

## **BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Binfield Heath Parish Council Meeting held on Monday January 24<sup>th</sup> 2022 at 7.00pm in the Scout Hut**

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Meeting of the Recreation Ground Charities & Allotment for the Labouring Poor Charity  
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**001/22 Allotments** The Clerk will again chase those rents still outstanding. **(Clerk to action)**

#### **002/22 Recreation Ground**

002.01/21 Regular inspections have taken place.

002.02/21 The quotation received from Playdale for the repair of the playground equipment had been discussed. The Chairman proposed that the quotation was accepted. All agreed. **(Clerk to action)**. An application for a grant towards the repairs from the Councillors' grant has been submitted.

002.03/21 The static horse is being painted by two willing volunteers. All materials have been provided.

**003/22 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 R. Davis, Cllr D Bartholomew (OCC, SODC), Cllr L Rawlins (SODC), three members of the public.

**001/22 Apologies** None

**002/22 Declarations of Interest** None

**003/22 Minutes of the meetings held on Monday November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021.** Cllr Ransom proposed the minutes were accepted as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Summerland. All agreed.

#### **004/22 Matters Arising**

129.01/21 The damaged area at the point along Footpath 20 is as yet not improved. Countryside Access had notified the Clerk that it was to be undertaken.

134/21 Community Governance Review It was decided not to take this forward.

**005/22 County Councillor's report** Cllr Bartholomew briefly discussed local matters. The possible lighting of Henley Bridge was briefly discussed. If the PC is against this it was suggested that an e-mail to that effect was sent. His full report is attached to the minutes.

**006/22 District Councillor's report** Cllr Rawlins had sent his report. His full report is attached to these minutes. There was discussion about the backlog of enforcement after the decision made by SODC to just focus on the more important issues and ignore those that were minor. The PC expressed its discomfort with this situation. Cllr Ransom will aim to attend a Teams meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> January regarding this.

**007/22 Public Forum** No questions at this point.

#### **008/22 Financial Situation**

008.01/21 The financial position was circulated.

008.02/21 The January & December accounts were presented. Invoices to the value of £7,638.20 were authorised for payment. These payments were proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr Ransom. All agreed. **(Clerk to action)**

#### **009/22 Planning Matters.**

##### ***Applications GRANTED by SODC***

Elm Tree Farm Common Lane Binfield Heath RG9 4JY P21/S4670/HH and P21/S4672/LB  
Proposed demolition of existing rear extension and 2 x existing ancillary outbuildings and erection of replacement linked extension.

Elm Cottage Dunsden Way Binfield Heath RG4 4LE P21/S4756/FUL

Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on application P21/S2478/FUL to add office detail and dormer roof features. Demolition of existing cottage and new replacement with two semi-detached villas.

***COMPLETED Applications for Ratification***

The Stable Hampstead Farm Binfield Heath RG9 4LG [P21/S4988/FUL](#)  
Alterations and refurbishment of the stable. Installation of conservation rooflights, a spiral staircase, a stable entrance door with canopy & replacement timber doors. Removal of internal partitions to reconfigure internal space. The Parish Council had recommended this application for approval. Decision ratified.

**NEW Applications for Discussion (10mins)**

Old Acres Shiplake Row Binfield Heath RG9 4DP [P21/S5315/HH](#)

Single storey Oak frame porch extension and replacement of dormers to (North-East) elevation, single storey extension to rear with first floor terrace to (South-East) elevation and erection of oak framed Garage. The Parish Council recommended this application for approval. All agreed.

Highlands House Reading Road Lower Shiplake RG9 3PH [P21/S5328/FUL](#)

Demolition of the existing cottage, pool and associated building and the erection of a new replacement house, new cartshed and associated landscape and highway works. As this is not in the parish no comment will be made. All agreed.

