

BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Binfield Heath Parish Council Meeting held on Monday October 25th 2021 at 7.00pm in the Scout Hut

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

021/21 Allotments Rents are coming in. Two new tenants have taken over the available plots.
(Clerk to action)

022/21 Recreation Ground

019.01/21 Regular inspections have taken place.

019.02/21 Playdale has carried out an inspection of the equipment and have provided a quotation for necessary repairs. It is possible to use the CIL monies for the repairs. The Contractor is aiming to restore the old horse and will prime the repair work. A volunteer will be asked to paint the horse when restored.

023/21 Public Forum No questions

The meeting of the Parish Council

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

101/21 Apologies None

102/21 Declarations of Interest None

103/21 Minutes of the meetings held on Monday 27th September 2021. Cllr Summerland proposed the minutes were accepted as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Fulton-Urry. All agreed.

104/21 Matters Arising A brief discussion took place about the problems of SODC planning committee meetings. The letter to the cabinet member had been sent. All other items on the agenda.

105/21 County Councillor's report Cllr Bartholomew briefly discussed local matters. His full report is attached to the minutes. He mentioned the possibility of providing a rural style path leading from Memorial Avenue to link with the footpath leading to the Plowden Arms soon to be reopened.

106/21 District Councillor's report Cllr Rawlins had sent his report. His full report is attached to these minutes. Cllr Davis asked about the difficulty of responding to the consultation with a wish to reduce the number of houses indicated for the South East. Cllr Rawlins agreed that the houses were needed more in the North. SODC had requested the Ox-Cam Arc should be paused and reconsidered.

107/21 Public Forum

107.01/21 The Clerk had been contacted with a request for liaison regarding events for the Platinum Jubilee next year. This is to be discussed by the Village Society.

107.02/21 The Clerk will collect and deliver the wreath for Remembrance Day.

108/21 Financial Situation

108.01/21 The financial position was circulated.

108.02/21 The October accounts were presented. Invoices to the value of £1,272.52 were authorised for payment. These payments were proposed by Cllr Summerland and Cllr. Ransom All agreed. **(Clerk to action)**

109/21 Planning Matters

Applications GRANTED by SODC

P20/S1991/FUL Proposed new 4 bedroom residential dwelling, built within the garden of Oak House Cottage. New single storey, single car, oak frame car port. Land next to Oak House Cottage Leading to Box Cottage Common Lane Binfield Heath RG9 4JY

P21/S2478/FUL Demolition of existing cottage and new replacement with 2 semidetached villas (revised energy statement provided on 13th July 2021 and bat emergence survey report received 19th July and depth reduced and roof lowered as shown on amended plans received 6th August 2021 and rear roofs changed from gables to hips as shown on amended plans received 3rd September

2021). Elm Cottage Binfield Heath RG9 4LE

P21/S3571/HH Proposed two storey side extension 7 New Road Binfield Heath RG9 4EP

P21/S3796/HH Erection of triple garage (re-submission of P21/So487/HH). Gosbrook House Common Lane Binfield Heath RG9 4JY

110/21 Neighbourhood Plan Cllr Davis had prepared a summary of progress: The first grant application was successful. Smaller groups are now working on design codes and planning policy. A quotation for a Landscape Character Assessment is being sought. Comments and suggestions for the Aims and Objectives have been received and are being updated. The next NP SG meeting is on Monday 15th November at the Scout hut.

111/21 Community Matters

111.01/21 Defibrillator As Dr Barton was unavailable this was deferred till November. The Clerk will contact Dr Barton re this. **(Clerk to action)**

111.02/21 Litter Pick A volunteer wishes to organise a litter pick around the village on 20th November. Safety measures will be taken. The Clerk ordered bags for refuse and clear bags for recycling. Litter pickers and hi-vis jackets will be provided and jackets must be worn. **(Cllr Ransom to action)**

112/21 Highways/Transport and General Maintenance Nothing to report this month.

113/21 Green & Open Spaces

113.01/21 The damaged area along Footpath 20 has been reported again to Savills.

113.02/21 Footpath 421/9 is completely blocked with vegetation. Pricketts will be asked to clear this. **(Clerk to action)**

114/21 Website Compliance Nothing to report yet.

