

## **Minutes of a meeting of the PC held at the Village Hall on Tuesday 19th November, 2019 at 7.30pm.**

**Present were:** Mrs N.A. Brooks (Chair), M Walker (Vice-Chair), Mrs E. Mawle, M. Wilson, G. Soame. In attendance were Ken Brooks (Clerk) and Charles Matthew (first half hour of the meeting). Apologies were received from Nick Kelaher, Carl Rylett and Dan Levy.

1. Non-specific declarations of interest relating to land in the Parish were made by M. Walker and Mrs E. Mawle and Mrs E. Mawle with regard to Bantam Lodge.
2. The Minutes for the previous PC meeting held on 8th October were approved and the Chair was authorised to sign the same as being a true record of such proceedings. The Clerk was authorised to publish the Minutes on the website.

### **3. Matters of Concern**

There were up to 35 members of the public present at various times though the number did fluctuate. The meeting began in the small room and later moved to the larger hall.

#### **Speeding**

The Chair invited Lysette Nichols to speak on her investigations to date and the latest traffic report she had done. Charles Mathew was still present and he offered to tackle OCC on the issues she had raised. It was agreed that Charles would liaise with Lysette and the Chair on the outcome of his investigations. In the meantime, the Chair offered to accompany Lysette to Stonesfield to look at their speed monitoring equipment with others invited to join in as available. Lysette will co-ordinate and report back to the next PC meeting.

#### **Conservation Area**

The Chair then invited Dick Pears to speak on his proposal to seek Conservation Area status for the Parish. Dick referred to the original PC vote in 2016 to proceed with such an application that was subsequently over-taken by the proposal for a Neighbourhood Plan. Dick wanted to know if the PC was still in favour. There was some opposition in the room but the majority of the public present were clearly in favour. There was some concern over the area to be covered and the interaction with the existing Neighbourhood Plan but Dick confirmed that his proposal was to seek Conservation Area status for the whole of the Parish to protect us from another Gladman and "three thousand houses". Tim Lawson said he saw it as really a belt and braces issue, so why not do it? Mai Strunge felt that Church End might qualify but she doubted we'd get the whole Parish designated. Parts of the Parish including near her down Chapel Road just weren't that special. The Clerk observed that there was no incompatibility between part of the settlement being covered by a Conservation Area within a larger Neighbourhood Plan for the whole Parish. He too doubted we'd get everywhere designated but he saw no harm in trying. The Chair put a motion to the vote that we should continue to investigate Conservation Area status and see what was possible (it not being expressly said but implied that Dick Pears would continue to chair / convene any investigative working group).

VOTE. The motion was passed three to two with Martin Wilson and Mark Walker voting against.

Dick Pears then proposed that the public present should have a show of hands on the proposal. Martin Wilson objected on the grounds that there were not enough members of the public to give a good indication as to the views of the whole Parish and the Chair intervened saying that this was a PC meeting and the PC had voted - as it happened in favour of the proposal. She would indeed require a public vote but at a later public meeting when we had a definitive proposal. She saw no point in having one now.

4. Charles Mathew had by now left the meeting so there were now no District or County Councillors present and the meeting adjourned from the small room to the main hall

#### **5. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

It was agreed there were no matters arising from the minutes that would not be covered elsewhere in the meeting.

#### **6. Constitutional**

The Chair confirmed that the Clerk's Training Day has been fixed

The Chair said that going forward the PC would endeavour to publish draft minutes ahead of the next PC meeting but without committing to any given timetable - the PC being dependent on the Clerk.

#### **7. Financial Report**

The Chair asked for authority to sign cheques as follows:

OALC £90 plus VAT for the Clerk's training course.

ONPA £50 plus VAT for annual membership.

The PC approved these cheques.

The Chair observed that these items on the Agenda would appear each meeting whether there was anything specific to report or not.

