

SOUTH LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, 13TH JULY 2021, 19:30

Present were:

- Nicky Brooks (Chair)
- Lysette Nicholls (Vice Chair)
- Graham Soame (Parish Councillor)
- Rita Sawrey-Woodwards (Parish Councillor)
- David Augervid Auger (Parish Councillor)
- Dick Pears (Parish Councillor)
- Dan Levy (District Councillor)
- Andy Goodwin (District Councillor)
- Members of public: Melody England, Gary Nicholls, Martin Spurrier & Liz Ashwell

(Numbers refer to agenda items)

1. Apologies: Carl Rylett. No other apologies.
2. No declarations of interest.
3. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
4. No issue of concern were raised by any parishioner save in respect of the football pitch / playing field.
5. Cllr. Levy said he would update the Parish Council on the A40 when that item was discussed.

Cllr. Goodman informed the Parish Council of various information gathering initiatives by WODC - a review and listing of sports and social facilities, information about management of land owned by WODC - Nicky Brooks requested a copy of any map and it was agreed he would get the Parish Council a copy. There was a sustainability project of the whole of WODC area with £100,000 grant. He mentioned the Nature Recovery Network with which South Leigh was already in contact.

6. There were no matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.
7. The Clerk having resigned from end of June, active steps were being taken to fill the vacancy and Melody England was attending the meeting to observe.

All post-election forms and declarations had been submitted to WODC and approved by WODC and the annual accounting requirements had been filed.

The Parish Council bank account with Barclays needed the submission of one document to commence internet banking but in the event that issues remained, a bank account with a bank approved by the Parish Council association would be opened.

8. No payments to approve and it was noted there was a £245.76 credit on the council tax bill.

9. Cllr. Levy updated the Parish Council on the A40 - he thought with funding in place, civil servants and others who want it, the scheme is 99% certain to happen. There was discussion about a number of issues including Shores Green and Barnard Gate. Nicky Brooks expressed to Cllr. Levy her frustration that, despite cooperation on the Parish Council's part and representatives of the Parish Council attending meetings and 'Zoom conferences', information had been requested since Easter and it was still not forthcoming. She indicated that she wanted the information now that she had been requesting in emails (figures, assumptions, etc.) or there would be a freedom of information request and Dick Pears indicated that a consultation was in danger of not being a consultation and raising risks to OCC of a judicial review. Cllr. Levy agreed to contact Cllr. Enright and there was a discussion about raising it at Cabinet level next week. As part of item 9, there was the issue of the cycle paths and Dick Pears indicated that he had circulated a discussion paper to the Parish Council suggesting three routes - to Eynsham, Witney and to the southeast - none following roads and all being more direct routes than perhaps OCC would suggest. Dick Pears asked the Parish Council for permission to contact various individuals (representatives of the Solar Farm, WODC) with a view to developing a plan to discuss with the village. That was agreed.
10. Gary Nicholls of the conservation group presented the report of the Heritage Consultant, dated 1st July 2021. Nicky Brooks raised the issue of numbering of particular areas on Figure 5 and asked whether it suggested hierarchy and Gary Nicholls indicated that it was simply identification. He suggested that the report should be circulated to the village and that there would then be a pre-application meeting with WODC before the conservation group bringing the issue back to the Parish Council and to the village for votes in the light of that meeting and the preliminary views of WODC. The Parish Council agreed unanimously to that course.
11. Dick Pears updated the Parish Council with the latest from BT/ EE - that its engineers reported their adjustments had not produced the improved results it wanted and that therefore they were putting into effect two alternative solutions - pruning trees that were interfering and raising the level of the mast. Dick Pears had not given up with the other mobile providers and would raise the matter again with Robert Courts.
12. Rita Sawrey-Woodwards and Graham Soame updated the Parish Council about the Limb Brook - voles were back and the barn owl was visiting. Rita Sawrey-Woodwards reported recent observations of frogs and toads from villagers.

Rita Sawrey-Woodwards dealt with pollution levels. Dissolved chemicals in the Limb Brook are being monitored and measured monthly. The results from the June sampling were very disturbing. Downstream of the sewage treatment plant in Lymbrook Close, the Eynsham end of the village, phosphate levels of 6.4 ppm and nitrate levels of 100ppm were recorded. To compare, where the Limb Brook enters the village at the Witney end, levels of 0.09ppm phosphate and 10ppm nitrates were recorded, levels far lower and acceptable. (Note that 0.1ppm is the maximum acceptable level of phosphates and <5ppm the acceptable level of nitrates to avoid accelerated eutrofication). There is a high probability that these unacceptably high levels of phosphates and nitrates are

caused by the outflow from the sewage plant in South Leigh into the Limb Brook. The Parish Council agreed that this cannot continue if the re-wilding and returning biodiversity to the Limb Brook is going to be successful. It was felt that both Thames Water and the Environment Agency should be made aware of, and address, the cause of these very high levels. Lysette Nicholls agreed to provide Rita Sawrey-Woodwards with email contacts for them to be contacted. Ashley Smith of WASP has been informed of the excessive levels by Rita Sawrey-Woodwards.

