

BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Binfield Heath Annual Parish Meeting held at the Scout Hut on Monday May 21st 2018 at 7.45pm.

Present Cllr P Rollason, Cllr L Ransom, Cllr S Summerland, Cllr Hugh Lacey, Cllr G Englefield, Cllr Keith Maher, Cllr Paul Harrison and Cllr David Bartholomew. 21 residents of Binfield Heath.

Chairman's Report

The PC has had its usual busy year.

Neighbourhood Plan

In November a Parish Council working party put a lot of time into a response to the Local Plan which was submitted to SODC.

The process of planning decisions is still a concern for the Parish Council. The Parish Council is under pressure to consider a Neighbourhood Plan as we are now advised that the Community Led Plan, completed last year, no longer has any impact with development.

The Council is considering whether to proceed or not with a Neighbourhood Plan and hope that a final decision will be made by the end of the year.

AONB

In the meantime the PC is trying to increase the area covered by AONB, this will be a lengthy process

Gladman Planning Application

The Parish council has given neighbouring E&D Parish Council full support in its objection to the Gladman planning application for the development of 245 houses on the edge of Eye and Dunsden. This would impact BH with additional traffic and set a worrying precedent for Binfield Heath. Lis Ransom, myself and Hugh Lacey attended the Gladman Appeal hearing in Henley 2 weeks ago on different days, Hugh Lacey gave the BH response.

Recreation Ground

The playground repairs necessary on safety grounds were undertaken successfully although the PC has recently had to seal off one of the larger pieces of equipment as it was reported that two of the poles were loose. This will be repaired as soon as possible. The PC is very grateful for all the volunteers who help to keep the Recreation Ground tidy and help with minor repairs. A girl undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh's award has been keeping the litter down in the Recreation Ground for the early part of the year.

Website

The PC website, run by Lis Ransom, is now established and receives a regular flow of traffic. Our next challenge is to ensure we are GDPR compliant in our news mailing system.

Village Halls

Sue Summerland has been appointed a trustee for the Dunsden Village Hall. Hugh Lacey represents BH on Shiplake Memorial Hall.

Green Gym

The Green Gym was very busy again and the River Binn; Green Pond and Arch Hill Woods are now looking much clearer.

Allotments

With one or two exceptions the allotment site is looking tidy and productive. There is one plot available for rent.

Police

The PCSO for the area came to the March meeting and it is apparently sheds that are being broken into locally.

Your Councillors

Roger Roberts retired this Summer after 3 years' service as a Councillor. We thank him for his valued contribution, he does join us regularly at our meetings as he does like to keep an eye on us. Keith Maher joined us in the Autumn, he has already carried out a lot of research on the issues surrounding the NP, I'm sure he will prove a great asset to the Council.

A big thank you to George Englefield who has looked after the grounds for us since this council was established in 2013 and who celebrated his 90th this spring!

The Clerk

The Clerk applied for a grant and was successful in securing money towards a laptop and printer for

the use of the PC. I would like to thank Mandy for her invaluable contribution ensuring the smooth running of the council and keeping us on track.

Financial Report

This last year the precept was kept at the same amount as the reserves were quite low. A one-off donation of (£500) was made towards the campaign against Gladman Developments in order that a barrister's services could be enlisted to argue on behalf of campaign. Another large donation (£1500) was made to the Scout Hut as the roof needed replacing. The usual donation was made to the Royal British Legion this financial year.

The amount carried forward March 31st 2018 was about £12,500 and predicted expenditure is just short of that amount.

VAT has been claimed and the accounts are at present being scrutinised by the internal auditor.

Paperwork is being prepared for the external audit.

