

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held at the Village Hall on Tuesday, 18th February at 7.30pm.

Present were: Mrs N.A. Brooks (Chair), M. Wilson and Lysette Nicholls. C. Mathew (County Councillor), Charlotte Simms and Kevin Broughton (all OCC) and Jackie Johnson (taking minutes) were in attendance. Apologies were received from Mrs E. Mawle, Graham Soame and Mark Walker.

1. The Chair made a welcoming statement.
2. Declarations of Interest - none.
3. The Chair signed the Minutes of the previous meeting as being a true record of proceedings.
4. Opportunity for any parishioner to raise a concern - none.
5. Opportunity for any County Councillor / District Councillor to update the Parish Council on any matters of relevance or concern - none.
6. There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes not thought to be covered elsewhere in the Agenda.

7. Constitutional

The Chair NB is acting as temporary clerk and JJ is taking minutes until a new Clerk is appointed. The AGM is set for 12th May 2020. This will be the Annual Parish Council meeting to approve the documents to be set before the Annual Parish Meeting, followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting and then the ordinary Parish Council Meeting. The Parish Council will be in Purdah in May 2020. The cost of the election will be £800. West Oxfordshire District Council will invoice in 2021. It has been confirmed that the Forest Restoration Group is a sub committee of the Parish Council.

8. Financial Report

No change.

Payments to approve / make: A cheque was to be written to Graham Soame for paint for fences, £64.71 and £70.00, total of £134.71; agreed.

9. Facilities

- a. Village Hall. No change.
- b. Village Green. A site for a permanent Christmas tree is proving difficult to find. The sub-committee is looking further into options. The land in front of the Old Vicarage and down the side roads has been identified as Highways, not Village Green (see the plan that has been circulated). This will cause a public liability and insurance issue should the village run any activities on these sites.
- c. Playground. Still waiting for the Cottsway draft lease.
- d. Football Pitch. still waiting for the Estate draft Lease. M. Wilson contacted the solicitor who will be able to update.
- e. Telephone Box. BT are removing the old box. Mark Walker has an old red box; the pub may be willing to install.
- f. Bus Shelter. There is a working group on 29th February, 2020 to paint this; may also be able to paint the various bridges in the village.

10. Planning matters

Any relevant Planning applications for consideration and comment (dates in brackets are the PC not necessarily the public consultation deadline dates).

a. Applications

- Aurora Solar Farm

WODC planning meeting on 10th February 2020, there was no decision made. 'In conclusion the proposed development would make a significant contribution to meeting targets for renewable energy and would contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases. There are considered to be no available or suitable brownfield sites nor areas of lower quality agricultural land suitable for the solar farm development. Nevertheless it is recognised that the proposal which includes locating panels on the higher ground would have a harmful impact on the landscape including views from the local public rights of way and more distant vantage points. Discussions including the possibility of relocating some of the panels to lower lying land and enhanced mitigation measures are ongoing. Additional information is also required in respect of ecology issues and the possibility of including a wildlife pond as part of the mitigation measures. Exactly what and how much screening is being proposed still needs clarifying as does the exact positioning of panels. We are waiting for more detailed reports and they have agreed to lower the panels. There

is ongoing discussion about the amount of 'Community Benefit' monies that could be paid to the Parish. The Parish Council have no objection in principle. CM stated that Eynsham has been bombarded recently with plans. MW stated that they could push for widening the path. NB reminded the room that there would be a deer fence and CCTV cameras. It was decided that we need a proper planting plan. The issue of the lights and epilepsy was discussed but we have been reassured that this won't be an issue. MW expressed concern over safety with the batteries but NB thought that the fence would prevent that issue as it was 'standard for the industry'.

