

BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Binfield Heath Parish Council Meeting held on Monday February 24th 2020 at 7.45 pm at the Bottle and Glass

Meeting of the Recreation Ground Charities & Allotment for the Labouring Poor Charity

04/20 Recreation Ground The Clerk presented a quotation to replace the wooden surround to the sandpit and put a strong spring on the gate. The PC decided to accept this quotation but thought that the sand pit could perhaps be filled with volunteer help after the new surround was complete.

All agreed. **(Clerk to action)**

05/20 Allotments The Clerk reported that one rent was still outstanding. There is one spare allotment. **(Clerk to action)**

06/20 Public Forum No questions.

The meeting of the Parish Council

Present Cllr P Rollason, Cllr L Ransom, Cllr S Summerland, Cllr H Lacey, Cllr Sarah Fulton-Urry, Cllr D Bartholomew (OCC) and Cllr L Rawlins (SODC). Norman Lane, Barney Double and Roger Roberts

15/20 Apologies for absence Cllr K Maher

16/20 Declarations of Interest None

17/20 Minutes of the meeting held on Monday January 27th 2020 Cllr Summerland proposed the minutes were accepted as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Ransom. All agreed.

18/20 Matters Arising All items on the agenda.

19/20 County Councillor's report Cllr Bartholomew updated the PC on recent local matters. His report is attached and can be seen on the website.

20/20 District Councillor's report Cllr Rawlins discussed the issues with the Local Plan and with SODC finances. His report is attached and can be seen on the website. Both Councillors were asked about the plans for developing the land behind the hall in Dunsden. Both Councillors said that they had heard nothing about this and that no plans had been submitted. The Clerk was asked to investigate further. **(Clerk to action)**

21/20 Public Forum/Correspondence Mr Roberts asked about the large vehicles parked on Arch Hill that are reducing visibility. The problem was discussed as there will be even more concern when parents and children are crossing to the Recreation Ground. Cllr Bartholomew commented that to apply double yellow lines would be very expensive.

22/20 Financial Situation

22.01/20 The financial position was circulated.

22.02/20 The February accounts were presented. Invoices to the value of £3,361.52 were authorised for payment by BACS. These payments were proposed by Cllr Ransom and seconded by Cllr Lacey. **(Clerk to action)**

22.03/20 Councillor expenses: None this month

23/20 Planning Matters

New Applications

P19/S4430/FUL Proposed demolition of existing stables, and erection of replacement stable building with 3x stables, haybarn and tack room Holmwood Shiplake Row Binfield Heath RG9 4DP This application was discussed by a working party and it was decided to recommend the application for approval. Decision ratified.

P20/S0101/HH Erection of single storey detached timber framed building. 5 Spring Terrace Gravel Road Binfield Heath RG9 4LU This application was discussed by a working party and it was decided to recommend the application for approval. Decision ratified.

Applications Granted

Applications to Committee

P19/S4261/FUL Bournes Farmhouse. This application was to go to Committee on 26th February. This was discussed with the District Councillors and with no specific planning reasons to take to the Committee, it was decided to withdraw the application to speak against this application although the letter explaining the Parish Council's objection is to be submitted. **(Vice Chair to action)**

24/20 Community Matters

24.01/20 The tree in the centre of the village. The tree is not thriving and may have to be replaced. The Parish Council is taking advice as the tree is an important focus.

24.02/20 The Village Litter Pick is planned for Saturday March 7th. The litter pick will commence at 10am at the Village Stores. Litter pickers and bags will be provided. It will be advertised on the website and on Nextdoor.

25/20 Highways/Transport and General Maintenance

25.01/20 The third Reading Bridge meeting: This is discussed in Cllr Bartholomew's report. However, it was suggested that Parish Councils wrote to the key decision makers regarding the bridge. A list of email addresses was passed to the Clerk. The Councillors will prepare a draft letter to be sent. **(All Councillors to action)**

25.02/20 Road closures: The PC expressed its frustration with Thames Water closing roads for a week disrupting residents and cancelling buses and then completing work in a much shorter time without informing anyone.

25.03/20 Sewage Leakage: This has become a major problem in the village. The Clerk was unsuccessful in conversations with Thames Water. However, the residents concerned are now more reassured having spoken to the contractors.