Carillon New Road Binfield Heath RG9 4EP [P22/S0040/HH](#)

Construct new enclosed porch to front door. Extend garage to enclose open porch, and home office loft conversion. The Parish Council recommended this application for approval. All agreed.

**010/22 Neighbourhood Plan** Cllr Davis updated the PC on progress: A second application for a grant has been made to fund the completion of the planning policy work and the landscape character assessment. Draft settlement boundaries are being discussed. A list of local character buildings is being developed. A village history is in progress. Emerging work will be shared with the parish at the Annual Parish Meeting in May.

**011/22 Community Matters**

011.01/22 [Defibrillator](#) The Phillimore Estate is happy for the defibrillator to be installed at the shop. The Parish Council decided that it will fund the cost. This was proposed by Cllr Fulton-Urry and seconded by Cllr Lacey. All agreed. The position needs to be confirmed. 'Millie's Dream' will be informed of the PC decision. **(Clerk to action)**

**012/22 Highways/Transport and General Maintenance**

012.01/22 Some cars are failing to stop at one of the junctions outside the Binfield Heath Stores. The white lines at the road junctions are disappearing and need replacing. Photos are to be taken and this will be reported. **(Chairman & Clerk to action)**

012.02/22 The PC wished to express its appreciation of the work undertaken by OCC to improve the road junction at Coppid crossroads. Improved signage, dragon's teeth and white gates appear to have resulted in far fewer accidents.

**013/22 Green & Open Spaces** A resident mentioned the poor state of the ground at the entrance to Barns Car Park where cars turn as they enter. A nearby area had been improved with bark. The Chairman offered to contact the Phillimore Estate to see if any action could be taken. **(Chairman to action)**

**014/22 Website Compliance** Cllr Ransom has looked at the website compliance information and it is being addressed. She will look at the Remenham PC website that is apparently compliant. The Clerk will then ask the person who improved that site if he could advise. **(Clerk to action)**

**015/22 Neighbourhood Watch** Nothing to report.

**016/22 Platinum Jubilee** The Village Society are planning a Big Lunch on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June. Other possible events were discussed. There is no flagpole in Binfield Heath. The Clerk was asked to find out the cost of a possible purchase. **(Clerk to action)**

**017/22 Possible Community building** Item deferred.

**018/22 Matters for future consideration** Platinum Jubilee; Tree planting;

The meeting finished at 9.10pm.

**Date of next meeting: Monday February 28<sup>th</sup> 2022**

# **REPORT TO BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL JAN 2022 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW**

## **GENERAL OCC REPORT**

### **LARGE RISE IN COUNCIL TAX PROPOSED**

The previous Conservative-led administration had put in place a Medium-Term Financial Strategy featuring a maximum of a 4% increase in Council Tax for 22/23. The new left-wing administration is proposing to increase this by a quarter to 5%. They intend to use the extra increase to fund a variety of proposals including £0.83m on climate action, £4.4m extra for adult social care, a £0.8m subsidy on assessed care needs, £1.2m extra on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and £1.15m extra on children's social care. The extra 1% increase in Council Tax could potentially be avoided altogether as the council has received an unexpected and generous grant of £6.1m from central government, equivalent to 1.5% Council Tax. My mailbox is dominated by issues relating to roads and drains and I am disappointed that there is no mention of these matters in the preliminary budget statement, which can be found at <https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/budget-202223/>

### **LEFT-WING ADMINISTRATION BANS MEAT & DAIRY PRODUCTS FROM EVENTS**

The left-wing administration moved a motion at the Full Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December to ban meat and dairy products from all council-catered events and meetings. I recognise that veganism is a choice to be respected and moved an amendment to say that a vegan option should always be available at council events and meetings, but meat and dairy products should not be banned. My amendment was not accepted and the ruling parties forced the proposal banning meat and dairy products through. The decision has to be ratified by Cabinet and I would urge those who believe in freedom of choice and those who wish to support our local farmers to lobby Cabinet Members. Their email addresses are on the OCC website.