115/21 Neighbourhood Watch A short report related to scams had been sent to coordinators.

116/21 Consultations This was considered by Councillors to be a waste of time.

Matters for future consideration Neighbourhood Plan; defibrillator.

The meeting finished at 8.53pm.

Date of next meeting: Monday November 22nd 2021

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

GENERAL OCC REPORT

THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S FIRST MOTION TO FULL COUNCIL

Oxfordshire residents may be interested to learn about the first motion brought to Full Council on 14th September by the new administration. Up until then, people managing committee meetings were given the courtesy of being addressed in the manner they requested: chairman, madam chairman, chair or whatever. The motion brought by the ruling group to Full Council sought to proscribe all form of address other than 'chair' and to have the constitution re-written accordingly. Despite some of the most vociferous opponents being women, after nearly an hour's debate, the ruling group forced this motion through. I question whether residents think the time and money spent on this debate was worthwhile, whether it should have been the administration's top priority motion, and whether such a restriction on speech is desirable.

ROAD CLOSURE DETAILS FOR AJ BELL WOMEN'S TOUR CYCLING RACE

Road closure details have been announced for the Oxfordshire stage of the AJ Bell Women's Tour professional cycling race – between Bicester, Oxford, Abingdon, and Banbury – on Monday 4 October 2021. Road restrictions will be in place at the start point on Bicester's Sheep Street and Market Square involving closures, prohibitions of waiting, disabled person parking and loading, and the imposing of one-way traffic. Local diversions and information signs will be used to indicate the route. There will then be rolling road

closures from approximately 11am at the race start area in Bicester, controlled by police and route marshals, that will then continue along the route. They will involve highways and junctions with access roads onto the route, closing for short periods while the race passes through. The length of closure depends on how dispersed the riders are. Road closure locations along the route – between Bicester, Oxford, Abingdon, and Banbury – are listed in full at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/licences-and-permits/public-event-planning>

‘WISHLIST’ FOR SPECIFIC DONATIONS TO HELP AFGHAN REFUGEES

People in Oxfordshire are being asked to make donations of very specific items to help Afghan people currently being looked after in the county after their recent arrival in the UK following events in their home country. As is the case throughout the country Oxfordshire is playing host to a number of Afghan people in temporary accommodation as a prelude to them moving into more stable accommodation once central Government has allocated families and individuals to appropriate homes either locally or elsewhere. The people of the county have been very generous in contributing an array of items that have been welcomed by those in temporary accommodation and those who initially arrived in the country at RAF Brize Norton before being transported elsewhere. Soft toys, sanitary items and clothing have proved very useful.

Earlier in September the county council announced that it would work with district and city council partners and the charity Asylum Welcome to publish an Amazon wish list should any further very specific items be needed in due course. That list is being hosted by Asylum Welcome and has now been published and can be found at [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk). Items that are being requested include various items of clothing and shoes, sanitary products and headphones. The page will make clear when donations have been received to a level that means no more are required.

SCHOOL FLU VACCINATIONS BEGIN

More than 100,000 primary and secondary school children in Oxfordshire will be offered the opportunity to be immunised against influenza this autumn in an expanded health protection campaign. The programme started on September 22 with the Oxfordshire School-aged Immunisation Team from Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust giving quick and painless nasal spray vaccinations to consented pupils from reception classes to year 11. Schools are contacting parents, guardians and carers to ensure consent is provided. Any consented children who miss out on the day of immunisation at their school, either through sickness or absence, will be able to get their influenza vaccine at catch up clinics. Around 50,000 children – 73% of reception to year 7 pupils – were immunised last year. The 2021 influenza campaign now includes secondary school children up to year 11. This includes children educated at home and children who attend special schools. Preschool children over two years old will be offered the immunisation by their GP surgery. More information on vaccinations in non-school places can be obtained by emailing: flu.schoolnurses@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk.

OXFORD CITY RESIDENTS BENEFIT FROM CYCLE SCHEMES

Oxford City’s cyclists and rental e-scooter riders can look forward to a safer, purpose-built series of new rapid cycle routes across Oxford known as ‘Quickways’ as part of the next phase of the county’s investment in its active travel infrastructure. The proposals for the schemes for Oxford result from a major funding award from the government’s Active Travel Fund to upgrade infrastructure to increase levels of walking, cycling and use of rented e-scooters. I am supporting residents in rural areas and trying to get the administration’s attention focused on villages and towns which have struggled to obtain such generous funding.

SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR BINFIELD HEATH

FOOTPATH ALONGSIDE THE A4155 LINKING LOWER SHIPLAKE TO SHIPLAKE CROSS

I am investigating the feasibility of constructing a rural-style footpath to run from the junction of Memorial Avenue and the A4155, alongside the A4155 to where a path exists near the speed camera. I would welcome BH PC's views on this. Shiplake PC is divided on the issue.

GENERAL SODC REPORT

TRANSGENDER RIGHTS MOTION DECEMBER 2020

As a result of a corporate complaint, the SODC Head of Legal Services was asked to investigate a motion on transgender rights passed by the council in December 2020. The Head of Legal services reported back to Full Council on October 7th and stated that the motion was political, aspirational, without legal effect and lacked definition of some legal terms. This confirms the view of the Conservative Group that the administration repeatedly brings forward motions for debate that while often worthy, are beyond the remit of the council and hence a waste of councillors' time and council-taxpayers' money.

NEW CORPORATE HQ IN DIDCOT

At the Full Council meeting on October 7th, Council was asked to approve the budget and borrowings for a new corporate headquarters in Didcot. The objective of the administration is to construct a building bigger than that needed by the council in order to rent-out the surplus office space to produce an income stream. The Conservative Group opposed this proposal on the basis that the council was effectively entering into speculative property investment using borrowed money at a time when future demand for office accommodation is highly uncertain due to changes brought about by 'Working From Home'. The Conservative Group believes that there may already be other existing buildings in Oxfordshire that could be re-purposed under the Government philosophy of 'one Government Estate' but in any case, if a new building is built, it should not include the surplus, speculative, space.

SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR BINFIELD HEATH

P18/S4298/FUL HIGH WALL HOUSE

Planning Enforcement visited the site last week for a general inspection. They have now arranged to meet with the main contractor on site in the next ten days to go through the levels concerns. An update will be issued when they have completed their enquiries.

P20/S3501/FUL-3: CHANGE OF USE OF LAKE FOR RECREATION/SPORTS PURPOSES

The application has been refused. A full report is available on the SODC website. As this was a retrospective application, SODC Enforcement has opened a file and an officer will be allocated next few days.

RETIREMENT VILLAGE DISCHARGE OF CONDITIONS

The applicant has submitted three separate 'Discharge of conditions' applications. I have advised Shiplake PC that although they are not official consultees, they should be proactive and scrutinise these closely as some aspects are simply wrong, while others will have a big impact on the village. BH PC may also wish to examine these applications.

P21/S4102/RM: RETIREMENT VILLAGE RESERVED MATTERS

A full 'Reserved Matters' application has now been submitted. Shiplake PC is an official consultee in respect of this and very close scrutiny of the complex application is required. For example, the 'Landscape Masterplan' shows a break in the woodland shielding the site

and the construction of a pavilion to overlook the wider landscape. This conflicts with many residents' views that the site should be shielded as much as possible. Another example is the possible impact of light pollution which should also be carefully considered. BH PC may also wish to examine this application.

P20/S2808/DIS: THAMES FARM

As previously reported, Taylor Wimpey has submitted a revised drainage proposal to SODC. This involves pumping the surface water from the site along the A4155 to a discharge point near Sheephouse Lane. OCC and SODC have now objected to these proposals and a refusal of the application for discharge is expected by the end of the week. Taylor Wimpey has now also submitted its ground compacting/grouting proposals as part of this 'discharge' application. The SODC view is that a separate full planning application is required for this aspect.