25.04/20 Suggestions for improvements at Coppid Crossroads. This was discussed but the County Councillor said that the statistics were not sufficient for anything major to be done. The signs have been cleaned and the white markings have been repainted. It was agreed the PC would confirm the date and time of the accident and car reg numbers so that the County Councillor could make further enquiries to see if there was any personal injury which would improve chances of new preventative measures being introduced. Reducing the height of the hedges near the junction was suggested to increase visibility.

26/20 Grants and Donations Donations were discussed. It was decided that a donation of £100 would be given to the Citizens Advice Bureau and a donation of £400 to the Fish Volunteer Group as a number of residents use this service and the group are try to raise money to purchase a building to provide a centre for the charity.

27/20 Neighbourhood Plan Mr Roberts expressed concern that the actions from the November meeting might not have been undertaken. In Cllr Maher's absence it was difficult to ascertain developments so the item was deferred until the next meeting. The importance of the development of an NP was emphasised as the design of properties in the village can be addressed in an NP and this has been a recent issue.

28/20 Neighbourhood Watch As Cllr Maher was absent this item was deferred.

29/20 Matters for future consideration Neighbourhood Plan; CIL money

The meeting finished at 9.50pm

Date of next meeting: Monday March 23rd 2020

REPORT TO BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL FEB 2020 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW GENERAL OCC REPORT

BUDGET OFFERS RESIDENTS INVESTMENT IN SOCIAL SERVICES, SCHOOLS & ROADS

Proposals for an 'investment budget' to reduce neglect, ill-health and social isolation will be considered by councillors when the budget is set on Tuesday 11 February, following resident and business consultation. The proposals include community support for vulnerable people so they can live independently for longer, and more help for struggling families to reduce the chances of children having to go into care.

Funding for children and adult social services would increase by £30 million next year, including an extra £8.1m from the government. This money is needed to support an increase in adult social care needs for both older and disabled people, as well as the increasing number of child protection cases, which has grown in line with national trends.

The budget proposals also include investment in infrastructure across the county, such as an extra £50m for new and existing schools over ten years. Most of the funding comes from housing developers to meet the

need for more pupil places in Oxfordshire.

The county council proposes to spend £30 million in 2020/21 from its capital budget on repairs to roads, bridges, drainage and footways across Oxfordshire's towns and villages. New funding of £3m per year is proposed to improve local road safety and accessibility, including new pedestrian crossings, improved junctions and better bus stop facilities. These measures are designed to encourage walking and cycling as part of the council's commitment to improving air quality and active lifestyles.

Responding to climate change features prominently across budget proposals, including support for sustainable travel such as improving park and ride services on the A40, and the replacement of over 50,000 streetlights with energy-efficient LEDs. However, all budget proposals have to consider the climate change agenda and how OCC will meet its carbon neutral target by 2030.

NEW ONLINE WASTE INFORMATION TOOL LAUNCHED TO BOOST RECYCLING RATES

A new online tool has been launched by the council to help tackle the main issue inhibiting residents doing better at recycling. It is called Waste Wizard and offers information on: what can and cannot be recycled; where to deposit waste; and be repurposing or donation.

Waste Wizard uses postcodes and allows residents to identify what to do with a huge range of household objects and materials to avoid them being disposed of based on location. It works across all areas of the county, irrespective of district. It aims to inform residents of where and how to get some objects repaired or donated as well as recycled at local authority sites or from the kerbside.

Oxfordshire has a commanding lead position in England for recycling with over 58 per cent of all waste is reused, composted or recycled in compared to the national rate of 45 per cent. The rationale for Waste Wizard is to drive this rate up further. It aims to cut the contamination in kerbside recycling collection bins (currently 10%) as well as informing residents about the many items (especially food) that are erroneously deposited in the general waste bin. The online tool can be found at: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wastewizard

WINTER BOOKLET OFFERS ADVICE TO OLDER PEOPLE

Age UK Oxfordshire has joined forces with local partners to provide advice to older people on staying healthy and well during the winter. The aim is to provide older people with health, well-being and lifestyle advice that supports them during the winter months – when they are susceptible to flu, coughs and colds. Working in partnership with Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and OCC, Age UK Oxfordshire is encouraging older people to create a personal winter plan.

