

BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Binfield Heath Parish Council Meeting held on Monday March 22nd 2021 at 6.30pm by Zoom

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

07/21 Allotments Nothing to report.

08/21 Recreation Ground The Chairman had noticed that the new football posts were already being enjoyed by groups of boys.

09/21 Public Forum A member of the residents in Kings Common Close had asked if the Recreation Ground Car Park could be renovated. Volunteers would be happy to redo the area if the PC provide the materials. **(Cllr Ransom to ask the resident to confirm costs)**

The meeting of the Parish Council

Present Cllr P Rollason, Cllr L Ransom, Cllr H Lacey, Cllr Sarah Fulton-Urry Cllr D Bartholomew (OCC), Cllr L Rawlins (SODC), five members of the public. The Chairman welcomed a new Binfield Heath resident to the meeting.

035/21 Apologies Cllr S Summerland.

036/21 Declarations of Interest None

037/21 Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 22nd February 2021. Cllr Ransom proposed the minutes were accepted as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Lacey. All agreed.

038/21 Matters Arising The Chairman reported that Cllr Maher wished to resign from the Parish Council. He has been unwell and demands of work have meant that it is difficult to keep up with being a Councillor. He was formally thanked for his work over the last few years. His resignation means that there is a casual vacancy. This will be published tomorrow. **(Clerk to action)**

039/21 County Councillor's report Cllr Bartholomew briefly discussed local matters. His full report is attached to the minutes.

040/21 District Councillor's report Cllr Rawlins introduced his report. His full report is attached to these minutes. There was discussion about litter picking, particularly along roads where it was difficult for volunteers to walk. Cllr Ransom said that there should be regular litter clearance by contractors along such roads.

041/21 Public Forum A member of the public mentioned there had been a large amount of tree clearing at a small copse off Kiln Lane and further down near Keepers Cottage. Unfortunately this clearance has affected the view adversely in an AONB area.

042/21 Financial Situation

042.01/21 The financial position was circulated.

042.02/21 The March accounts were presented. Invoices to the value of £1,473.33 were authorised for payment by BACS. These payments were proposed by Cllr Ransom and seconded by Cllr Rollason. All agreed. **(Clerk to action)**

042.03/21 Councillor expenses. None this month

042.04/21 Insurance: This will be renewed. **(Clerk to action)**

043/21 Planning Matters

New Applications

P21/S/0521/HH Erection of a garden room in the garden of the Old House. The Old House Shiplake Row Binfield Heath RG9 4DR The owner of the Old House enquired about this application. A working party had recommended this application for approval. The clerk was asked to check that the response was made before the deadline. **(Clerk to action)**

P21/S0847/HH Erection of triple garage Gosbrook House Binfield Heath RG9 4JY This was discussed and Cllr Ransom will look at the site. A working party will report back before the response date. **(Clerk to action)**

Applications Granted

P21/S0202/HH Erection of single storey wrap-around rear extension with lantern rooflight and skylights. Little Crwys Cottage 8 Heathfield Avenue Binfield Heath RG9 4ED

044/21 Neighbourhood Plan Letters were printed and sent to all residents by e-mail where possible and also by hand. Responses are coming in and to date the majority appear quite positive. It is hoped more will be received by the 31st March and the Chairman and Vice Chairman will aim to analyse the responses. A working party will discuss the results. The hope is to propose taking an NP forward at the next meeting when the analysis is complete. SODC has been notified of the BHPC position.

045/21 Community Matters

It was decided that Cllr Lacey to continue as the BHPC representative on the Shiplake Memorial Hall. All agreed.

