

BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Binfield Heath Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 23rd January at 7.00pm in the Palmer Room at Dunsden Hall

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

01/23 Allotments. The tenant requesting a pond and a beehive had replied to the PC. The PC does not see a pond as suitable at an allotment. The Clerk is to ask what experience the tenant has for taking care of a beehive and the Trustees consider it necessary to ask if nearby tenants have any allergies. **(Clerk to action)**

02/23 Recreation Ground

02.01/23 Regular inspections have taken place.

02.02/23 A cradle child's swing seat has been attached to the remaining frame.

02.03/23 A spring mechanism for the sandpit gate is still required. The Clerk continues to source this. **(Clerk to action)**

03/23 Public Forum Nothing to report.

The meeting of the Parish Council

Present Cllr P Rollason, Cllr L Ransom, Cllr H Lacey, Cllr S Summerland, Cllr D Bartholomew (OCC, SODC), Cllr L Rawlins (SODC). 2 members of the public.

001/23 Apologies. Cllr Sarah Fulton-Urry, Cllr Robert Davis

002/23 Declarations of Interest Cllr Rollason declared an interest in the item **015/23** as he is a Trustee of the Forge Charity

003/23 Minutes of the meetings held on Monday November 28th 2022. Cllr Summerland proposed the minutes were accepted as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Ransom. All agreed.

004/23 Matters Arising

148.01/22 The bus shelter: This is to be erected next week.

005/23 County Councillor's report Cllr Bartholomew's full report is attached to the minutes. Cllr Bartholomew confirmed that he will support the application for The Forge. Thanks were expressed.

006/23 District Councillor's report Cllr Rawlins presented his report that is attached to these minutes. The Bournes Farmhouse application was discussed and Councillor Rawlins advised that 'character' in a village should be fully defined as an important factor in the Neighbourhood Plan.

007/23 Financial Situation

007.01/23 The financial position had been circulated.

007.02/23 The January accounts were presented. Invoices to the value of £818.92 were authorised for payment. These payments were proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr Summerland. All agreed. **(Clerk to action)**

007.03/23 A request from the Citizens Advice Bureau had been received. A £50 donation was agreed. **(Clerk to action)**

007.04/23 An extra £400 is needed for the submission to Natural England to extend the AONB. All agreed to this amount as a contribution to the JPAGroup.

008/23 Planning Matters

Applications granted by SODC

High Meadow, Kiln Lane, Binfield Heath P22/S3894/HH Replacement roof, two storey and single storey rear extension, fenestration and internal alterations, porch addition and replacement garage.

Completed applications for ratification

Bournes Farmhouse Harpsden Road Binfield Heath RG9 4JT P22/S4374/FUL Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of three detached dwellings with retained access from Harpsden Road; hard and soft landscaping and other works. The PC had recommended refusal of this application. Decision ratified.

New Applications

Harvest House Crowsley RG9 4JN P22/S4639/HH Refurbishment and alterations to an existing home office studio including fenestration modifications, thermal improvements, the introduction of an external heating and cooling unit with associated screening and biodiversity enhancements. The

PC will recommend approval of this application.

Frieze Cottage Crowsley RG9 4JL P22/S4634/LB Rebuild top of both chimney stacks and replace pots to ensure top of pot is sufficiently raised above surface of thatch - re-thatch the roof - replace windows with double doors to Boot Room and Study - replacement of side gate and re-surfacing of adjacent hard-standing - replacement door to rear Hall. - minor repairs. The PC will recommend approval of this application.

Iona Kiln Lane Binfield Heath RG9 4EL P23/S0053/HH Erection single storey rear extension and installation of solar panels. A working party will look at this application.

009/23 Neighbourhood Plan Councillor Davis had sent an update to the NP. An application for a small Councillor Community Grant to cover part of the remaining costs has been submitted. A further grant application has been successful and this will provide funds for a Landscape Value Assessment and the final costs of the NP.

010/23 Neighbourhood Watch Nothing to report.

011/23 Community Matters

11.01/23 The electrician will be contacted regarding installation of the defibrillator. **(Clerk to action)**

11.02/23 No further action will be taken on the 20mph idea.

012/23 Highways/Transport and General Maintenance See **Matters Arising**.

013/23 Green & Open Spaces Flooding near the Bottle and Glass. Cllr Bartholomew advised reporting initially to Fix My Street.

014/23 Website Compliance The website compliance is still being investigated. Paragraphs of text have been reduced. Other actions are being considered.

015/23 The Forge Parking in Binfield Heath was discussed and suggestions were made.

016/23 Public Forum The reduction in the bus service was discussed and disappointment expressed at the fact that no redress is possible. The possibility of using the FISH volunteer service or organising an alternative shuttle was discussed.

017/23 Matters for future consideration Transport from Binfield Heath
The meeting finished at 9.00pm.

Date of next meeting: Monday February 27th 2023 at Dunsden Hall

REPORT TO BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL JAN 2023 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

CLIMATE LOCKDOWN

Conspiracy theorists have cunningly linked OCC plans to create '15-minute neighbourhoods' with the plans to introduce six traffic filters that will divide the city of Oxford.