Neighbourhood Plans

The Chairman welcomed the three people who had agreed to speak to the PC and the residents about their experiences of Neighbourhood Plans. Unfortunately, the speaker coming from SODC was unwell and unable to attend so Cllr Paul Harrison, the District Councillor, stepped in to give the background to Neighbourhood Plans and why now the Community Led Plan that had been drawn up was no longer sufficient to stand against developers wanting to acquire land for housing. Cllr Harrison explained that the Neighbourhood Plan has to provide sites that the residents are on the whole happy to see developed. In Binfield Heath it would need to involve the local landowner. It would need to be reviewed every 2 years and if completed would provide a stand against the more powerful land developers. A plan of less than 2 years only requires a three-year land supply by the District Council.

Cllr Sue Biggs from Kidmore End Parish Council and David Pheasant from Shiplake Parish Council spoke about their experiences of starting and working towards a Neighbourhood Plan. Budgets had been set and adhered to. It was clear however that it was a lot of hard work with regular meetings. It also requires support from a large number of residents. Cllr Lis Ransom commented that despite leaflets distributed throughout the village only 21 residents attended the meeting which disappointingly did not demonstrate wide interest. It was noted that SODC officers now have more experience so there is not such a need for expensive consultants, and grants are available.

The Chairman thanked the three speakers for their expertise. A show of hands from the 21 residents showed that they were nearly all in favour of drawing up a Neighbourhood Plan. It was suggested that a meeting with the local stakeholders would be a good way to start the discussion. Cllr Harrison recommended a look at the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan.

The meeting of the Recreation Ground Charities and Allotment for the Labouring Poor Charity

013/18 Recreation Ground The playground has had its regular inspections.

014/18 Allotments These were inspected. There is one plot vacant.

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

Present Cllr P Rollason, Cllr L Ransom, Cllr S Summerland, Cllr Hugh Lacey, Cllr G Englefield,

001/18 Apologies for absence

002/18 Minutes of the Annual meeting on 23rd May 2016. Tabled. These had been accepted as a true record in June 2017.

003/18 Appointment of Chairman The Chairman handed the meeting over to the Vice Chairman. As Cllr Rollason was willing to stand again as Chairman, his position was proposed by Cllr Summerland and seconded by Cllr Maher. All agreed. The Chairman returned to the Chair.

004/18 Appointment of Vice Chairman Cllr Summerland proposed that Cllr Ransom continued as Vice Chairman. This was seconded by Cllr Englefield. All agreed

005/18. Councillor responsibilities

Cllr Ransom: website, planning & neighbourhood plans

Cllr Summerland: allotments, Green Pond

Cllr Englefield

Cllr Lacey: planning, footpaths, transport & minerals

The responsibilities of the Councillors will be discussed next month. At present the Chairman is carrying out the responsibility of the Recreation Ground inspections.

006/18 County Councillor's report Cllr Bartholomew reported that a) OCC had been asked for its views on the Oxbridge Expressway. It is concerned that the A34 is not to be part of the scheme, that the impact on the existing highway network is minimal and that it is developed separately alongside local developments such as Culham river crossing b) there are now two dragon patchers repairing potholes. In the last year over 21000 potholes have been fixed c) Residents have helped the Trading Standards to report drivers and vehicles breaching the weight limit on rural roads and bridges resulting in prosecutions and fines d) a recruitment drive to encourage more people in Oxfordshire to consider a career as a care worker has attracted more applicants in just five months as in the previous two years. An ageing population means that more caring, friendly care workers to support older, frail people at home, in nursing and residential homes or in community hospital settings are needed e) OCC have questioned Thames Water's plans to build a huge reservoir south of Abingdon to support the forecast of the Thames Water area. Thames Water was asked to speed up their programme of leak reduction to delay the need for a reservoir as long as possible and the lack of clarity on whether potential sites have been assessed across the South East region was pointed out f) as advised at the last meeting, I now have a £15k Councillor Priorities Fund to allocate across my nine parishes. I will divide this in relation to parish size, thus I have £1000 available for Binfield Heath to match-fund Highways projects. If the works are costed via OCC Highways and undertaken by them, all that is needed is my agreement to proceed; if works are costed and undertaken by third-parties a form will need to be completed followed by a simple OCC approval process g) he spoke on 2nd May at the planning inquiry held at Henley Rugby Club. My focus was primarily on the potential erosion of the distinctive urban-to-rural county boundary and cross-border administrative complexities h) as previously reported, the required road closure running through Harpsden, near Henley golf club, started in March. Openreach then began to prove the route from there to the Bottle & Glass – including rodding and roping all the way to check for any blockages or collapsed ducting. The outcome of the route proving has shown the network is exceptionally dilapidated; providing a firm timeline for completion is therefore difficult.