- Anaerobic Digester

Update Minerals and Waste Draft Consultation Paper and presentation. Charlotte Simms and Kevon Broughton gave a presentation regarding the proposal to use land near High Cogges to place an anaerobic digester. Nicky Brooks reminded the room that this was a presentation only at this point in time to inform the Council and interested parties and that the time for a discussion or to object / support would come later along the process. It was explained to the room that there were two elements to the Local Plan: Minerals and Waste. The proposed site involves Waste only. Sites were nominated, about 44 in total. This was reduced to 12 after initial assessment, then 9 and those deemed acceptable were identified. The Council has targets to put as little waste as possible into landfill and therefore increase the number of anaerobic digesters. The short-listed sites had gone through a two-stage assessment and those thought suitable are contained in a draft document. The document is now out for general consultation. Comments were required by 6th March 2020 although there is some leeway. The OCC 'Cabinet Advisory Group' would make the final decision. The process began in January 2019 with an initial 'call for site'. There followed detailed methodology including bio diversity, transport links, landscape impact etc. After the initial assessment sites were selected as suitable and the full report can be found online. This site had been nominated by a representative for the Farm on High Cogges.

Questions were asked by members of the public at this stage, such as what the waste would be, why the Cassington site could not be extended, and what the extent of this proposed site would be as shown initially in dark blue on the map.

CS and KB stated that the report was complete and has come out now for consultation. An initial consultation had taken place in 2018. It was discussed that the Parish Council did not appear to have been consulted at that stage. NB had no knowledge and the Parish Council had not raised a comment at that time. The Parish Council had not received a copy of the consultation document and it still has not been received. CS and KB explained that it was not too late and we could raise an issue at this point. They stated that parishioners could contact them via any media and they wanted our thoughts. The life of the plan was until 2031, then it would be reviewed.

CS and KB were asked what the demand was; the explanation was to divert from landfill to comply with the sustainable policy. An aerobic digester would provide energy which was more sustainable and helped to reach targets and core strategy. It was explained that this was a small site and the waste was unlikely to come from a long distance. The site at Cassington processes 20,000 per annum with about 50 lorries per day. Any smell would be controlled by the Environment Agency. The definition 'farm waste' was described as being animal slurry / green waste. The issues of noise and electrics were discussed, as the site would need an engine, dynamo and power cables; it was possible that there would be a 'humming noise'. A discussion ensued regarding any growth of the site. It was pointed out by a member of the public that this site could be built to one specification but what was to stop that from being expanded at a later date? It was explained that an application would have to be considered if expansion was requested. It was suggested that there would be no control over the site. CM asked if there was a time limit on the site, CS and KB explained that this site would be permanent if built.

It was then asked if there were operators assigned to the site or whether the farmer allocated an operator, the reply was that the farmer would probably allocate / tender for an operator.

All properties such as appearance / how tall / outward finish would be considered in the planning application. The Environment Agency control the process, the farm (owner) would be in control of procedures, in this case the applicant if successful. CM suggested that because of the objection by WODC it would possibly not be taken forward.

It was put to the room by a member of the public that there was a concern about an undisclosed conflict of interest as the applicant's son works for the Environment Agency. It was explained by CS and KB that whoever monitored the scheme would have to be a person different to any person with a conflict of interest.

Planning would be determined by Oxfordshire County Council made up of twelve counsellors, advised by the Planning Department. WODC have a consultant role in the process. The consultation period ends on 4th March 2020, which has been extended to 11th March 2020 due to the concern about the confusion that South Leigh Parish did not appear to have been briefed in a timely manner.

This would then have to be checked out, views listened to and any other significant issues checked out, such as the Shores Green Junction. It was stated by CS and KB that if there was a site nominated that had better road systems it would be looked at. If this land was withdrawn then the nomination would no longer exist.

CS and KB then left the meeting.

A member of the public stated that this scheme was entirely reliant on the Shores Green issue, the road has no suitable access (a junction off a junction would not be allowed) the road would need to be widened substantially, speeding and line markings were an issue. WODC have put in an objection due to possible requirement of that land for Shores Green. It was also stated that High Cogges is part of South Leigh, not Witney. The Neighbourhood plan was of use here. The room was also reminded that the Cassington site was on a 'brown field site'.