- An example is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkZDcVFlxRI>
- And the OCC rebuttal is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8Dn8MWpv-U>
- Regrettably, the fake messaging has frequently been believed and has resulted in threats to councillors and staff: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-64001776>

THE TRUTH: NO LOCKDOWN BUT FILTERS TO SPLIT OXFORD INTO FOUR SECTORS

The truth behind the 'Climate Lockdown' scare is that OCC plans to spend £6.5m on traffic filters that will split Oxford into four sectors: North, South, West and East. When the traffic filters are operating, for cars without a permit, movement within each sector is unrestricted, but direct movement between sectors is not possible and requires use of the ring road. Affected motorists will face much longer journey times and distances. The intention is to force a change in behaviour. At the Cabinet meeting on 29th November 2022, a record number of individuals and organisations spoke passionately for and against the highly controversial proposal. The meeting was attended by police armed with tasers and security

guards. The chamber had to be cleared at one point. The proposal was approved by Cabinet. The Conservative Opposition has grave concerns about the proposal but condemns the misinformation that is being spread and the resultant abuse suffered by councillors and employees. Many supporters of these measures now concede that they have been poorly planned, maximising the damaging effects of Low-Traffic Neighbourhoods, bus gates and Botley Road improvements works to motorists and businesses in Oxford.

COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 23/24

The Budget process is nearing conclusion, and it is likely the administration will impose a 5% increase in Council Tax on residents. In terms of proposed Directorate spend, a staggering 71% will go on Social Care (Adults £221.3m, Children's £164.9m, total Directorate £544m). As a proportion of gross expenditure (excluding schools) it will be around 52% of c£750m. By way of comparison Highways & Transport will get just 8%.

CHILDREN SERVICES CURRENTLY £14.5M OVER BUDGET OF £149.1M

The Children's Services budget for 22/23 is £149.1M. As of October 2022, the latest forecast actual spend is £163.M – an overspend of £14.5M. While there is no question that vulnerable children must be protected, the individual costs are staggering. A typical mainstream residential placement is £5,100 per child per week. Costs for children who need significant support can be as high as £20,000 per child per week – pro-rata that is £1m per child per year. Conservatives are questioning whether best value is being achieved and what action is being taken to bring down these extraordinary costs. Despite such questions over value for money, the Council is consulting on a budget that would see Council Tax increase to pay for an 8.3% cash rise in Children's Services spending.

OCC APPOINTS NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE ON £225,000 PA



Dr Martin Reeves has been named as the new Chief Executive of OCC. Dr Reeves is expected to take over from Interim Chief Executive, Stephen Chandler, in the Spring. The move means the Council will have been without a permanent Chief Executive for over a year, following Mr Chandler's engagement as an Interim in February 2022, when the process of ending the partnership between OCC and Cherwell District Council began. Dr Reeves joins from Coventry City Council where he has been Chief Executive since 2009. From 2008 - 2009 he was Chief Executive of Bedfordshire County Council, after serving as Assistant Chief Executive there from 2006 - 2008. He will be paid a salary of £225,000 pa. Not only do Conservatives question whether Town Hall chiefs should be paid such salaries but they also continue to raise the issue of the lack of urgency surrounding the recruitment of a permanent Chief Executive.

CAR PARK 'LIVING WALL' THAT COST COUNCIL-TAX PAYERS £30,000 NOW REMOVED

The strange structure that appeared in the car park in front of County Hall during August, taking up two valuable car parking spaces intended for visitors on county business, has now been removed. Apparently, it was a 'living wall' and the aim was to understand the impact of plants on air quality in the car park. The cost of this five-month project to Council Tax payers was £30,000.



OCC RESOLVES TO IMPROVE SERVICE FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

At the 13 December Full Council meeting, the council acknowledged the difficulties experienced by certain parents and students in the delivery of its SEND service and paid tribute to the testimonies of parents heard at Full Council on 1 November 2022. Councillor Eddie Reeves, Leader of the Opposition, said: *“This is an issue of national and indeed grave concern and Oxfordshire does not compare that favourably to other counties and certainly not to other comparable local authorities – we are letting parents, pupils and professionals down if we don’t acknowledge that. We have over 5,000 children and young people with educational health plans in this county – that has grown of a quarter in the past three years. We must ensure that assessments are undertaken promptly and we must ensure that recommendations are subsequently acted upon promptly.”*

SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR BINFIELD HEATH

DISTRIBUTION S-14(2) NOTICE - T11102 SHIPLAKE, READING ROAD (A4155), RG9 4BT

The restriction will operate from 23/01/2023 to 25/01/2023 (each night 23:00hrs to 05:00hrs). The A4155 will be closed between Plough Lane and Memorial Avenue. A diversion via the A4 will be signposted, but those who know the area will use Plough Lane and Memorial Avenue.

P23/S0042/CM: DEVELOPMENT WORK AT SONNING QUARRY

The council has received an application for an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion for a southern and eastern extension to Sonning Quarry. Details on OCC website.