007/18 District Councillor's Report Cllr Harrison reported that a) a new leader (Jane Murphy) and cabinet team are in place b) a by-election will be held for the Benson and Crowmarsh Ward on Thursday 7th June c) both councils are now meeting the five-year housing land supply required by the National Planning Policy Framework d) a Neighbourhood Planning workshop took place on 15th May e) recycling now includes cooking oil (in a plastic bottle <1litre) left inside the food waste caddy f) with demand for water expected to increase Thames Water has carried out a consultation on a new Water Resource Management Plan to 2100. The plan considers a range of water supply options, including a new reservoir near Abingdon g) the first SO Lottery Draw took place and raised £450 for good causes. The District Councillor's annual report is attached to these minutes.

008/18 Minutes of the PC meeting April 23rd 2018 Cllr Hugh Lacey proposed the minutes be adopted. Proposal seconded by Cllr Summerland. All agreed.

009/18 Matters Arising

062/18 Peter Woolsey put in a request to stand as “steward” of the piece of land opposite the Chapel being used as allotments as he has been carrying out this duty for many years. The Chairman said that the estate had asked the PC to take on the responsibility of the land and a tenancy agreement was awaited. The Chairman suggested the coordinator would be chosen by the tenants.

010/18 Public Forum Richard Winter reported that a footpath leading from Gravel Road opposite Heath Drive down to Sandpit Lane was extremely difficult for walkers as it was damaged by horses and cyclists. This will also be mentioned at the next EDPC meeting,

The Clerk was also asked to report fly tipping of fence panels along the Emmer Green Road opposite the entrance to the Cricket Pitch. **(Clerk to Action)**

011/18 Declarations of Interest none

012/18 Financial Situation a) The financial situation was presented

b) The May accounts were presented for payment. Cheques to the value of £762.19 were authorised. Payment for these was proposed by Cllr Summerland and seconded by Cllr Lacey. **(Clerk to Action)**

013/18 GDPR This was discussed. The Clerk had sent a draft privacy policy, a retention policy and a data protection policy to Councillors prior to the meeting. Councillors were asked to send their comments and any amendments to the Clerk so that the policies can be adopted at the next meeting. Cllr Ransom had suggested a number of amendments and was sending them around to the other Councillors for their comments. The Clerk reported that she was trying to register the Parish Council with the Information Commissioner but so far had had problems with the website completing this. However, progress towards compliance is being made. **(Clerk to action)**

The meeting closed at 10.30pm

Date of next meeting Monday June 18th

District Councillor's Annual Report 2018

Unitary Council

At an emergency full council meeting on Friday 10th March SODC voted to pursue the setting up of a Unitary Council based on the Oxfordshire County Council. This immediately followed a cabinet meeting to agree the proposals prior to putting to the full council. Our sister council the Vale of the White Horse had an emergency full council meeting a couple of days before. The reason for such a rush was so that it could go Oxfordshire County Council's full council the following Tuesday.

The proposed bid now goes to the minister of state (Sajid Javid MP) for a decision. The combined proposal would have regional boards which would handle planning based on the same boundaries as the current District Council's boundaries, and there would be local decision making in as yet not fully defined town zones.

Because of the purdah rules surrounding the County Council elections any further movement will have to wait until these elections are complete. However, although the Vale, SODC and Oxfordshire County Council have recommended the proposed unitary three other councils are opposed to this. These are West Oxfordshire District Council, Cherwell District Council and Oxford City Council.