### **OXFORDSHIRE AT TOP OF RECYCLING TABLE FOR EIGHTH YEAR**

For the eighth year in a row, residents in Oxfordshire have topped the table nationally when it comes to recycling, reusing, and composting. Oxfordshire County Council has once again been named the best performing county council waste disposal authority in England. In 2020-21, residents recycled, reused, or composted 59.5 per cent of their household waste, an increase on the previous year's figure of 58.8 per cent, according to government figures. The total amount of household waste produced in Oxfordshire was 310,479 tonnes for 2020/2021. And 186,052 tonnes were reused, recycled and composted, which created a carbon benefit of 126,603 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e compared to disposing of it through landfill. Oxfordshire's five district and city councils, which operate the kerbside collections, also achieved excellent results in their national categories. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse came second and fourth respectively, while West Oxfordshire, Cherwell, and Oxford City were all in the top performing 25 per cent.

### **MAKE HENLEY SHINE CAMPAIGN (ILLUMINATING HENLEY BRIDGE)**

A campaign in support of illuminating Henley Bridge is gaining momentum, resulting in positive noises coming from OCC, according to the Henley Standard. However, I am aware that many parish councils and residents are in support of 'dark skies' and are opposed to unnecessary illumination and consequent light pollution; indeed, this is my own view. Provisionally, I intend to OPPOSE the illumination proposals but welcome input from parish councils before coming to a final decision.

## **SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR BINFIELD HEATH**

### **MAKE HENLEY SHINE CAMPAIGN (ILLUMINATING HENLEY BRIDGE)**

Should the PC wish to make its views known to OCC, the relevant emails are:  
[nick.mottram@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:nick.mottram@oxfordshire.gov.uk) (officer for culture/heritage)  
[neil.fawcett@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:neil.fawcett@oxfordshire.gov.uk) (Cabinet Member for Cultural Services)

### **HUMANE DISPATCH OF DEER INJURED ON ROADS**

Subsequent to my previous reports, I have now managed to put a senior TVP officer in contact with the concerned local volunteer coordinator, and the matter is being progressed.

### **GENERAL SODC REPORT**

#### **PLANNING ENFORCEMENT**

As previously reported, the LibDem/Green administration at SODC has changed its planning enforcement policy. The Conservative Group continues to oppose these changes. The administration has allowed a huge backlog of cases to build up. There are 131 cases that haven't even been allocated to officers. Their plan is to reduce the backlog by closing cases considered by officers to be minor and not issuing updates on on-going enquiries as this is deemed to be time consuming.

### **SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR BINFIELD HEATH**

#### **P21/S4616/FUL ERECTION OF 11 DWELLINGS AT REAR OF CROSSWAYS**

Despite being rejected when put forward for the JHHNP, an application for this proposal has now been submitted to SODC. I am also advised that an appeal in respect of the previous application for 20 houses will be coming forward.

#### **P21/S4271/RM WYEVALE 40 DWELLINGS**

Objections have been received from OCC LLFA, OCC Transport, S&V Drainage, S&V Forestry, S&V Landscape, Thames Water and TVP. An amended application is expected, however the developer has now also submitted a new application for 55 houses – see below.

#### **P21/S5382/FUL WYEVALE 55 DWELLINGS**

The developer has now submitted a new application for 55 houses. To accommodate this, the shared green spaces have been removed and three-storey apartment blocks introduced.

#### **P20/S2808/DIS: THAMES FARM**

Following objections from OCC and SODC drainage/flood engineers, Taylor Wimpey withdrew its revised drainage proposal which involved pumping the surface water from the site along the A4155 to a discharge point near Sheepphouse Lane. With regard to the ground compacting grouting proposals, Taylor Wimpey submitted an 'Application for a Certification of Lawfulness for Proposed Use or Development to establish that proposed ground stabilisation works... are to be undertaken as part of the foundation works, and which comprise compaction grouting, surface ground compacting and associated works, are lawful pursuant to planning permission P16/S0970/O.' This has been refused by SODC. Lastly, I am awaiting a response from Taylor Wimpey whether there are any plans to tidy up the site which is likely to remain uncompleted for a considerable period.