CHANGES TO BUS SERVICES IN SHIPLAKE, BINFIELD HEATH AND DUNSDEN GREEN

The clerk has been sent the new timetable, which is effective from 8th January 2023. I continue to get representations deploring the change.

COUNCILLOR PRIORITY FUND: ‘THE FORGE’

I support the application for c.£5k and it is now going through the approval process.

RETIREMENT VILLAGE S278 AGREEMENT & P21/S4102/RM

Officers continue to state good progress is being made with the S278 Agreement and therefore no enforcement action is going to be taken at the moment with regard to the commencement of works in breach of the Unilateral Undertaking.

LAND ADJACENT THE TOWER HOUSE READING ROAD (STOW HOUSE AND THE PINES)

The contractors appear to have moved off site and residents have moved in. The residents have no way of entering or leaving the site other than by car as the footpath has not been built.

GENERAL SODC REPORT

SODC HQ MOVE

SODC has now moved out of Milton Park into temporary accommodation owned by VOWH DC in Abingdon. Conservatives are pressing that this move should be made permanent.

SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR BINFIELD HEATH

P21/S4271/RM & P22/S4613/MPO WYEVALE 40 DWELLINGS

The developer submitted an amended RM application and recently followed this up with a 'Planning Obligation Modification'. I am broadly supportive of the RM proposals subject to the MPO being agreed.

P21/S5382/FUL WYEVALE 55 DWELLINGS

The refusal notice has finally been issued.

P20/S2808/DIS: THAMES FARM

I am continuing to press SODC to take robust action in respect of the tree replanting.

SODC ward councillor's report Binfield Heath – 23rd January 2023

(I believe that this January report will adequately cover December and January.)

Covid-19 The reliability of data on Covid cases is now much reduced following the end of test and trace. However national figures have shown falls in cases – contrary to what might be expected for this time of year. At 14th January 2023, reported cases in SODC were at a weekly rate per 100k of population of 33 (it peaked at 1,504 on 6th January 2022) – a very low level - albeit that reporting may be somewhat incomplete. Separately, there has been significant levels of flu causing some references to a “twindemic” in terms of absences and pressures on the NHS. In Australia and New Zealand winter flu was more impactful and more virulent than normal and this may well echo into the UK's winter season. Booster jabs for both Flu and Covid for over 50s have been provided.

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill As debates on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill settled down, the Secretary of State Michael Gove sent this letter to his MPs seeking to address areas of concern :

https://mcusercontent.com/3036c690a1180c4edb90ae1a0/files/6d2b9179-a5d5-2d7d-07ab-dbodo264c3b4/22125_Michael_Gove_MP_to_all_Conservative_MPs.pdf

We shall need to see what actually transpires, but there are some positive signs that the concerns pressed by many of us about our corrupted and broken planning system are now beginning to attract an appetite for action – as we begin to look forward to elections!

The following indications were given :-

- Recognition that unrealistic top-down targets take power away from communities, and cause erosion of Local plans and fuel resented speculative development in unsustainable locations.
- Standard method formulas that place too much on the South East etc to be reconsidered and also to become merely a “guide”.

- More weight given to designated landscapes.
- The Planning Inspectorate to be reined-in and told not to pursue the old Jenrick agenda. Instead to give more respect to locations approved by local Plans.
- More respect as regards character for prevailing local densities. More local power to dictate minimum standards.
- An end to 5 year Housing Land supply obligations for authorities with up to date plans. Scope for the benchmark in the meantime to fall to 4 years for areas who are well on with making an up to date Local plan.
- Neighbourhood Plans will become more powerful against speculative development and have protection for 5 years rather than just for 2.
- Planning fees – set by the Ministry - will be increased to help with resourcing planning departments – with much higher fees for retrospective applications made by those who have been in breach of planning.
- More pressure on developers to build out sites and scope to take into account bad behaviour in future applications. More consideration of those who “game” the system.
- Annoyingly he seems intent on pressing forward with a new form of infrastructure levy, but is at least allowing Local Planning Authorities to separate Greenfield and Brownfield rates and to set rates and zones locally. (My fear being that s106 is often an important tool.)
- Scope to require local registration of housing for short-term lets – with more local control. A different use class may be considered.
- More emphasis on the internal regeneration of urban areas – particularly cities and large towns.

It is, I suggest, apparent that an approaching general election is, very belatedly, focussing minds! For how long? Nonetheless, the above considerations would surely be rational steps in the right direction. There was also a ministerial statement to confirm the intended changes :- <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-12-06/hcws415>

Now a draft revised NPPF – with tracked changes - has been released for consultation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-nationalplanning-policy>

Many of the above feature, but as yet there is no further detail on any new algorithm for the Standard Method of calculating Housing Need.

Councillor Grants Scheme The Councillor Grant Scheme will closed at noon on the 20th January.

AONB extension A brief for the work required has been developed and has been shared with suppliers. Costing and delivery schedules are being discussed. Indications are that the costs have increased and a new approval is needed by parishes. A first phase of delivery has been approved. The next meeting is pencilled in for 7th February 2023.

Happy New Year all!

Leigh Rawlins
District Councillor