#### **8. Facilities**

- a. Village Hall. The Chair said the only issue to note was the ongoing plan to repair and improve the Village Hall, where the PC had already agreed to contribute £2000. The Chair then invited John Ashwell to comment on the plan to do something about the acoustics.
- b. Village Green. The Chair updated those present about the formation of the Village Green Sub-Committee and asked Dick Pears about the signage declaring SLPC as the owner. Dick confirmed that new signage had been ordered and would arrive tomorrow. He confirmed that he planned to reposition the new signs.
- c. Playground. Karen Wilson made her brief report being conscious that there was already so much on the Agenda. Her investigations into new equipment were continuing. In the meantime, the Village Fayre Committee had donated £2750 for the playground and Karen gave the Clerk a cheque for this sum. The Chair confirmed that the PC would treat this money as allocated for the Playground along with the £3000 already allocated in the PC accounts. The Chair said that we had also just heard back from Cottsway with regard to an offer to let the playground officially to the PC on a 25 year lease. The Clerk outlined the terms and was instructed to go back to Cottsway and seek a reduction in the proposed rent. The Clerk outlined the economics of the transaction but emphasised the need to regularise everything, not least to maintain public liability cover.
- d. Football Pitch. Martin Wilson advised that he had chased Savills with regard to the new lease and Savills had said that they would chase the Estate's solicitors. The Clerk confirmed that the PC Forecast Accounts contained an allowance of £2000 towards the costs of securing the lease.
- e. Telephone Box. Graham Soame and Mark Walker will liaise with the pub over a suitable box. The Chair said that various suggestions had been made as to the use of the box. Liz Ashwell asked about moving the defibrillator and Dean Jarvis confirmed that the electrical supply side was perfectly doable. Graham Soame will report back on progress to the next meeting.
- f. Bus Shelter. The Chair outlined the issues to those that weren't aware. Graham Soame then reported on his investigations into the relative cost of repair and replacement. After some discussion, the Chair proposed that we should refurbish the existing shelter now and then fund-raise for a new better shelter. Concern was expressed by John Alexander over the effect of the prospective Shores Green development. The Chair also said that our hopes that Low Carbon (the developers

for 12 Acre Farm Solar Panel Farm) would cover the cost now seemed to be diminishing.

VOTE. The motion was passed unanimously authorising the refurbishment of the existing Bus Shelter. Mark Walker estimated the cost of the panels at £400 plus VAT though the cost would fall perhaps as low as £250 if we undertook the painting and fixing ourselves. Graham Soame and Mark Walker will liaise over this project and seek volunteers to help.

## 9. Planning matters

### a. Applications

The Chair reported on the following outstanding planning applications:

- 13 Springhill Cottages extension.

The Chair asked for views from the PC. Graham Soame thought the extension would almost double the size of the accommodation but he didn't feel that alone was a cause to object. New, clearer plans had been received after the Chair had questioned the original plans submitted. Graham's only other comment was that the extension should be recessed. The PC agreed.

- Aurora Solar Farm

The Chair reported on the latest proposal via Low Carbon regarding Community Benefit being transmuted into financial participation through bodies in Eynsham wanting to run the Solar Farm as a community project. The PC felt this was inappropriate and thus unacceptable to South Leigh and the Chair was instructed to write in the form of the draft email already submitted by her to the PC for approval with a view to meeting Low Carbon.

- Anaerobic Digester

Many members of the public present were desperately concerned about this designation, now come to light. The Chair explained the designation process and that to date the PC had not been officially consulted. She also said she had heard from Sue Morrish by email that afternoon and she read out a paragraph from the email which said it was all early days and there was no certainty anything would ever happen though no guarantee it would not. John Alexander also reported on what he had been told to the same effect. The Chair said she understood the concerns of the meeting and as soon as there was an opportunity through consultation she would make the village feelings known. In the meantime, the Chair would try to ascertain more about the designation and the process, reply to Sue Morrish's email and ask for further clarification.

### b. Neighbourhood Plan

The Clerk reported on his ongoing monitoring of the Oxfordshire Growth Board, WODC and the other district councils. He said that at this moment there was nothing that could be done by the PC itself. The next key issues were the designation of the route of the Expressway and what became of the Growth Board itself and its plans following the current attitude of SODC and Cherwell and the knock-on effect on WODC and ourselves.

### c. Other planning issues

- Eynsham Garden Village

The Clerk reported on the latest developments on the Eynsham Area Action Plan, the Eynsham Garden Village, the Park & Ride and the A40.

- Bantam Lodge

The Chair reported that WODC had been investigating a breach of the planning conditions affecting the development of Bantam Lodge by Mrs E. Mawle, a Parish Councillor. WODC has agreed with Mrs Mawle that a new Condition 10 Agreement would be submitted by her. WODC had further agreed with the Chair that WODC

would send her the new Condition 10 application (although this was something that wasn't normally done) so that the Parish remained informed.

However, concern was expressed by some members of the public present that a Parish Councillor in this position should be held to the highest standard of behaviour. The Chair observed that as long as the home owner complied satisfactorily with WODC requests then that should be an end to the matter.