'Staying Well This Winter' is full of tips and advice on how to look after oneself and others. This might include having a list of emergency phone numbers by the phone, getting repeat prescriptions in plenty of time or having a free flu vaccination for those in an 'at risk' group. The booklet also includes a handy checklist of items you may need as part of your winter plan. It is available via www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire or by contacting Age UK Oxfordshire by phone on 01235 849 434 or email network@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk.

GO AHEAD FOR BUSINESS CASE TO REDUCE CONGESTION IN AND AROUND OXFORD

OCC and Oxford City Council cabinets have approved plans to develop a detailed business case for a project to reduce congestion on routes into and around Oxford, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions. The aim of 'Connecting Oxford' is to make a real improvement to journey times for commuters, other travellers and quality of life for residents and visitors, including improved air quality. This will be done by reducing the number of cars travelling into and around the city and encouraging more people to travel by buses, walking and cycling. The business plan was informed by a survey run in autumn 2019 on an outline of possible proposals. Over 3000 responses were received from residents, employers and other major city organisations including the NHS and universities.

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BINFIELD HEATH

SPECIAL THIRD READING BRIDGE MEETING FRIDAY 31st JANUARY 2020

At an informal joint meeting of parish councils from the southern part of Oxfordshire on 31st January 2020 to

discuss the proposed Third Reading Bridge, the following resolution was overwhelmingly passed:

a) In the context of the Climate Emergency a car-based solution to a car-based problem that would pour thousands of cars and HGVs into Oxfordshire is totally inappropriate and should a new bridge be built it should be restricted to public transport, cyclists and pedestrians;

b) Notwithstanding the above, if a car-based solution is pursued, the proposed bridge and necessary mitigation measures (i.e. improvements to the Oxfordshire road network) are not considered as two separate projects, but as one single project in order that the benefits, disadvantages and costs of the complete scheme can be holistically assessed.

I was asked to communicate this fact to the MP Bridge Summit meeting in March.

Representatives from these parish councils attended: Binfield Heath, Eye & Dunsden, Harpsden, Highmoor, Ipsden, Kidmore End, Rotherfield Greys, Rotherfield Peppard, Shiplake, Sonning Common.

ROADWORKS ON A4155 RELATING TO THAMES FARM

The works recommenced on the 6th January 2020 and will continue until the 16th March.

REFUGE/ISLAND AT SOUTHERN PEDESTRIAN CROSSING POINT ON A4155

Shiplake PC asked that I investigate why there will be no island/refuge at the new southern crossing point planned as part of the Thames Farm development. Officers subsequently advised that there was neither the space nor necessity for an island/refuge.

ACCIDENTS AT EMMER GREEN ROAD/SONNING COMMON ROAD CROSSROADS

I have been advised of a further accident at these crossroads by the PC and others. I understand the PC will be making a suggestion about proposed action. I have already asked officers for their thoughts and they have asked for date/time/registration numbers.

CHESTNUT TREE OPPOSITE POST OFFICE

I understand the PC was going to obtain a second opinion on the health of this tree and would welcome an update.

SIGN AT WELL HOUSE, CROWSLEY, BINFIELD HEATH

I have been copied on emails relating to this matter and raised an enquiry with officers. The sign was not erected by OCC and the officer's response was: *"Looking at the photo it's difficult to see the sign in context but the sign itself isn't saying anything wrong as far as I can see. As it's a private sign it's not something I would get involved in unless it was misleading or hindering access along the footpath which I imagine it's not?"*

SODC ward councillor's report – Binfield Heath - 24th February 2020

Local Plan As noted last time, Sue Cooper's response has now been made – seeking a meeting for a pragmatic resolution. It can be found here:

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Letter%20to%20Mr%20Jenrick%20in%20Response%20to%207%20Jan%20Letter.pdf>