There is a further complication, you can only have one council tax for the whole of this new unitary and because Oxford City has the majority of the Social Services need unless they agree to take some of the current services from the unitary council then there could be a substantial increase in council tax across the county. There is also the question of the £50m+ reserves held by SODC, not all this could be used to for residents in South Oxfordshire and a lot of this will have to go outside our district possibly to massage the council tax increase for the first year of the new unitary.

The following press release has been put on the Public Sector Executive web page: -

http://www.publicsectorexecutive.com/Comment/a-new-council-for-a-better-oxfordshire/167970?utm_source=Public%20Sector%20Executive&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=8225250_PSE%20Newsletter%2003%20April%2017%20wk%204&dm_i=IJU,4WAN6,8Z1EVR,IJU6X,1

Local Plan

As we all know both the Vale and South Oxfordshire District Councils have failed the 5-year land supply test, mainly due to developer's land banking significant parts of Didcot which was expected to take 60% of our housing supply. This then leaves a large proportion of our District open to aggressive development often by the same developers who land banked most of the development areas in Didcot. The one saving grace is those towns and villages which have a neighbourhood plan as Gavin Barwell MP the minister responsible for the planning Inspectorate has decreed that a neighbourhood if under 2 years old in a District with over 3 years land supply should be considered "In Date", which is significant because the inspectorate will consider that area to be protected.

We are therefore keen to get our 5-year land supply back up to date which is where the Local Plan 2033 becomes important. 2033 is the period covered by this local plan. There has been a number of public meetings in our market towns and the one relevant to us in Henley at the Christ the Church Centre between 10am – 4pm on Saturday 22nd April.

Individual Councillor Grant Scheme

The Individual Councillor Grant Scheme was approved on **Thursday 6 April**. The scheme will launch early summer with every South Oxfordshire District Councillor having £5,000 allocated to them to award in grants for community projects. Grants can be made from £500 to the maximum of £5,000 and must benefit the community in the councillor's ward area.

Neighbourhood planning update

Shiplake Parish Council

Shiplake Parish Council has submitted its proposed neighbourhood plan area application to the council. As the application includes parts of two parishes, we have launched a six-week publicity period.

Further information can be viewed at www.southoxon.gov.uk/shiplakenp

To check the progress of all our neighbourhood plans, **take a look at the South Oxfordshire chart.**

General Election

We had two elections last year. The county council elections in May followed very quickly by the General

Election in June.

Changes to the bin collection

At the beginning of the year we had many issues with breakdowns of our waste collection vehicles. Hence, we invested £6.5 million in a new fleet of vehicles across the two districts.

You'll have noticed that the new waste collection vehicles have changed. Instead of having one vehicle to collect both the bulk waste and food waste we now have two separate vehicles. The reason for this is simple. We live in a rural area and because the bulk waste vehicle was filling up too quickly it was having to go back to the depot more often. By having two vehicles the bulk waste vehicle can stay out longer. As the food waste is much smaller in comparison this vehicle can stay out all day.

Binzone app available to download

We have launched our new smartphone app - it's called Binzone and it is available on iPhone and Android devices. Binzone lets you know what day your bins will be emptied and which bin it will be, all at the tap of your phone screen. You will also receive notifications when your collection date changes due to bank holidays, or if bad weather disrupts collections. You can also find out what can and can't be recycled!

You can download the app on your mobile or tablet by searching for "Binzone" on the Appstore or Google Play Store now. Please help us spread the word!

Chief Executive Resigns

David Hill has resigned as chief executive of SODC and the Vale District Councils. Mark Stone was appointed acting chief executive and then in December this position was made permanent.

Thames Farm

This is an example of how an inspector can get a calculation so totally wrong and there is absolutely nothing you can do about it.