Cllr. Goodman made the Parish Council aware of a national Green Week beginning 21st September 2021. The Parish Council agreed to discuss how South Leigh could become actively involved in this.

Rita Sawrey-Woodwards and Graham Soame will be attending a course associated with the national River Fly Project on 4th August 2021. This will enable both to carry out kick-testing of the Limb Brook to determine the presence / absence of invertebrate species indicative of high / low pollution levels, alongside the testing of dissolved chemicals. Information gathered will contribute to the national database on river pollution.

There was a preliminary discussion about action that could be taken with Thames Water, but it was agreed that we needed to hear back from Windrush and need to be assured of our ground before launching action-like injunctions.

13. Flooding - Lysette Nicholls did a detailed oral report on the issue of flooding, the amelioration efforts of OCC.

Grips have been done and pipes near Shuttles Cottage and the Mason Arms been checked and cleared if required.

High Cogges - OCC will be inspecting the course of the pipe that is leading to flooding issues. They will also arrange for jetting later in the year. Permission has been granted by Mark Walker for OCC to complete this work on his land later in the year. OCC advised residents at High Cogges to upload photos when issues occur on [fixmystreet.com](https://www.fixmystreet.com) - see below for link.

OCC advised speaking with landowners in High Cogges to clear ditches as this is not helping with surface water on the road. Dick Pears agreed to follow up with the landowners in conjunction with Lysette Nicholls.

[fixmystreet.com](https://www.fixmystreet.com) has proven very successful as drain covers have been repaired, footpath bridges repaired and pot holes filled in. All villagers can access and are encouraged to report via this. This has been highlighted on the village website.

14. As far as facilities were concerned, the matter of urgent need of resolution was the mowing of the football pitch. There was discussion about the fact that no-one could remember a football match being played and it was agreed that it was an under-used resource and there needed to be a detailed look at its role and function in the village, but in the immediate present, as Mark Walker was no longer willing to mow the pitch at a reduced fee, Martin Spurrier agreed to mow it for free with Nicky Brooks's topper (if that was required) and the Parish

Council would look at the strategic issues raised by the football pitch and other village facilities.

15. Shuttles Cottage - it was recorded that the Parish Council had supported this application and Nicky Brooks would check that WODC had received this. Church Farm was a pending decision. The Parish Council had filed its reasons for objection and WODC indicated that if the officers recommended grant it would be called in. It was not on WODC planning application for next week.
16. Speed Watch - Lysette Nicholls updated and indicated that the initiative was ready to proceed once more and she would be seeking volunteers.
17. Boundary Commission - Cllr. Levy indicated that the Boundary Commission looked at moving whole wards and not part of wards and whilst South Leigh would more naturally sit with Witney, there needed to be a substantial adjustment because of the number of voters in the current Witney constituency so that he thought that the Boundary Commission proposal had something to recommend it although the current proposed name could be improved and he suggested 'Evenlode and Cherwell', 'Blenheim and Bicester' or 'Woodstock and Bicester'. Nicky Brooks indicated that all the connections that South Leigh had were with Witney and most people felt that South Leigh should remain in the current constituency. Dick Pears agreed to contact Robert Court and write a submission on behalf of the Parish Council to the Boundary Commission.
18. Raising the profile of the village - the Parish Council agreed to defer discussion of that.
19. HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee - Liz Ashwell said the village hall committee were already considering both a beacon and a picnic and it was agreed that there would be further detailed discussion.
20. Items to note - Martin Spurrier congratulated Lysette Nicholls and John Ashwell and others on the terrific newsletter - the Parish Council were all in agreement on that and Lysette Nicholls thought we ought to thank Martin Spurrier for working so hard on the bell tower and achieving an award with high marks - again the Parish Council unanimously agreed.
21. Rita Sawrey-Woodwards raised the issue of the kerb gutters no longer being cleaned regularly, if at all, by WODC. Much of the kerbed lengths in the village are clogged with soil and plants. Cleaning could enhance the dissipation of water during heavy rainfall assisting in avoiding flooding. She enquired as to whether this service was still available. Cllr. Goodman agreed to investigate and report back.

The meeting closed at 21:00