The Secretary of State (SoS) Robert Jenrick has been out of the country for the Holocaust memorial, but before leaving gave a promise in the House of Commons to have a meeting with South Oxfordshire's leader. Next steps are awaited. In Wheatley there was a public meeting on 25th January attended by 250 or so people concerned by the threat to local democracy and excess development. Concern was also voiced about the direction of the Arc process and the future – if any of the Expressway. Meanwhile OCC put forward a motion offering to take over South Oxfordshire's planning powers for their 11th February council. This is based on communication with Westminster. The main motion read:- In the event of the receipt of an invitation by the Secretary of State to prepare or revise the South Oxfordshire Local Plan pursuant to powers under section 27A of, and paragraph 7B of Schedule A1 to, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Council is RECOMMENDED to accept such an invitation subject to satisfactory assurances being received in relation to the recovery of its costs. The Labour councillors put a preamble amendment offering to support

Cllr Hudspeth if the Green Belt Grenoble Road site – part owned by Oxford City council – would be advanced and rather superfluously added clauses supporting a re-opening of the Cowley branch railway line and roads to help with traffic for Didcot. A large pro-democracy protest took place outside the OCC offices. Sue Cooper had booked to speak at the meeting and received written confirmation of a 5 minute speaking slot – but at the moment of stepping up to speak was told that her speaking time had been halved! The vote was carried with Labour support, although the move was widely condemned. The Oxford Mail ran an editorial denouncing the action, as well as the Secretary of State's holding and gagging order that had been disabling SODC. The editorial suggested that a failure to respect elections was improper. Likewise The Herald. In practice if such an order were made it would be a most radical departure from past precedent and with wafer thin grounds. However as yet no direction has been made and the main reason for delay in progress has been the temporary holding direction itself. Some councillors, supporting Cllr Hudspeth, suggested that tête-à-tête discussions had implied that the takeover of SODC powers would either happen with an independent nominee or with OCC - and that OCC's invitation was really a kind ofLocalism! However as yet no decision has been made.

Council Finances SODC's budget process has been completed. As noted previously because of the financial situation that was left, difficult decisions are having to be made. SODC has, together with Vale of White Horse with whom it shares officers and offices the lowest costs by some margin of the Oxfordshire district (and City) councils. As noted before confirmation of changes to the New Homes Bonus aspect of council receipts from central government will make things even more difficult going forwards after 2020-21. Given statutory obligations and restraints on council tax increases, there is limited scope. However proposals are coming forward, SODC's own budget was agreed on 13th February and the overall council tax for the new fiscal year confirmed at a forthcoming SODC council meeting on 20th February. Amongst the budget items are proposed changes ending Neighbourhood Plan grants from SODC, although SODC will continue to provide strong support from officers in the dedicated NP planning team and of course fund examination and referendum costs. UK government has cut and restricted grants to SODC and the future for 2020-21 onwards is unclear. SODC have been an exception in giving NP grants. However, government have increased funding for NPs to claim directly; these grants provide more funds than the outgoing SODC scheme used to do and also provide scope for technical grants via Locality. Officers will help with claims for these and overall the belief is that NP groups will be able to access the funds that are needed. SODC will continue to bear the costs of examination and referendum. SODC has taken the opportunity to increase fees and charges – including for brown garden bins and for parish dog bins. A review of car parking charges is coming forwards. It was noted that past Council Tax reductions and missed increases now had the cumulative effect of costing SODC some £2m every single year. This creates an ongoing burn on reserves which – since SODC already has very low operating costs - cannot be met from further cost-cutting without major impacts. Further action to explore new sources of revenue are to be undertaken. The total average Band D council tax across South Oxfordshire for 2020-21 will be £1,965.45 – an increase of 4.16%. Of that SODC represents £126.24, some 6.4% of the total – which also includes the OCC tax charge, TV Police and of course the parish precepts. Only the town and parish (Band D) rates vary by local area. In Binfield Heath the total Band D charge will be £52.58 lower as the BHPC precept of £42.91 is lower than the average town and parish rate of £95.49. The average town and parish rate is of course affected by the large number of properties in the towns and also in the larger villages.

Council Motions On the 20th February council motions were passed calling for a UK Gov review of the planning Housing Land Supply rules such that LPAs would only be responsible for approvals and not for failure of developers to build out or other matters beyond the control of LPAs. Likewise a review of Permitted Development was called for. A review of Taxi Licensing legislation was called for with particular reference to unlicensed agents booking journeys for Hackney carriages. Finally, jointly, standard (IHRA and APPG) definitions were approved against Anti-semitism and Islamophobia.

Leigh Rawlins
District Councillor