

Minutes for South Leigh Parish Council Meeting on 31st March 2020

Present were:

Nicky Brooks (Chair)
Martin Wilson (Parish Councillor)
Lysette Nicholls (Parish Councillor)
Eileen Mawle (Parish Councillor)
Graham Soame (Parish Councillor)
Mark Walker (Parish Councillor)
Jackie Johnson (taking minutes)

The meeting was held via video conference due to the Covid-19 crisis.

The meeting opened at 7:30pm with a welcome by the Chair.

1. Apologies: None.
2. Declarations of interest. Eileen Mawle, Shores Green. Mark Walker, Shores Green and telephone box.
3. Approve Minutes from previous meeting as being a true record of proceedings. Signed as correct by Nicky Brooks, Chair.
4. Opportunity for any parishioner to raise a concern. None received.
5. Opportunity for any County Councillor / District Councillor to update the Parish council on any matters of relevance or concern. None received.
6. Matters arising from the minutes if not covered by the Agenda. There had been no confirmation of the legality of conducting the meeting via video conference but there was no other option due to isolation rules in place. It had been confirmed to Nicky Brooks that the AGM could be moved considering the current Covid-19 issue. It was possible that there would be no AGM.
7. Constitutional. The Chair, Nicky Brooks, is acting as temporary clerk and Jackie Johnson is taking minutes until a new Clerk is appointed.
8. Financial Report. Nicky Brooks reported that there should be enough money to pay a clerk for the following year, at £2,000. The precept has already been increased.
9. Payments to approve / make. A payment was required for non-domestic rates for the Village Hall of £245.75; agreed. The question was raised by Lysette Nicholls whether the Parish Council could apply for rate relief under the Covid-19 plans? Martin Wilson stated that this was something that we could ask. Lysette Nicholls thought that it may only relate to businesses with a £25,000 turnover so probably not relevant. The rates were due in June 2020. Nicky Brooks suggested that the Parish Council needed to stay a member of Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, OALC, which would cost £140.42 inc. VAT, and would be useful for obtaining information regarding legal points. Agreed
10. Facilities
 - a) **Village Hall.** The hall is closed for the duration of Covid-19.
 - b) **Village Green.** No change.
 - c) **Playground.** A discussion ensued regarding whether the playground should be closed to the public during Covid-19. It was decided that a poster would be attached to the one main entrance to the playground to inform that it was closed for the duration. It was also discussed that the unregistered opening to the playground from No. 1 Lymbrook Close may also need signage, however this was thought to 'formalise' the opening which shouldn't be there. The sign was to be laminated.

Karen Wilson has some funds for equipment in the playground and it was being surveyed this week to provide a formal price. The Coop has declined a donation so the fund is a little short. The money will be used to improve, replace and upgrade current equipment. At this time the money is being held by the Parish Council. Ken Brooks has conducted some research for insurance of the playground. Cottsway have stated that we need to have a lease but have never sent one. Eileen Mawle stated that the lease needed to be chased up as the situation needs to be regulated.

- d) **Football Pitch.** After further correspondence with Eynsham Estate the lease had been modified so that the onus is on the Estate to ask for the annual rent - if not asked for, we don't have to pay. They have two smaller things to modify and then they will get back in touch with the Parish Council and we should then be in a position to sign.
- e) **Telephone box.** Mark Walker informed the Council that a representative from the Mason Arms Pub had visited him and had seen the telephone box, he had heard nothing since.
- f) **Bus shelter, Lymbrook Close.** There was a suggestion that this could be painted and perhaps the village could think of alternative ways to decorate or use. Jackie Johnson suggested allocating each child in the village a grid marked out on the inside of the shelter to paint something wildlife related. She was happy to assist, Graham Soame would put an article on the South Leigh Facebook page.
- g) **Grass cutting.** A quote had been received for 10 cuts at £90.00 a cut, all present agreed to accept the quote.
- h) **Covid-19.** Notes had been posted in the village offering help to those unable to leave their houses during the crisis. These had been well received and there had been several 'thank you' messages. There were several people in the village with symptoms. Wates Delicatessen were offering food boxes on request. Lysette Nicholls stated that these were good quality. Bakers Butchers were offering to provide meat that David Brooks would then deliver. It did not appear that all villages were offering support like this.
- i) **Nature Recovery Project.** Graham Soame is asking for individuals to assist, maybe with their own projects initially. The Parish Council were in support of this. There was a discussion regarding the lack of wildlife in the Lymbrook as compared to years ago. Lysette Nicholls brought up the issue of water testing the Lymbrook to find out what we are dealing with in an aim to re-establish wildlife in it. It was discussed that the A40 slip road possibly drains into the brook at the top of the village, and many fields, this would be difficult to rectify. It was agreed that the water testing of the brook would be an effective way of identifying the problem. Various inhabitants along Chapel road were planting wildflowers along the brook. The support for the Nature Recovery Network was unanimous.