046/21 Highways/Transport and General Maintenance Nothing to report

047/21 Green & Open Spaces A grant to clear and develop the area around the River Binn at the bottom of Arch Hill has been awarded from the SODC Councillor Grants. The Clerk had passed on the PC's thanks. Pricketts have cleared both areas although there is still some debris in the ditch. The Chairman will speak to them tomorrow. **(Chairman to action)**

048/21. Defibrillator The Clerk has been trying to obtain a price for the defibrillator. The British Heart Foundation does not have part funding available at present. The Clerk was asked to contact 'Millies Dream'. **(Clerk to action)**

049/21 Website Compliance The website needs to become compliant with regulations. David Woodward will be asked if he could look at the website with a view to making it compliant. **(Vice Chair to action)**

050/21 Neighbourhood Watch Nothing to report this month. The Clerk will speak to Cllr Maher to obtain any contacts to pass on to the next Councillor with that responsibility. **(Clerk to action)**

051/21 April APM and APCM Taking the advice of the Oxford Association of Local Councils, the annual meetings will take place next month so that members of the public can attend by Zoom. **(Clerk to action)**

Matters for future consideration Neighbourhood Plan; Neighbourhood Watch; defibrillator.

The meeting finished at 7.58pm.

Date of next meetings: Monday April 26th 2021

REPORT TO BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL MAR 2021 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

FRONTLINE SERVICES GIVEN PROTECTION WITH NEW INVESTMENTS

Details of OCC Budget proposals were given in last month's report. All 63 county councillors met on February 9th to debate the proposals which were then passed with minimal amendment. The council is dedicated to investing in services that will have positive long-term impact for local communities. The budget reflects this, with more than £25m of additional funding included. Some of this funding has been previously agreed, but £9.5m of this is new for 2021/22 to help meet additional demands, including within adult social care. A total of £19.6m of savings will also take place in total across all services although £14.6m of these savings were already planned and are centred on the transformation of services to make them more efficient while protecting the frontline. A 1.99 per cent rise in basic council tax will take place from April plus an extra one per cent which would be required to be spent on adult social care under national rules, making a total of 2.99%.

STAY AT HOME AND DRIVE COVID CASES DOWN

Oxfordshire residents, together with the nation, are being advised to continue to stay at home and follow the existing COVID-19 rules, which will begin to gradually ease from 8 March as part of the government's roadmap to bring England out of lockdown. The number of COVID cases across the county is continuing to fall, but the week-on-week reduction is now much smaller than it was earlier this month. For the week ending 19 February, the number of cases across Oxfordshire fell by just 5% compared to a drop of 40% in the

previous week

RAPID SYMPTOM-FREE TESTING AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC-FACING WORKERS

OCC is working in partnership with the city and district councils to provide regular rapid testing for people without COVID-19 symptoms who work and volunteer outside the home. The free tests are for people who do not have access to workplace testing through their employer. This includes the self-employed and people who work for small businesses, for example taxi drivers, independent retailers, and tradespeople such as plumbers and electricians. People can [book a free test](#) online and go to one of three locations:

- Spiceball Leisure Centre in Banbury (OX16 2BW)
- The Beacon in Wantage (OX12 9BX)
- King's Centre in Oxford (OX2 0ES)

The tests take just 15 minutes using lateral flow devices and involve taking a swab of the back of the throat and inside the nose. The swab is then given to trained staff at the test centre who process the test on-site. Results are given within an hour by text message or by email. Anyone who tests positive is told to self-isolate and follow the national guidance. They are provided with detailed [advice and support on self-isolation](#).

NEW PARTNERSHIP HELPS CHAMPION THE CLIMATE CAUSE

Plans to turn Oxfordshire into a zero-carbon county by 2050 will benefit from the announcement of a new link-up which will champion the cause of sustainable and low-carbon business.

OCC has joined Oxfordshire Greentech (OG) as its local authority innovation partner. Business network OG was set up in 2019 to bring together a wide range of commercial interests, academia and other organisations to encourage innovation, collaboration and knowledge transfer as a response to the climate emergency. Details [here](#).

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BINFIELD HEATH

ANSWERS TO ENQUIRIES ABOUT CABLE ERECTION/LAYING

As previously advised: 1) Openreach has laid/erected a one-mile fibre cable from Mill Road/Mill Lane, Shiplake to Shiplake Primary School as part of a BDUK/DfE initiative; 2) Airband is working in the area to provide fibre connections for rural businesses as part of a Defra contract. In relation to item 2), I have referred a number of specific enquiries from local businesses/residents to officers.

