on the PC can be considered as a replacement as long as agreement is reached that the person is suitable.

Cllr Willmott asked that in the future the Holton Pavilions should be a separate agenda item as this is the PC's project.

144. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE LITTLEWORTH PLAYING FIELDS, INCLUDING THE PATHWAY ACROSS LITTLEWORTH GREEN

13.1 To receive a report from the advisory group

Cllr Willmott and Hood reported:

- there had been a very co-operative meeting on 22nd February with the school and the diocese with the emphasis on a lease on the whole field, rather than the previous half field
- the group would like to present their proposal to the PC at an extraordinary parish meeting.
- a seven-year lease was proposed and the school and diocese would set up a trust with minimal cost to the PC
- the PC's share of the on-going costs would remain at a similar level as before.

It was proposed by Cllr Wilmott and seconded by Cllr Harding that the date of the Extraordinary Meeting be on Monday 27th March 2017. This was **Agreed**.

13.2 Pathway across Littleworth Green

The PC owns the green and there is concern that the path that runs in front of the noticeboard and bench has eroded and needs to be reinstated. Shrubs need to be cut back.

It was proposed by Cllr Wilmott and seconded by Cllr Carr to get quotes for a contractor to do this work. This was **Agreed**.

145. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

John Fox, Chairman of WNP, reported:

- the seven workshops held had been very positive and from them the vision, objectives, policies and strategies for the WNP had been realised
- four people from Holton had taken part, this has helped strengthen relations
- the draft WNP has been taken to the SODC advisors who are going to look through the details and help strengthen the wording. This a milestone after fourteen months of hard work
- there are issues with preferred Sites No.2 and the Emerging Local Plan 2033
- analysis of Preferred Sites No.1 was never released so volunteers did their own research on this which has been added to the WNP

The Vice-Chairman reminded councillors that the next Holton Parish Meeting on 13th March was starting early to accommodate a confidential session with councillors from both parishes at 6.30 - 7.30pm to discuss progress.

8.30pm The Vice-Chairman declared the council out of session and asked for contributions from the floor. There were no questions from the general public.

Report from County Councillor Anne Purse

- she expressed concern about the cuts made to the OCC budget for social care for older people. Although the council tax has been increased up to the maximum cap, the increased number of older people as well as children requiring care means there is not enough funding for all the services required
- the road maintenance budget has been cut
- she supports the Unitary proposal as she believes it the only way to deliver services instead of cuts
- the Oxford Cambridge Expressway is in the early stages. Government analysis is that there is poor east-west road links and so a road is needed to improve this.
- This goes against OCC strategy as they want to minimise journeys by road. The road will be built before the railway, so there will be no opportunity to see if the railway would make building a road unnecessary
- There are 3 major routes:
 - Via Didcot, joining up with Junction 7 of M40
 - Via North Abingdon, coming across near Oxford, joining up with Junction 8a of M40
 - via Botley A34 going up through Bicester and Aylesbury
- the middle option would concern Wheatley. Advice is to to keep close tabs on the developing situation
- Cllr Purse said this was her last WPC meeting as she has decided to retire. She thanked the PC for their support over the years and their understanding about austerity budgets
 - she will be working until May and will retain links with the community afterwards and stay on The Maple Tree CC Committee.

The Vice-Chairman spoke on behalf of the PC to express their thanks for the years of valuable service she has given to Wheatley.

Report from District Councillor Toby Newman

- Planning:
 - SODC have lost the 5-year housing supply which puts the district at risk of speculative development.
 - SODC continue to supporting neighbourhood plans where possible
 - housing supply has returned to 3.8 years now but unlikely to go back up to 5 before the emerging plan is adopted.
- travellers site near Milton Common and Tetsworth was rejected last year under delegated powers, going to the Planning Inspectorate in June.
- plans in progress for approx. 900 homes near Chinnor, also similar number of homes for near both Benson and Crowmarsh

- cash machine in Wheatley - if the PC and Postmaster write to Planning it might be able to speed up the progress of the application to install the machine. the proposed development of The Railway site:
 - working with Beechcroft Homes and Hunter Page Planning
 - attended a meeting with Friends of Wheatley Pubs who are trying to save The Railway and protect the remaining pubs in the village
- working with a group looking at the proposed application from Frontier Homes for a care home on Park Hill
- devolution - still ongoing discussion
- 'Better Oxfordshire' - report has been published
 - this is a joint bid of OCC with the Vale of White Horse DC and SODC
 - Cherwell, West Oxon and Oxford City Council did not take part in the bid
 - bid will be considered by the Secretary of State and only councils who are part of it will participate in the negotiations
 - if the bid is accepted, the other councils will have it imposed upon them
 - benefits to residents
 - single point of contact
 - save money as no multiple sets of councillors, offices, etc
 - have joined up, sustainable, strategic planning
 - area boards will be based around market towns, to take local decisions
 - if accepted the earliest a new election could take place is May 2019
 - there would be a reduction to just under half the number of current councillors with increased ward sizes

The Vice-Chairman offered his opinion that this would be good for Wheatley because it would promote joined-up planning for infrastructure and amenities.