Back in December 2016 Gavin Barwell MP announced that if a District Council has over "3 years land supply" and there was a validated neighbourhood plan in place then development could be constrained to the sites agreed. For the rest of the district outside a neighbourhood planning area the land supply had to be over 5 years. The issue we've suffered here in South Oxfordshire has been land banking in Didcot bringing our land supply down to 4.1 year. Therefore, speculative development is springing up all over our district in these unprotected areas.

The inspector on the Thames Farm application decided arbitrarily that we didn't even have a 3-year land supply with some magic numbers used to bring our housing number down to 2 below the 3-year target. No, other inspector before or since has disputed our number. I'll say that again no other inspector has disputed our numbers.

The net effect is he granted Thames Farm planning permission to build within the Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood planning area on the edge of Shiplake even though this site was rejected in the plan. SODC decided to challenge this in the high court. We lost as the judge said the inspector can come to his own decision and his way of calculating the numbers cannot be challenged. We along with Shiplake tried to take this to the appeal court but in every case, we were told effectively the inspector system could not be challenged. Interestingly the applicants for Thames Farm were able to challenge the original inspector when he came to the opposite decision.

The net effect is that we've had to accept Thames Farm.

Returning to Crowmarsh

A press announcement had now been made that we are returning to our old home in 2 years' time. This will co-inside with the contract with Milton Park expiring and for us in the south this is good news as we won't have to fight the way through traffic in Didcot to get to Planning Committee meetings and it will be easier to get to see officers during the day.

Buy tickets for SO Charitable Lottery

Tickets go on sale from 27 March for the new SO Charitable Lottery. The good news is you're all able to play and help support your local causes, with the exception of Lynn Lloyd as she's the cabinet member for that area of the council. From every £1 ticket sold, 50p will go to registered good causes and 10p into a general fund that will support local volunteering. So far, almost 40 charities and voluntary groups have joined as beneficiaries and we are expecting this number to continue rising.

Visit the [lottery website](#) to buy your tickets and find out more - and please remember to spread the word about the lottery among your local communities. The first draw takes place on 28 April.

Land Pirates

They call themselves “Land Promoters” but they’re really the pirates of the housing world. They are one of the reasons we have to pay so much for housing in this country. They don’t build anything but grab a large profit from acquiring land and then selling it on to a developer who then passes these costs onto the consumer who purchases the property.

In the Sonning Common Ward we have two appeals by the two biggest of these companies. Gladman’s on the edge of Reading in Eye and Dunsden Paris and Gallagher’s in Sonning Common’s neighbourhood planning area.

I would recommend reading the following article in the Daily Telegraph regarding these two Companies:- <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2017/08/05/modern-day-barons-inside-murky-underbelly-land-promotion/>

Through their connections in central government they have been able to prosper to the detriment of the rest of society.

Local Plan

As already mentioned we’ve lost our 5-year land supply. We are therefore keen to get a new plan in place to resolve this issue. The new plan will take us to 2033. We have picked 2 major sites, Culham and Chalgrove airfield. However, both sites have issues, Culham is within the Oxford Green Belt but at least it’s near the so called “Science Vale”, the area identified within the SHMA as where most of the jobs are going to be generated. Chalgrove airfield was owned by the MOD and passed across to “Housing England” a government quango but there’s an issue Martin Baker had a lease to use the land to 2063. Housing England are threatening Martin Baker with compulsory purchase as they have that power but I can see this getting very messy for us.

Changes in Leadership

Councillor Jane Murphy was elected Leader of the Council for a term ending on the date of the annual Council meeting in May 2019. She appointed Councillor Felix Bloomfield as Deputy Leader. Details of the Cabinet appointments with portfolio responsibilities are set out below: -

Jan Murphy: Leader and communications

Felix Bloomfield: Deputy Leader and planning

Anna Badcock: Legal and democratic

Kevin Bulmer: Corporate Services

David Dodds: Finance

Paul Harrison: Development and regeneration

Lynn Lloyd: Community Services

Caroline Newton: Housing and environment

Bill Service: Partnership and insight

My portfolio consists of 3 subsections these are: -

Economic Development; Property; Infrastructure & development