NOTICE OF LANDOWNER DEPOSIT: LAND OWNED BY PHILLIMORE SUCCESSORS

I received complaints that the previously supplied maps were poorly annotated, lacked place names and were of such low quality that printing-off for parish noticeboards was pointless. I asked officers to request that the originator supply maps of higher quality and revise publication deadlines accordingly. This has now happened.

STREETLIGHTS ON A4155

An informal poll on the Shiplake village website indicated an overwhelming desire for the lights to be turned off until the site is occupied (there was only one resident who wanted them left on). Officers are to discuss the matter with Taylor Wimpey.

SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR BINFIELD HEATH

THAMES FARM: P20/S2808/DIS (DRAINAGE)

Taylor Wimpey now propose to pipe the surface water towards Henley rather than into the Lashbrook. This might solve the problem for Shiplake but has provoked a backlash from Henley residents. New concerns have also emerged about the possibility that the grouting needed to stabilise the site could have an impact on the quality of drinking water drawn

from the aquifer under the site. This drinking water supplies nearby villages and Henley. I am in full contact with officers in relation to these matters.

THAMES FARM: FENCING

The moth-balled site has been shielded with close-clad fencing. This is temporary and not a replacement for tree replanting.

SODC ward councillor's report – Binfield Heath – 22nd March 2021

Covid-19 There is now very clear evidence that new cases have diminished sharply and indeed are plateauing or slightly increasing. On the 8th March the return of schools was marked, as the first step in the easing of the 3rd lockdown. The next step being on the 29th March when the rule of six meeting outside will return and the “stay at home” becomes “stay local”. All being well, on 12th April, non-essential retail, community centres, pubs (outdoors only) and gyms will re-open. It is clear that cases in hospital are reducing - although of course there remains pressure – including from waiting lists for a range of other conditions. At 16/3 Oxford City was at a weekly rate of 44 per 100k population. By comparison Cherwell DC was 21, West Oxon DC at 34, SODC at 27 and Vale of WH DC at 40. Reading BC (to 16th March) was at 45.

(By comparison see per my January report when I noted:- At 19/1 Oxford City was at a weekly rate of 472 per 100k population (12/1 was 548 and 5/1 was 571). By comparison Cherwell DC was 477 (12/1 was 548 and 5/1 was 997), West Oxon DC at 193 (12/1 was 314 and 5/1 was 428), SODC at 247 (12/1 was 320 and 5/1 was 520) and Vale of WH DC at 284 (12/1 was 299 and 5/1 was 442). Reading BC to 19/1 was at 616 (12/1 was 735). These numbers had been surging, but have now edged back following the impact of the 3rd lockdown.

In my February report I noted:- Locally, at 17/2 Oxford City was at a weekly rate of 100 per 100k population. By comparison Cherwell DC was 86, West Oxon DC at 41, SODC at 58 and Vale of WH DC at 60. Reading BC (to 17th Feb) was at 93.

The vaccine programme continues apace. The national intent is now to get all of the first 4 priority groups first dose done by mid-February (achieved – being over 70s, clinically highly vulnerable people and healthcare plus social care staff - around 15m people) and the first dose for the next 5 groups (down to age 50 - around 17m people) by mid-April. All adults are expected to have a first dose by end July. The programme will continue with 2nd doses with the aim of reaching all (of age 16+) before the end of September. As noted above there may need then to be booster vaccinations for new strains and to maintain antibody levels. As yet it is believed that having had a vaccination is not a guarantee against being infected by the virus or indeed against passing the virus to others – though it is expected to improve matters. Testing centres are being opened with a view to improve tracking of the virus and with support from local councils on of these will be in Wantage in Vale of White Horse. Since 23rd February the Beacon in Wantage became a designated Covid-19 testing site for public-facing workers and volunteers who are not displaying symptoms. People in these roles who cannot work from home and do not have access to workplace testing will be able to book a weekly test at the centre. Tests take only 15 minutes with results available within an hour. There is another testing centre in Osney Mead, Oxford. South and Vale district councils have worked closely with partners across Oxfordshire to help set up these rapid symptom-free testing sites to help stop the spread of the virus, protect the NHS and vital social care services, and ultimately to save lives. Around 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 have no symptoms but can still pass it on and so regular testing of public-facing workers will help to stop the spread of the virus.

New Tree Champions for South Oxfordshire Following a motion that was passed unanimously by Full Council, SODC has appointed two member Tree Champions – Cllr Peter Dragonetti (Green) and Cllr Ian Snowdon (Conservative). The remit for this role is to:

- Promote the value of trees and woodlands in tackling the climate and ecological emergencies
- Encourage people to re-connect with nature and appreciate the importance of trees and woodlands

for both environmental and human health and wellbeing

- Promote woodland protection/conservation and tree growing initiatives in the district
- Work with officers and members to develop and promote a Tree Policy and Strategy
- Raise awareness of the statutory protections for trees and woodland within local communities, town and parish councils.

Ecological Emergency Declared At the same meeting, the Council declared an Ecological Emergency and has now renamed CEAC as the CEEAC – the Climate and Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee. This aligns completely with the top priority Theme in the new Corporate Plan – “Protect and Restore our Natural World”, and provides a strong mandate for officers to work on monitoring, measuring and reducing the ecological impact of our activities, particularly in Planning. (Since the 1970s there has been a 40% reduction of vertebrates and a 50% reduction of insect numbers. Of course pollinators are also key to agriculture. This aligns completely with the top priority Theme in the new Corporate Plan – “Protect and Restore our Natural World”, and provides a strong mandate for officers to work on monitoring, measuring and reducing the ecological impact of our activities, particularly in Planning. A new Biodiversity Steering Group will be established, and SODC will work closely with others (e.g. The Earth Trust) to develop Nature Recovery Networks and a Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire.

OxCam-Arc You may have seen a recent Government press release about the OxCam Arc - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-plan-to-transform-oxford-cambridge-arc-into-uk-s-fastest-growing-economic-region>. This announced “an ambitious plan to unleash the economic and cultural potential of the Oxford Cambridge Arc, to transform it into one of the world’s premier growth corridors and a world-leader in sustainability”. It release a concept of a “Spatial Framework” to be dictated by central government whilst graciously indicating that some consultation with residents and councils would also be entertained. While recognising the contribution made by this region to the UK economy, and the need for a pandemic recovery strategy, the Arc should be contributing research and prototyping to enable growth in the regions and nations of the UK. This framework document aspired to add 1.1 million jobs by 2050 to the just over 2 million that exist now. This rather implies going back to 1 million new homes and the original NIC suggestions? There should also be much more focus on a green recovery and investment in new skills rather than just on economic growth for its own sake. East-West rail is to proceed, but until last week the dreaded Expressway remained ominously “paused”. Officially it is now cancelled as being “not cost-effective”! Apparently there will now be more localised improvements – which we must hope don’t follow the pattern of an Expressway! Key for South Oxfordshire would be the area south of Oxford and from the Thames/M40 area and west past Chalgrove to the A34 around Radley.

Joint Plan (SODC and Vale of White Horse) For the next Local Plan, there is a proposal to consider a Joint Local Plan for SODC and VoWH. This would save costs and help officers undertake certain standard activities such as Sustainability Analysis and research on Habitats that are required processes. It could also lead to a joint planning policy book. Each council would still need to approve the Plan. Although governance details have yet to be proposed it is likely that each district would focus on sites in their own area. (In other planning news, the Civil Aviation Authority gave a strong judgement against the safety of the Chalgrove Airfield site and made it clear that they could not support the current application made on behalf of it. The indication was that there was no prospect of the red-lined site accommodating both Martin Baker’s airfield activities and the proposed housing development. The applicant (being the government’s Homes England) will now consider different options.)

Keep safe!

Leigh Rawlins
District Councillor