11. Planning.

- a) **Aurora Solar Farm.** This has now been passed by Planning and will go ahead as quickly as possible, however it may be on hold now with the Covid-19 situation. Report attached.
- b) **High Cogges Anaerobic Digester.** The Parish Council objected to this application. It was thought that we would hear nothing until October 2020 when all comments had been put collated by OCC.
- c) **Conservation Area update.** On hold during Covid-19.

- d) **East Witney Consultation and Shores Green Junction.** Nicky Brooks reported that she had attended a meeting held by OCC with an update on Shores Green, The Eynsham Park and Ride and the provision of bus lanes. Report attached.
 - e) **Shuttles Cottage.** Eileen Mawle, Martin Wilson, Graham Soame and Nicky Brooks visited the new people at Shuttles Cottage. They want to complete some development on the site behind the trees. The Parish Council are generally happy with the plans. It was discussed that this may be an opportunity to resolve the ditch nearby that is blocked and causing a problem as the new owners may consider including that in the plan. They were also intending to plant oak trees in the boundary and wild flowers on the other side, along with a wildflower meadow. Mark Walker was to visit later. Lysette Nicholls stated that there is a generator and lights in the paddock area and it was discussed that the village does not wish to have light pollution, this is part of the Neighbourhood Plan. Graham Soame suggested having a word regarding directional light if it became a problem. There was no action to take at this time.
12. Footpaths. No update.
13. Roads and traffic.
- a) **Flooding** - no update.
 - b) **Pothole repairs and damaged verges** - no update.
 - c) **Tree planting report** - there had been some concern from three people about trees being planted on Chapel Road. Report attached.
 - d) **Verge litter collection** - no update.
 - e) **Speeding** - Lysette Nicholls said that this project was on hold during Covid-19. Report attached.
 - f) **Lorries through the village** - these seem to have lessened - whether that's because Just Cartridges is not getting deliveries at the moment, or Corona virus with less traffic was not clear - the Parish Council agreed to keep a watchful eye on the situation.
14. Improvements to the A40. Graham Soame was concerned about the plan to improve the Barnard Gate to Eynsham part of the A40 which would necessitate the removal of ancient hedges and trees. Eileen Mawle stated that the aspect of replanting would always be taken into account. Nicky Brooks said that there would be another meeting, the Traffic Monitoring had been completed and this would assist the Traffic Modelling. The timescale was thought to be 2022 for the Shores Green part and 2024 for the project as a whole. Shores Green would be a junction. One of the reasons for the District Council objection to the anaerobic digester project was that the proposed land may be required for this junction.
15. AOB. Graham Soame requested that the Parish Council thank Ken Brooks for all his work with the Minutes and the background work. This was agreed unanimously by the Council. The Council thanked Graham Soame and all the volunteers for their work in painting the railings in the village.
16. Next meeting: 12th May, 2020 at 7:30pm via Zoom - parishioners would be invited.

Report: East Witney Consultation and Shores Green Junction

I attended a consultation meeting held by OCC with regard to the Phase 1 and 2 work for the A40.

Phase 1 is the provision of the Park and Ride at the new Garden Village and provision of a east bound bus lane to Duke's Cut Bridges and the provision of an intermittent bus lane west bound

Phase 2 is the extension of the dual carriageway (both east and west bound) from the Barnard Gate turn to the new Park and Ride, the provision of a full bus lane from Duke's Cut to the Woodstock Road on the east side and similarly a full bus lane from the Woodstock Road to the new park and ride West bound

The new Shores Green junction

Phase 1's funding is not yet approved but Phase 2's is. They are hoping to complete both phases by 2024 and Shores Green by 2022 although as yet there are no designs.