### **SODC ward councillor's report Binfield Heath – 18th January 2022**

For completeness I will cover reporting for December and January separately: -

#### **December 2021**

**Covid-19** Covid cases are increasing quite sharply. We now have increasing impact from autumn/winter

weather and of course the new Omicron (B.1.1.529) variant. Omicron is known to be much more transmissible and has some extra capacity to somewhat evade past vaccinations (1st and 2nd) – especially as anti-body levels fall over time. However, early evidence suggests that the current booster vaccinations (3rd jab) really improve our defences. Because of superior transmissibility the Omicron variant is expected to become dominant over the current mostly Delta (Indian - B.1.617.2) variant in the near future. It is suggested that the doubling rate of the new Omicron variant may be a little as 2.5 days – indicating exponential growth potential. Accordingly the Covid alert level has been raised from 3 to 4 – meaning fast growth likely to cause more NHS pressure. The highest level is level 5 (which is defined as being a situation where the NHS is at risk of being overwhelmed). Because of natural lags the likely hospitalisation rate of Omicron and indeed its death rate are not yet known. Early evidence – including some from very different conditions in South Africa suggest a somewhat lower rate than for Delta. However because of the high transmissibility and growth of infections, even lower rates have the potential to take the number of NHS beds occupied with Covid to the highest ever in the UK at a time when the NHS faces strong demand from the previous backlog of conditions and where flu may make more impact than it did last year. The Government have instituted “Plan B”. Those changes, which have now been expanded in light of the variant, are:

- Reintroducing guidance to work from home, if you can, from 13 December
- Legally mandating face masks in "most public indoor venues", including theatres and cinemas from 10 December, with exceptions "where it's not practical, including while eating, drinking, or singing"
- NHS COVID passes required for nightclubs, unseated indoor venues with more than 500 people, unseated outdoor venues with more than 4,000 people, and any venue with more than 10,000 people
- Daily testing for people identified as a contact of a coronavirus case - with isolation required only for people who test positive

Face masks were already a legal requirement in shops, banks, post offices, hairdressers and on public transport in England as of 30 November. Presently there are no restrictions applicable to hospitality where face masks are not required – not at the bar, in general circulation - or of course at tables. However the sector is reporting a lot of cancellations and reduced demand. There are however suggestions that a Plan C may be required – with more restrictions – subject to fast evolving evidence.

At 14/12, Oxford City was at a weekly rate of 863 per 100k population. By comparison, Cherwell DC was 935, West Oxon DC at 723, SODC at 915 and Vale of WH DC at 882. Reading BC (to 14h December) was at 856. These rates are around double or in some cases nearly treble what I reported to you in November. The vaccine programme continues – with particular focus on boosters and reaching out to those with vaccine hesitancy. The booster programme is working down to those in their 30s and is now being rapidly expanded to extend on to all adults (18 or over and 16 or over if vulnerable). Walk-in centres are being offered and expanded with the aim of getting boosters to as many as possible before the New Year. However the resources to deliver this surge of vaccination are desperately stretched. Second doses are now being offered to 12-15 year olds. Flu vaccines are also available – free for those over 50, those who are vulnerable or whose health job or care role implies a particular need. The risks of co-infection or twin infection with both flu and Covid are troubling virologists. Whatever the rules may be, the advice must be to proceed with caution to enjoy the festive season and protect the more vulnerable.