Cllr Bell asked why West Oxon and Cherwell were against the Unitary proposal. Cllr Newman understood that West Oxon had concerns about control of parking and being able to make improvements to the A40. He was unaware of Cherwell's motives.

The Vice-Chairman declared the council back in session.

146. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE HIGH STREET ADVISORY GROUP

Cllr Walkey reported:

- an article from Cllr T Davies will go in the newsletter about the exhibition
- the exhibition had been successful with up to 300 people attending
- data from questionnaires is being collated and Cllr T Davies will give a report
- main issues are over parking and the number of spaces available

- another meeting with retailers is planned
- 'Wake up to Wheatley' campaign - Cllr Walkey had 50-60 positive comments and only one difficult conversation
- with the departure in the near future of Cllr Walkey, consideration should be given to who can take the campaign on; does not have to be a councillor

Cllr Bell stated that there are issues with the ownership of the High Street square which is still in Bullingdon Rural Council's name.

The Vice-Chairman said he will add a proposal to the EGM agenda to instruct a solicitor to buy the piece of land from the current owner for, ideally, a peppercorn price. Other pieces of land, especially the footpath behind Barlow Close, could also be purchased at the same time.

The Vice-Chairman asked, in connection with the High Street, that he would like to seek approval to send a letter to SODC to say the new cashpoint machine for the village centre will be of great benefit to the community and could they expedite approval.

Cllr Carr expressed reservations about the PC doing this as it is a commercial venture. After further discussion, it was decided that the Planning Committee should emphasise the major support of the community for the machine on the application consultation feedback form.

147. TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO THE ALLOTMENTS AT LITTLEWORTH

Cllr Gregory reported that the allotments required more attention with the adjustment of the boundaries of plots as well as the on-going general maintenance required.

He proposed that the Recreation Areas Working Group should oversee this. This was seconded by Cllr Willmott. **This was Agreed.**

148. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

17.1 The Merry Bells Management Committee - no report

17.2 The Howe Trust - Cllr Gregory reported a lot of work has been done to make room for the planting of new saplings on Sat 11th March.

17.3 Thames Valley Police - Cllr Gregory reported that it is not good news for Wheatley in terms of coverage. Due to SODC cuts there will be now only be 2 neighbourhood police officers and 4 PCSOs to cover the whole Chalgrove/ Wheatley neighbourhood.

Cllr Willmott asked if there was anything the PC could do regarding this situation. Cllr Gregory reported he had asked at the NAG if villages could club together to pay for a PCSO but the advice was that there would still be not enough coverage in Wheatley to get value for money. Cllr Newman said Chinnor PC pay for a PSCO to cover Chinnor only and the new clerk should contact them for more information.

The Vice-Chairman asked if there was any objection to this topic being on the next agenda and there was none.

17.4 Brookes University Resident Associations' meeting - no report

17.5 Wheatley Windmill Preservation Trust - the Vice-Chairman reported that money is needed for the completion of the current project to re-instate the sails.

149. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS - noted

- 18.1 Planning Committee – Wednesday 8th March 2017 – 7:30pm
- 18.2 F&GP Committee – Monday 20th March 2017 – 7:30pm
[EGM - Monday 27th March 2017 - 7.30pm]
- 18.3 Planning Committee – Wednesday 12th April 2017 – 7:30pm
- 18.4 F&GP Committee – Monday 24th April 2017 – 7:30pm
- 18.5 Parish Council Meeting – Monday 8th May 2017 – 7:30pm

150. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- Cllr Harding reported that Beechcroft Homes have a questionnaire for personal feedback on their website, closing date 10th March
- The Vice-Chairman reported he had already drawn their attention to the village's need for an east-west green route.
- Cllr Bignell reported that Beechcroft have been trying to contact BT to buy the neighbouring land owed by BT but they have not replied
- Cllr Wilmott reported that he had been told BT were unlikely to sell as they wanted to use the building as storage

151. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 27th March 2017 - Noted

Meeting closed at 9.30pm