The dualling of the A40 will have an obvious affect on the Barnard Gate road through the village but no detailed plans are available at the moment. Plans that I saw several years ago had a roundabout there with an access both to Barnard Gate and the village and a further entrance to serve the Christmas tree farm and their neighbours. At the time, I suggested it would be better to move that roundabout to the other entrance to Barnard Gate and then no new access road would be required.

It was generally acknowledged that the Shores Green junction would have an affect on traffic through South Leigh and that that would need to be ameliorated. We would seem to have the support of councillors on this.

There have been traffic monitoring systems in place throughout the affected area including South Leigh. I have asked for copies of the reports which are not available as yet. I have also pointed out that the two weeks during which they conducted the survey included half term week - this was noted.

There was a promise that communities would be further consulted and kept in regular touch with suggested plans. I hoped to have the promised copy of the presentation but it is yet to be sent to me.

Nicky Brooks

South Leigh Speed Watch report

South Leigh Speed Watch managed to do five weeks of monitoring before we stood down having clearly established that speeding was an issue. This was also covered by the Witney Gazette.

We captured over 150 speeders during this period and the average speed was 39mph. Letters were being sent out by the police as even if we haven't captured speeding motorists three times in the village, data is consolidated and taken from the whole of the Thames Valley Police region.

We have been asked to stand down currently as police are focusing their resources to deal with current issues.

I would like to thank all those that are helping and that have asked to be trained in the future.

Lysette Nicholls

Report re. update on Aurora Solar Farm Planning Application

This was passed at the last WODC planning committee - there are extra reports that will follow on as 'Conditions', mainly 'Biodiversity', 'Traffic Management plan' and 'Final Plan for the panels'.

Having had a series of meetings and emails with the developer and Eynsham PC, the following alterations to the planning application were made:

- The entrance to the site during the construction phase would be from the A40 along a new track - this would be removed after the construction phase had finished. After construction, traffic will go through the Chilbrook Lane in Eynsham but should be minimal.
- There are now to be no panels on the highest ground - thus widening the area for the footpath even further. It will have the effect of making the pathway less of a 'tunnel' and more of an opening and widening view as you go up the hill.
- The perimeter fence will be as close as possible to the panels, the hedging will be planted the footpath side of the fence and then the wild flower strip will be alongside that.
- The fencing will be no higher than 2.5m - down from 3m.
- The planting for screening throughout the site and on the edges will be made up of a mixture of new hedging plants (at least 2 years old) and young native trees (at least 5 years old). The developer has a duty to replace any that die throughout the life of the site.
- The developer has suggested that they could extend the southern footpath to allow for a cycle path.
- They have offered us and Eynsham £40,000 each on completion of the site. (16 weeks from the commencement of construction).

Nicky Brooks

South Leigh Forest Restoration Group report

To: The Chairman, South Leigh Parish Council for Meeting, 31st March 2020. From: David Brooks and Martin Spurrier.

South Leigh Forest Restoration Update

The early days of the South Leigh Forest Restoration are being very rewarding, if a little slow, but we expected this.

Launched in January, we have already planted or secured more than 40 trees and have rescued another 31 baby, self-set oaks from the hedgerows ready for planting. The slow bit is gaining permission from land owners, as anticipated.

Good news! On 20th March we were advised by Savills, the agents of Eynsham Park Estate, that we have been granted permission for planting near Just Cartridges, along Chapel Road and, potentially, Church End. Their email is below for information.

In the meantime, several households are pressing ahead. There are new trees in front of Acre Cottage in Chapel Road, we have been offered fruit trees for public spaces and there's tree planting at Station Farm, Tarwood House, Glebe House, Shuttles Cottage and at The Manor House, that we know of.

Football Field: Our big hope now is that we can get permission to plant 15 trees in clumps of three or four along the north side of the Football Field. We have asked Savills as this request was not mentioned. The Parish Council's Football Field Committee has kindly agreed, so we just need the Estate's consent.

For everyone's information, there are small stakes placed where we plan to plant the hardwood, long-life 'legacy' trees in each of the clumps.

A light-hearted, but serious, legal agreement has been drafted and is with Savills for the Estate's consideration. The Draft is below.