**Enforcement** Like the NHS, planning enforcement built up a backlog during Covid. SODC is a top performer amongst councils with regards to enforcement – although the Government do not specify planning enforcement as a statutory obligation on councils and in fact have greatly eroded enforcement powers over time. SODC spends rather more on enforcement than most councils – and some councils do not offer an enforcement service. SODC treats enforcement seriously and, given the backlog has set out a recovery plan. Within this plan resources will be focussed on the most urgent and the most serious cases. Thus a system of “triage” and assessment will be used to focus on these. Processes are being tightened up and less resource will go on the most minor cases. Moreover for reasons of GDPR and efficiency less updates will be given to residents during the investigation process. Due to the backlog many requests are received for updates which are eating a lot of resource and cause GDPR issues and risks. By exception district councillors will be able to get updates on key cases. The intent is to recover the backlog by summer 2022 and to then review the process going forwards with lessons learnt.

**Gambling policy** At council on 9th December SODC approved updates to its gambling policy as regards the licensing of premises. As had been done some years ago by Vale of White Horse, SODC has also set policy to oppose any casino proposition that might come forwards. Whilst the likelihood of a casino proposal does not seem particularly likely it is also judged not to be appropriate to the rural character of South Oxfordshire and its use of land.

**Constitution review** With the advent of a new head of service for the Legal and Democratic service at SODC and VoWH (Vale) there is to be a review of the constitution of each council. As the two councils shares officers and offices, the constitution is considered jointly – although there are certain differences between the two when it comes to detail. The review group will consist of 6 councillors with 6 from each council. Final decisions will be made by each council following recommendations being put forward by the review group(s). Separately updates of the councillor code of conduct (including as regards parishes) and councillors' parental leave policy were agreed by council.

**Motions** At its council meeting on 9th October SODC agreed :-

- 1) To write to ask the Secretary of State to review the national planning enforcement system and to make it tougher with additional powers. Also to propose certificates of commencement and completion (as applies in Scotland) to improve the clarity of process. This was unanimously agreed.
- 2) To write to and engage with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to address lack of delivery of built facilities and services to support housing growth. Also to seek assurances that matters will improve with the Bucks., Oxfordshire and West Berks Integrated Care System (ICS) which is scheduled to take over from the CCGs under the latest reorganisation. Unanimously agreed.
- 3) To publish a Climate Change Action Plan to address key issues, to encourage the Government to provide the necessary powers to help drive forward the aims agreed at COP26 and to work with other councils and partners for success in this.
- 4) To seek further detail on the national planning and housing policy of the LibDems. (This was proposed by the Conservative group as a Christmas joke and with a view to receiving guidance on levelling up and mix as it relates to policy on housing numbers – with particular reference to how it might relate to South Oxfordshire. Many abstained from this Xmas joke.

**Inspired Villages/Little Sparrows** SODC's application for a Judicial Review of the highly unconventional approach of the Inspector in the above case was refused, appealed and refused again. The courts now take the view that Appeal Inspectors can virtually do as they like with scant recourse even where bizarre, unconventional and apparently irrational approaches are taken. In my view this decision underlines the extent to which our national planning system is broken. The only positive being the change of Secretary of State and the promise of a review to improve things; we shall see.

**Grants** The capital grants scheme closed for applications from voluntary and community sector organisations and town and parish councils on 17th December. This vital funding offers capital grants to improve community facilities to help build and support thriving communities and improve the quality of life for the residents of South Oxfordshire. The total budget is £320,000 and organisations can apply for up to £75,000, and a maximum of 50 per cent of their total project cost – so matching funds are required. The Councillor grants scheme (round 2 of 2) has re-opened and will close just after the end of January. It is appropriate to see that this is used if at all possible. For further information about the grants scheme and scoring criteria please take a look at the website [southoxon.gov.uk/grants](https://southoxon.gov.uk/grants). The Community Enablement Team on [communityenablement@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:communityenablement@southandvale.gov.uk) will welcome enquiries for help and advice.