The Chair said that she would keep a watching brief on this matter and would keep in touch with the enforcement department of WODC. She would also continue to keep informed those with concerns here.

Dick Pears then argued that, regardless of the issue of enforcement, due process hadn't been followed from the beginning in the failure of the then PC to scrutinise properly the original planning application. The Chair explained how applications that fell due between the six weekly PC meetings had been dealt with historically but also stated that on this occasion a special meeting had been arranged (not a formal PC meeting) specifically to discuss this application as it was for a large house and the applicant was herself a Parish Councillor. Dick complained that there were no minutes to that meeting. The Chair explained that in retrospect it would have been better had there been a recording of that meeting (whilst acknowledging that it wasn't a formal PC meeting) but that the results of that meeting were on record on the WODC planning application portal. Dick demanded to know if Mrs Mawle had been present at that meeting and Mark Walker confirmed that she had not. The Chair pointed out that if it had been a formal PC meeting then Mrs Mawle would have had the right to attend but not to contribute or vote but as it happened she wasn't even there. The Chair then reminded everyone that the usual yellow application notices from WODC had been posted as normal and that the home owner had consulted with the neighbours personally at the beginning of the process. No objections were made by the neighbours directly to WODC.

Dick felt that regardless there appeared to be prima facie favouritism in that he knew of two other applications where objections were raised whereas in this case none were made.

The Chair advised that not only had no neighbour individually lodged an objection to WODC but that the Chair had taken it upon herself to visit or consult personally with each of the neighbours to get their views before the special meeting of the Parish Councillors mentioned above. The outcome of that meeting reflected the comments made to the Chair and the points raised by the PC appeared on the WODC planning portal. The Chair commented that in any event this was only a consultative process and one had to remember that WODC was perfectly entitled to take these comments into account and follow them or not as it saw fit.

Dick Pears continued to complain that he wasn't satisfied and the Chair asked whether he was accusing the PC of corruption to which his answer was "no". He said his argument was over "due process". The Chair said she felt that the PC had behaved honourably and properly.

10. The Chair said there was nothing to report from our Footpath Officers.

11. The meeting having already over-run, the Chair asked that the next items be dealt with swiftly

a. Potholes. The Chair said that the best way to report potholes was to use 'Fix My Street' but she said she would write to Charles Mathew regarding potholes near High Cogges in particular. Dean Jarvis asked that we also asked for something to be done regarding the temporary signage at Shores Green as vision up the slipway is now being blocked and the Chair said that she would contact Charles Mathew on this matter too.

- b. Tree Planting. The Chair said that through her son, David and Martin Spurrier there was a plan to look at tree planting and nurturing in the Parish. Martin was writing a report and the Clerk was trying to get an OCC grant. A report would follow.
- c. Litter Blitz. John Ashwell confirmed the next litter blitz was planned for March 2020 although he would be away then. He would liaise with the Chair to try to organise for his absence or change the prospective date.
- d. Flooding. During the latest heavy downpours, flooding had occurred again at High Cogges, Shuttles Cottage and the pub. All three had been reported before and some work had been done but not completed. A further email would be sent to the two responsible officers within OCC.
- e. Salt Spreader. Mark Walker said that his original plan to get a cheap salt spreader had come to nought. We will need to make a decision as to whether to buy one or not.
- f. Speeding. The Issue of speeding had been dealt with above in Lysette's presentation. Her strap-line of 'Safer South Leigh' was generally liked.

## **12. Parish events**

The Chair noted the General Election on 12th December where the Village Hall would be the Polling Station and the next local elections due on 7th May, 2020. The Chair invited anyone that was interested to stand as a Parish Councillor in due course.

- 13. The date for next meeting was fixed as 7th January, 2020. The Chair noted that at that meeting the PC would need to fix dates for the whole of 2020 and a date for the AGM between 11th and 26th May, 2020.

## **14. AOB**

The Chair mentioned a request for support by Voluntary Link Up (West Oxfordshire) but said it would have to be considered at the next meeting which would also have to fix the Precept for 2020/21.

In the interests of transparency, the Chair said that certain anonymous complaints had been made about the planting of some trees by her and her husband along one of their field boundaries. The effect would be partially to screen the proposed new Solar Farm which would affect her house more than almost anyone else. She felt it was very sad that no one had raised the matter directly with her and that they were in contact with the Estate and had planned a meeting.

There was no further business.