The three Parish Councillors present stated that they all objected to the plan. A show of hands in the room showed support for that decision from the members of the public. NB will write to KB outlining the Parish's objections and also write outlining those points to the village email address list so that people can also object if they wish.

b. Conservation Area

There had been a meeting on 29th January 2020 chaired by Amanda Howard in which the pros and cons of the issues for a Conservation Area were discussed with strong support overall. There had been specific concerns raised and contact was to be made with the Conservation Advisor at WODC. The next step was for the sub-committee to compile a briefing document for villagers. There was no specific timescale. It was confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan 'Heritage Assessment' document could be used here.

11. Footpaths

No update.

12. Roads and Traffic

- Flooding

No update.

- Pothole repairs and damaged verges

No update.

- Speeding

LN gave a report on the speeding issues. 30 letters had been sent out, speeders will be recorded and she felt the survey was doing really well. She thought there would more incidents when the clocks change. Any records of mobile phone use while driving were being sent to the police.

- Lorries through the village.

There had been reports of large lorries entering the village to deliver to 'Just Cartridges'. They had stated that this was temporary and they didn't need such large lorries and had stated so to their supplier so this should cease. Improvements to the A40 – A member of the public had been worried about the hedges and verges and this was noted.

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13. AOB

- Tree planting report

There was an update regarding the planting of trees, with 30 trees already secured, 31 young oaks had been obtained and were ready for planting. There has been preliminary work on grants. The occupant of the Old Chapel had donated three trees and was also advising. There was planned planting on the football pitch on the front wall to continue the line of trees towards the 'Just Cartridges' old warehouse building. The group were waiting

for a lease from the Eynsham Estate. There were stakes in the ground already and a proposal had been submitted to Eynsham Estate through Savills. The work had been tabled for the week of 24th February 2020. They had also written to other landowners. NB stated that the group needed to address the leasing system, a member of the public said that the group needed to be aware of the landscape and archaeology. The site of the football field was the site of an old homestead and it may well be that evidence is uncovered when planting. This should be documented and covered in a report. Jackie Johnson pointed out that each tree had to be the right tree in the right place. A member of the public asked if these would all be indigenous trees. It was confirmed that the 'Forest Restoration Group' was a sub-committee of the Parish Council. See the report by Martin Spurrier here.

- Verge litter collection

There had been a litter collection and the Parish Council were very thankful for the assistance from so many villagers. See the report by Martin Spurrier here.

14. AGM & Meeting dates

The next Parish Council meeting will be on 31st March 2020. There will be an ordinary meeting after the AGM on 12th May and that will determine the meeting dates for the remainder of the year depending on Village Hall bookings and whether we need the big hall or not.

South Leigh Forest Restoration Group report

I said it and would be slow to start because securing sites takes time.

However:

- We have already planted or secured about 30 trees.
- We have rescued another 31 baby self-set oaks ready for planting.
- We have done preliminary work on...
- We have been awarded a grant of £450 by the District Council. This will buy tree shelters, stakes and trees.
- We have been given 15 trees by Mike Kirk, who is a landscape gardener and lives at the Old Chapel. He is also advising us.
- We have planned planting at the Football Pitch and have the support and agreement of Martin Wilson and his Committee. There are small stakes where we plan to plant 'legacy' trees. Each will have a couple of fast growers.
- We have submitted a proposal to the Eynsham Estate through agents, Savills. This has been slow but have been advised it will be tabled week of 24th February. We have identified 12 potential sites.
- We have written to David Bury regarding a site that he owns between his farm and Tarwood Lodge in Stanton Harcourt Road.
- We are in contact with several other advisory bodies.
- All interested, please contact me.

Martin Spurrier | 07799 368464