## **January 2022**

**Covid-19** Covid cases have surged. We now have increasing impact from autumn/winter weather, Christmas gatherings and of course the new Omicron (B.1.1.529) variant. Omicron is known to be much more transmissible and has some extra capacity to somewhat evade past vaccinations (1st and 2nd) – especially as anti-body levels fall over time. However, early evidence suggests that the current booster vaccinations (3rd jab) really improve our defences. The Omicron variant is now dominant and has shown strong growth. It is clear that the vaccinations and natural antibodies are reducing the hospitalisation rate and death rate of

Omicron. However the surge of infections indicate that, even with a much lower hospitalisation rate, hospitalisations are still significant by comparison with the national 34k peak seen last year on 22nd January 2021. At the time of writing and with data not fully up to date there were on the 20th January just under 18k nationally this year – having fallen back from a peak of 20k. This at a time when the NHS faces strong demand from the previous backlog of conditions and where flu may still potentially make more impact than it did last year. Happily deaths remain low and even with hospitalisations the severity of cases – particularly for those with antibodies – is less than seen previously. Further to “Plan B”, the government have indicated some further grants to certain business sectors – like hospitality – who have suffered sharply from falls in demand and cancellations. These are, it seems, to be limited to those businesses with business rates and they are subject to precise parameters set by the BEIS ministry. SODC will be releasing these locally very soon. The government are set to return to Plan A from 27th January – hoping, in the wake of “party-gate”, that we are through the worst for Omicron cases. At 18/01/2022, Oxford City was at a weekly rate of 1,217 per 100k population (it peaked at 1,504 on 6th Jan.). By comparison, Cherwell DC was 1,102 (peak was 1,804 on 2nd Jan.), West Oxon DC at 1,085 (peak was 1,565 on 3rd Jan.), SODC at 933 (peak was 1,522 on 3rd Jan.) and Vale of WH DC at 1,013 (peak was 1,565 on 3rd Jan.). Reading BC (to 18th January 2022) was at 1,332 having peaked at 1,780 on 4th Jan. These levels are still high; by way of comparison at 4th November SODC was at 363 and by the 3rd December was at 764 – now at 18th January at 933 weekly per 100k of population! That said, they now falling back. The booster and vaccine programme continues – with particular focus on boosters and reaching out to those with vaccine hesitancy. Resources are desperately stretched but have achieved very high numbers. Boosters are available to all adults and are now being extended down to all of age 16 and above. Walk-in centres are being offered and expanded with the aim of getting boosters to as many as possible. Second vaccine doses are now being offered to 12-15 year olds. Flu vaccines are also available – free for those over 50, those who are vulnerable or whose health job or care role implies a particular need. Government have now suggested that the requirement to self-isolate with Omicron should only be 5 days – subject to clear LFT tests on days 5 and 6 (in advance of re-emerging). The risks of co-infection or twin infection with both flu and Covid are still troubling virologists. Whatever the rules may be, the advice must be to proceed with caution and to protect the more vulnerable.

**Grants** The capital grants scheme closed for applications from voluntary and community sector organisations and town and parish councils on 17th December. This vital funding offers capital grants to improve community facilities to help build and support thriving communities and improve the quality of life for the residents of South Oxfordshire. The total budget is £320,000 and organisations can apply for up to £75,000, and a maximum of 50 per cent of their total project cost – so matching funds are required. The Councillor grants scheme (round 2 of 2) has re-opened and will close just after the end of January (3rd February). It is appropriate to see that the potential here is utilised. Ordinarily and pro rata Binfield Heath would be due £1,100 of the annual amount shared by David Bartholomew and I as the ward councillors. For further information about the grants scheme and scoring criteria please take a look at the website [southoxon.gov.uk/grants](http://southoxon.gov.uk/grants). The Community Enablement Team on [communityenablement@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:communityenablement@southandvale.gov.uk) will welcome enquiries for help and advice. This is expected to be a very competitive funding round. Happy New Year to all. Keep safe!

**Leigh Rawlins**  
**District Councillor**