Martin Spurrier | 07799 368464 | martinspurrier@hotmail.com

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Copy of message from Alice Simon, Savills, agent for the Eynsham Park Estate dated 20 March 2020 for information:

Dear Martin and Ken,

Thank you for your email. We did discuss your plans at the Estate Meeting last week and I am pleased to say that the Estate has granted permission for you to plant some trees in a few of the locations you requested.

The locations they have agreed to are as follows:

- The triangle of land next to the Buffers' Depot ('Cartridges Triangle' on your plan) - you may plant this up with an extra 10 trees or so as you have outlined on your plan.
- The stretch of hedgerow heading west along Chapel Lane from Marjory Cross (see attached location) - you may plant trees as necessary to stop up gaps or thin areas in the hedgerow.

The other section of hedgerow in this field (heading up towards Church End) is a possible site, but the Estate has not given permission for this yet. In the future, if you need further sites, please get in touch and we can discuss this one.

Unfortunately, the other locations you have identified within the village are not suitable and many of the field margins you have identified are either not owned by the Estate or are included in environmental land management schemes and therefore we are prohibited from altering them.

In terms of gaining access to the two above sites to plant the trees, you should be able to access the hedgerow along Chapel Road from the road itself and not need access to the field. For the triangle of land at the Buffers' Depot, I assume that you also can access that area from the road and do not need any other access. However, if this is not the case, please let me know.

In terms of formalising the arrangement, please could you let me know what you have done elsewhere? We would like to have something formalised in writing (ideally with a location plan) before any planting works go ahead. I believe you were working on something (possibly a licence?) and were going to send it over?

I will also need notice of when you are planning to carry out the tree planting works so that I am able to inform the Estate or tenants if necessary.

If you have any further queries please do let me know.

Kind regards,
Alice.

DRAFT AGREEMENT

South Leigh Forest Restoration



To All and Singular to whom these Presents shall come, The South Leigh Forest Restoration group sends greetings! Whereas The South Leigh Forest Restoration group, which is a committee of the South Leigh Parish Council, in the District of West Oxfordshire and part of the County of Oxfordshire, seeks to plant trees in the Parish of South Leigh for the betterment of the environment, the further beautification of its bucolic views in, towards, from and surrounding the settlements of South Leigh and High Cogges, and for the provision of new habitat for fauna and the propagation of flora, The South Leigh Forest Restoration group agrees with: (name), of (address) as the Landowner of (site's address) who has agreed generously to make the above-mentioned site available for the planting of trees, on the

following terms:

1. That, any and all such trees provided and planted by the South Leigh Forest Restoration group remain the property of the said group until the same day and month of the planting in the Diamond Anniversary Year of 2075.
2. That, all rights to and responsibilities for the tree or trees passes to the Landowner with immediate effect from the time and date of the planting, subject only to the 'maintenance and management' of the tree or trees remaining with the South Leigh Restoration group for the first three years from the date of the planting subject to the agreement of the Landowner and his or her instructions as to access to the site, approval of any planned work thereon, and any other reasonable conditions that he or she may wish to impose.
3. The above 'maintenance and management' agreement can be substituted by any other satisfactory tree 'maintenance and management' arrangement for the first three years, agreed between the parties.
4. The South Leigh Forest Restoration group commits not to enter the Landowner's land nor to carry out any work on his or her land without his or her prior permission, not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed.
5. During the initial three-year period, 'maintenance and management' means, inter alia, the planting, staking, shielding, watering, nurturing, pruning, and replacing of the tree or trees as necessary and/or any other work required to ensure the health and growth of the trees by the South Leigh Forest Restoration group at its own expense.
6. At the anniversary of the day and date of the planting of the tree or trees in the year 2075, ownership of the tree or trees will pass to the Landowner for the consideration, stated below.
7. The consideration for the passing of ownership of the tree or trees in the year 2075 will be a pint of beer (or other liquid confection) to be purchased and paid for by the Landowner and to be consumed in the nearest public house acceptable to both parties. To conclude the agreement, the then representative of The South Leigh Restoration group present at the time will reciprocate by the purchase (at his or her own expense) of a pint of beer (or other liquid confection). The passing of ownership will be consummated by a shaking of hands in the presence of the then bartending person.

Signed for and on behalf of The South Leigh Restoration group:

Signed by the Land owner:

Date: