

BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Binfield Heath Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 27th March at 7.00pm in the Palmer Room at Dunsden Hall

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

07/23 Allotments. The last allotment is now let.

08/23 Recreation Ground

08.01/23 A regular inspection have taken place today. It was noted that part of the locking mechanism at the pedestrian gate has part of it missing. Cllr Davis will ascertain the missing part and it will be ordered. **(Cllr Davis to action)**

08.02/23 A spring mechanism for the sandpit gate has been ordered and received. This will be fitted. **(Cllr Davis to action)**

09/23 Public Forum Nothing to report.

The meeting of the Parish Council

Present Cllr P Rollason, Cllr L Ransom, Cllr H Lacey, Cllr Robert Davis, Cllr Fulton-Urry, Cllr D Bartholomew (OCC, SODC), Cllr L Rawlins (SODC) and two members of the public.

035/23 Apologies. Cllr Summerland

036/23 Declarations of Interest None

037/23 Minutes of the meetings held on Monday February 27th 2023. Cllr Lacey proposed the minutes were accepted as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Ransom. All agreed.

038/23 Matters Arising

028/01/23 The Emergency planning survey was completed. This will be developed when the Neighbourhood Plan is completed.

028.02/23 The defibrillator is now in place at Three-A-Leet. Training will be sought. **(Clerk to action)**

029.01/23 Erection of the bus shelter is in progress.

039/23 County Councillor's report Cllr Bartholomew's full report is attached to the minutes.

040/23 District Councillor's report Cllr Rawlins' report is attached to these minutes.

041/23 Financial Situation

041.01/23 The financial position had been circulated.

041.02/23 The March accounts were presented. Invoices to the value of £were authorised for payment. These payments were proposed by Cllr Ransom and seconded by Cllr Davis. All agreed. **(Clerk to action)**

042/23 Planning Matters

Applications granted by SODC

Iona Kiln Lane Binfield Heath RG9 4EL P23/SO053/HH Erection single storey rear extension and installation of solar panels. A working party had no objections to this application. Decision ratified.

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.

New Applications

2 Arch Cottages Binfield Heath P23/SO824/LDP Formation, laying out and construction of an access to a highway (Kiln Lane) which is not a trunk road or a classified road (under Part 2, Class B). This was discussed and it was decided that the PC will not make a response.

043/23 Neighbourhood Plan Councillor Davis had sent an update to the NP. Nothing can be sent in during the period prior to the election so the group is checking the work produced before the pre-submission consultation after the election. Cllr Davis emphasised that the final NP will carry the same weight as the Local Plan.

044/23 Neighbourhood Watch Nothing specific to report. However it was suggested that to start a local WhatsApp group might be a good idea for exchanging relevant information. This suggestion will go into the next newsletter.

045/23 Community Matters

045.01/23 The Emergency planning survey was completed. This will be developed when the Neighbourhood Plan is completed and there is a Community Hall in the village.

045.02/23 The Coronation was discussed and a Sunday Lunch (7th May) will take place on the Recreation Ground. The Village Society will need to charge a small amount per head as funds are low due to the lack of events during the pandemic. A bar will be run.

045.03/23 Speeding through Binfield Heath can still be a problem. However, reducing to 20mph was decided against by the PC in November 2022 and the decision is maintained.

046/23 Highways/Transport and General Maintenance

The reduced bus service was discussed and although requested in the newsletter and by e-mail, few comments have come in from residents about which buses are needed. This request will be repeated. In the last few weeks, the buses are not reliable and the PC was informed that the Henley Arriva App was not giving correct bus times.

047/23 Green & Open Spaces

048/23 Website Compliance The Clerk has spoken to someone who is going to look at the Binfield Heath website to see what is necessary for compliance. **(Clerk to action)**

049/23 Public Forum Footpaths were discussed. The Clerk reported that the requests for the repairs have been made.

050/23 Matters for future consideration Buses; Defibrillator training.

The meeting finished at 9.20pm.

Date of next meeting: Monday April 24th 2023 at the Scout Hut

REPORT TO BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL MAR 2023 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW GENERAL OCC REPORT

COUNCIL TAX TO RISE BY 5%

The unexpectedly generous Local Government Funding Settlement left OCC with £9m more than anticipated at the time the draft Budget was drawn up. This presented the administration with an opportunity to cut the proposed Council Tax increase from 5% to 4% which they failed to take. The administration is ploughing on with pet projects the Opposition view as indulgent at a time when household budgets are under pressure. The alternative Budget put forward by the Conservative Opposition showed how the increase could be held at 4% without impacting on key services. The OCC Director of Finance confirmed the Conservative Budget was robust.

SOME OF THE EXPENDITURE ITEMS CHALLENGED BY CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION

£6.5M on Oxford traffic filters (the four-sector plan)

£3.0M on tree planting

£0.5M pedestrianizing Broad Street in Oxford

£0.2M developing Oxford Workplace Parking Tax

£173k repairing Oxford Low Traffic neighbourhood barriers

£152k advertising 20mph campaign

£30k on 'Living Wall' in Council car park

£5k on vegan lunches in County Hall

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT SPARE SEATS SCHEME CANCELLATION

Dear Parents/Carers

WITHDRAWAL OF SPARE SEATS SCHEME ROUTES 2-WT05 and 2-WT08: The Baldons, Blackbird Leys, Garsington to Wheatley Park School

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) provide school transport where there are children who qualify for free school transport according to the Council's Home to School Transport Policy.

Prior to the Full Council meeting on 14 February, councillors were bombarded with emails from concerned parents and pupils alarmed by the administration's decision to withdraw the 'Home To School Spare Seats Scheme' in certain areas. Councillors understand that 235 children could be affected by bus service cancellations between now and September, with as many as 1,384 children facing their school bus service being taken away as bus contracts are retendered. The Conservative Opposition proposed an additional £100,000 in their budget to fix this problem, however, as stated above, this was voted down by the administration.

OXFORD TRAFFIC FILTERS FUNDRAISER TO MOUNT LEGAL CHALLENGE

An appeal to raise funds to mount a legal challenge to Oxford's traffic filters (the four-sector plan) has raised £50,000 of its £80,000 goal in three months. The Go Fund Me appeal has had 551 donations since it started in November 2022. The key grounds for the legal action relate to a deficient consultation process, non-disclosure of data to support the traffic filters within reasonable timeframes of the consultation and, the group believes, an absence of impact assessments prior to making the decision or, if any impact assessments have been made, to make them publicly available. A leading Oxford law firm, has been instructed and the first step has been taken by issuing a letter of intention to OCC.

THOUSANDS JOIN PROTEST AGAINST TRAFFIC SCHEMES

On February 18, thousands of people joined a protest in Oxford against measures where roads are shut off to stop motorists driving through. Campaigners against Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and traffic filters (the four-sector plan) gathered in Broad Street and marched through the city. Thames Valley Police said: "Our officers are facilitating peaceful demonstrations, supporting the public's right to protest whilst keeping the community safe."



NEW 20MPH RESTRICTIONS WILL MAKE JOURNEYS TAKE LONGER SAYS BUS CO

An Oxfordshire bus company has claimed that OCC's 20mph programme across the county will negatively impact bus journey times. Oxford Bus Company has said that many of the roads involved in the proposal and the reasons behind this decision do not justify the introduction of the 20mph limit. The group has also said that this will negatively impact bus journey times. The company's Managing Director Luke Marion said: "The roads involved constitute movement corridors where frequent and planned mixing between traffic and vulnerable road users does not happen to a level justifying the introduction of the 20mph limit. This will have a negative impact on bus journey times that would result."

OCC GIVEN A GOLD AWARD BY STONEWALL

OCC has been given a gold award by Stonewall for its work supporting LGBTQ+ staff to be themselves at work. The Conservative Opposition agrees with OCC's support for staff, but questions the council's participation in the Stonewall programme given its high cost to the council. Many Government departments, local councils and the BBC have left Stonewall as concerns over its relative treatment of different minority groups have increased.

VISITORS TO HWRCs ASKED TO SORT OUT THEIR WASTE BEFOREHAND

Visitors to Oxfordshire's household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) are being asked to separate recyclable material from their general waste before disposing of it. OCC wants

residents to sort their mixed rubbish out before their visit, in a bid to prevent items that can be recycled from ending up in the general waste and bulky skips. Visitors are encouraged to separate their recycling so it can be put into the relevant containers which are on site, including plastics, card, textiles and shoes, metals and electrical items, before setting off. It remains to be seen what impact this will have. Details of where to find the nearest HWRC is available at oxfordshire.gov.uk/recyclingcentres.

COUNTY PARTNERSHIP REAFFIRMS ONGOING SUPPORT TO UKRAINE

Local authority partners across Oxfordshire marked the invasion of Ukraine by Russia a year ago by reaffirming their joint commitment to continue to provide vital help and support to those affected. The county council, city and district councils all observed the national one-minute silence at 11am 24 February and flew the Ukrainian flag to stand in solidarity with Ukraine. The councils, alongside health and voluntary and community sector partners, formed a dedicated working partnership to enable a joined-up response to the government's Homes for Ukraine scheme launched in March 2022. This partnership has evolved to work collectively to support all refugees and those who seek asylum in the county and will keep supporting Ukrainian guests, and their hosts, as the war in Ukraine continues.

SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR BINFIELD HEATH

OCC RESPONSE TO P21/S1733/FUL, LAND ADJACENT TO THE BOTTLE AND GLASS

OCC is objecting to the application and I would like to understand the PC's position.

Planning Application MW.0003/23: DEVELOPMENT WORK AT SONNING QUARRY

The council has adopted a Scoping Opinion for the above proposed development. Please see link for details: <https://myeplanning2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Planning/Display/MW.0003/23>

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.

GENERAL SODC REPORT

NEW £25M HQ

The administration's Budget that was debated and passed last month allocates £25million to the scheme. Conservatives will reverse the decision if returned to power in May.

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

I attended a Scrutiny meeting on 6 March where the new Enforcement policy was reviewed. Officers and the administration congratulated each other on how well it was working. I made it clear that I did not share this view, and neither did many parish councils and residents.

SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR BINFIELD HEATH

PLANNING APP P22/S4613/MPO: WYVALE PLANNING OBLIGATION MODIFICATION

The developer agreed to submit this MPO to cancel the speed limit change and cancel the introduction of a 'gateway feature' at the request of Harpsden PC, Shiplake PC and me. I am therefore very disappointed that the planning officer is proposing to REFUSE the application under delegated powers and not refer it to committee. I have asked why the contradictory nature of the OCC officer's report is not being challenged. He states quite explicitly that: *"I note and accept the submission demonstrates there are ample visibility splays, in excess of DMRB, at the priority junction."* There is thus no legal reason for

refusal. The points he goes on to make are highly general in nature and not relevant to this site. Furthermore, the reference to 'non-motorised highways users' is also wrong: these users will use a path within the site that connects to an existing footpath where the limit is 30mph. The PC may wish to email the Major Applications Team Leader at SODC cathie.scotting@southandvale.gov.uk and the Transport Development Control Lead at OCC michael.deadman@oxfordshire.gov.uk expressing its concern.

P20/S2808/DIS: THAMES FARM

I continue to press SODC to take robust action in respect of the tree replanting but SODC appears to be reluctant to take any action. The recent activity on site is due to a company undertaking ground investigations regarding discharge of surface water. They have also been monitoring ground water levels and working with Thames Water.

SODC ward councillor's report Binfield Heath – 27th March 2023

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 18th March 2023, reported cases in SODC were at a weekly rate per 100k of population of 61 (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. (Such pressures are also, of course, complicated now by pay disputes.)

Housing Mix – Census 2021 data

Results from the early release of “univariate” data from the census 2021 show some shocking facts in South Oxfordshire. They show that of the increase and change in housing stock between 2011 and 2021 fully 46% of the overall change is made up of 4+ Bedroom homes. We do not yet have the “multivariate” reports which will come later in the Spring. They will breakdown changes in market and social housing. However by using the early release of tenure data it is now clear that of the change in market housing the 4+ bedroom mix was so great that the mix of 1-3 bedroom homes – which was supposed per the 2014 SHMA to be 76% was actually less than half that. Some estimates have to be made at this stage because hybrid (shared ownership) social units get included with market under-mortgage data in the initial census release. In important part this problem has been caused by a large volume of extensions and Permitted Developments that have reduced the stock of 1-3 bedroom homes and increased the stock of 4+ bedroom homes. That is a bit like cutting the lower rungs from the housing “ladder” and moving then up – making them inaccessible for many first-time buyers etc. The only thing that can be done is to minimise the number of new-build 4+ bedroom homes – both on allocated sites and infill. Clearly the lack of supply of 1-3 bedroom homes locally is likely to have pushed up market prices and rents. Social rents are set by reference to a set % of market rents. The other effect is to make access to more modest housing difficult for the local young and less affluent. Instead in effect excess supply of 4+ bedroom units within the housing stock draws in discretionary demand from outside the district; responding to marketing.

AONB extension

The due to illness at our contractor, the next meeting is deferred from 15th March to 18th April 2023.

Enforcement

The enforcement team have now reduced the backlog to more normal levels. Officers are insistent that more reporting – say of anticipated updates – cannot be made public as the linked address would identify individuals and be contrary to GDPR. The triage system to focus on the most important cases is to continue with review now in November 2023. The

substance of the system is agreed, but the weighting and scoring of case-factors may be tweaked. Just to confirm, SODC has much higher levels of manning for enforcement than most other LPAs – about double the average; so it is simply not true that this function is under-manned. What is true – as was seen in Harpsden with the Holly House case – is that national rules are rather weak, long-winded and lean towards developers! The Ox-Cam Arc SODC and VoWH are no longer part of the Arc. Numerous others such as Buckinghamshire are also no longer participating. In the context of Levelling Up the government have stepped back from advocating very high population and jobs growth supported by “up to a million new homes” across the Arc. However Labour-led Oxford City council and Conservative-led Cherwell District council are both promoting high growth. City have launched a “housing needs” consultation which indicates an ambition for very high discretionary growth in jobs and housing and indicating that as it cannot accommodate such high numbers in its own area that it expects the surrounding districts for bear the burden of its discretionary choices! Those choices are not in tune with Levelling Up and SODC and VoWH have strongly objected. I would suggest reviewing this response from SODC and VoWH and going on to read the Oxford City “consultation” and the full strong response from our district council to that Oxford Local plan housing “need” consultation : <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/housing/councils-challenge-oxford-citys-plan-for-high-housing-numbers/>

Neighbourhood Plans

The Sonning Common revision NP went to referendum on 23rd February gaining a 95% “Yes” vote and was formally made by SODC’s council meeting on 14th March. I note Rob’s progress report on the Binfield Heath NP. Congratulations on good progress. I trust that the pre-submission consultation will go well. Good Luck! I assume that all the landscape work will be shared with the AONB extension project and consultants?

Litter

(On the subject of littering, I have included an appendix to this report which is a response sent by the Council’s lead officer in response to some queries from a different parish council. Hopefully it is helpful information! I had meant to include it last month!)

District elections in May and Voter ID

The district elections will be held on Thursday 4th May. They will be the first elections in which the new and more bureaucratic “Voter ID” requirements will be in place. Although there is virtually no past evidence of impersonation when voting, voters will now be required to produce photographic ID from a nominated range of options. (This range of options are far more restrictive for younger voters.) However those seeking a postal vote can apply without photo ID and also vote by post without it. Those without photo ID can apply to obtain a “voter ID certificate” by making an application. Please see link for details :- <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/local-democracy-and-elections/elections-and-voting/new-for-2023-you-will-need-to-show-photo-id-when-voting-at-a-polling-station/> It would be helpful to publicise this change to minimise any reduction of turnout.

Leigh Rawlins

District Councillor

APPENDIX – Litter Management (extracts from an email exchange from the Environmental Services Manager at SODC)

If you have occasions when Biffa have not actioned a request please let my team know waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk and one of my Technical officers will investigate. I have a team of four Technical Officers that directly monitor the Biffa contract, they cover both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse and deal with all aspects of the contract, not just street cleansing but also the collection of waste from the 120,000 properties across the

two districts.

The targets for street cleansing are set out in the Performance Review and relate to the levels of litter and detritus, this is assessed independently by inspectors from Keep Britain Tidy who come and do quarterly inspection. The contract does allow for penalties to be imposed on Biffa if the level of performance falls below the required standard and they do not bring it up to the standard within the time frames set out in the Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse. (N.B. The most recent Biffa Performance Report was on the agenda at the 20th October 2022 meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Committee (covering South and Vale), and can be downloaded as part of the meeting pack for that meeting.) As I have mentioned the district council is the Principal Litter Authority and any concerns should be reported to the waste team email above.

We do very much appreciate the volunteers who undertake litter picking and we are pleased to be able to support them by providing equipment and arranging for the litter to be collected. As you can imagine the scale of the work across the district is immense and is extremely frustrating that the majority of the litter is from passing vehicles.

You also raised some further questions in your email that I have responded to below in red

- Does Biffa only respond to complaints from members of the public or is there a proactive “litter monitor”? (Reporting of litter in the SODC area is no longer made public as cannot be reported on FixMyStreet and one can never be sure whether an email or a phone call will be acted upon - or whether an issue has been reported multiple times, thereby wasting everyone’s time). **This is a self monitoring contract so Biffa supervisors do proactively inspect relevant land in the districts and arrange litter picking/sweeping as necessary. In addition my Technical Officers are also out monitoring. Please continue to report issues to Biffa in the first instance and if you do not see any action contact the waste team**
- Who monitors Biffa’s performance of litter clearance? What happens when it hasn’t been done in the designated time or to the required standard? Does SODC/Biffa follow the grading and zoning systems as described in the attached DEFRA 2019 Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse? (The grading system is described on pages 14-15; the Zoning system of land on pages 18-26; recommended timings for litter clearance on page 20). **As mentioned above we do follow the guidance for grades and time frames as set out in the Code of Practice**
- Devising and publishing a Zoning plan is the responsibility of the Principle Litter Authority so who would that be and where am I able to view the said plan? (I assumed that for Oxfordshire this would be Oxfordshire County Council with South Oxfordshire District Council as the Duty Body responsible for managing litter clearance within the District. However, the only mention of Litter on the OCC website is to point people to the District Councils to report a problem). **Yes as part of the contract letting Zonings were provided to Biffa, this is based on road names rather than a plan, as you can imagine this is a large document but the basic principle is that villages fall into the medium intensity zones and the roads between villages would be considered low intensity. If you have specific sites that you would like to know please let me know and I will confirm them with you.**
- Are there published targets for litter clearance in the same vein as for fly-tipping? Is fly tipping (which is commendably picked up within a few days of it being reported) given higher priority due to targets imposed on the contractors? **No there are no specific targets for litter clearance, we have a dedicated fly tipping crew and there are targets for this set out in the Performance Review. The target for Litter relates to the level of cleanliness rather than clearance times.**

- Who promotes SODC's litter patrols (as mentioned in the May 2022 Strategic Performance Report, Q4 2021/22 (<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/05/Quarterly-Report-South-Q4-V4-fOR-WEBSITE-1.pdf> pages 23, 26 & 31)? Or devises a litter strategy - for collection as well as an education/campaign programme? **My Enforcement team works closely with the Councils Communications team to promote litter patrols and also the successes we have around prosecutions for waste related crimes. The patrols are very much focussed on education rather than enforcement, they will however take action if it is appropriate.**