SODC ward councillor's report

Binfield Heath – 25th October 2021

Covid-19

Covid cases are again rising firmly and are much higher than at the equivalent time last year - as the Delta (Indian - B1.617.2) variant continues to make its mark. Overall hospitalisations are not a drama, but UK case-rates are much higher than many elsewhere. At 20/10, Oxford City was at a weekly rate of 294 per 100k population. By comparison, Cherwell DC was 475, West Oxon DC at 474, SODC at 710 and Vale of WH DC at 569. Reading BC (to 12th October) was at 397. This is a very high figure for SODC. The vaccine programme continues – with particular focus on the younger groups down to age 16 and completing 2nd doses. Some younger recipients seem hesitant – perhaps influenced by scares on social media. A single Pfizer dose will then be offered to 12-15 year olds – partially subject to parental discussion. A booster programme is expected to support those over 70 or who are vulnerable. There will also be a broad-based flu inoculation programme to try to protect the NHS during the winter. Government is hopeful that we may have seen the worst from known Covid variants. The key seems to be to maintain antibody levels and to protect against flu. The risks of co-infection or twin infection - with both flu and Covid - are concerning virologists.

New Leader at SODC

At the SODC Council meeting on the 7th October Sue Cooper handed on the leadership of the council to David Rouane – who represents Didcot. Sue brought great experience to the team and has made a great impact – despite the challenges of Covid. Many projects across a wide area of innovation and progress are now emerging from the rather tired slough of the past. Sue will remain in Cabinet – retaining her Climate and Ecology role alongside the Environment portfolio. David steps from the Environment role into that of Leader. My portfolio remains as before but with the addition of in-house Property.

Refuse collection

The national shortage of HGV drivers continues. The Government have made tweaks to their proposals and temporary changes. Managers at BIFFA are doing their best to recruit more. In the meantime the brown bin garden waste collections have been on temporary stop. The Brown Bin "Garden Waste" service resumed on 4th October but on a fortnightly cycle. At each collection Biffa will take a full bin and as much again in garden side-waste. Happily the fortnightly collection of the Brown bins will resume from 1st November – starting with a "double" week of a full bin and as much again in garden side-waste. Users' annual subscriptions will be extended by 3 months before a new start-of-year DD payment is taken.

New offices for SODC

Progress is being made on new offices for SODC following the fire that destroyed the Crowmarsh

offices in January 2015. The previous administration did all too little to progress matters causing all the insurance money and millions more to be eaten up by the expensive temporary costs of Milton Park. Decisions to progress with more detail are proceeding with a view to utilise the Didcot Gateway site efficiently. The council owns this site within a wider Homes England owned site right opposite the Didcot railway station. In the wake of Covid and changed home-working patterns the council is planning for some 200 desk spaces for the shared council administration (rather than c. 400 before) and for 100 desks of commercial space on a floor above. The Gateway site is about 6 miles from the fast-growing Milton Park office park. In 2019 in their prospectus, MEPC the owners of the MP site forecast expansion from 9 thousand jobs to 20 thousand by 2040.

Crowmarsh NP

The Crowmarsh NP was overwhelmingly successful at referendum and has been made by SODC.

Strategic Property Review

SODC's main project to effect a Property Review has successfully completed its primary milestone with all properties listed and with appropriate data assessed and compiled. Unbelievably no such thing has existed for many years – having been badly out-sourced and poorly administered.

Tree Planting

As a first stage SODC have completed a practical tree policy to support increased planting on public land.

Procurement Strategy For the first time SODC has adopted a formal procurement policy. Whilst various contracts etc policies existed they were not formalised in this better practice.

Policies & motions

At its meeting on 7th October council progressed necessary decisions (some in confidential session – as advised) and also supported: -

A) Challenging the excessive growth assumptions for the ARC given:

- a. Promise to level up the regions
- b. Highly dubious cost-benefit
- c. Suggestion of and need for landscape scale nature mapping and recovery
- d. Decisions SHOULD be made by local democratic means to meet local needs!

B) Challenging the previously proposed planning reforms noting:

- a) The advent of a new Secretary of State
- b) COP 26
- c) “Build Back Better” promises for net zero and environmental aims
- d) Opposition to those “Planning Reforms”. (Please scrap them.)
- e) Calls to reverse the worst and more recent Permitted Development changes
- f) The importance of local decisions by democracy
- g) Need for a sustainable future in our natural world where people can afford to live
- h) The flaws in the 5 year Housing Land Supply “Standard Method” system

C) Call for Oxfordshire CCG to provide more than 2 palliative care beds in Wallingford after the closure of Sue Ryder. The 2 retained beds are supported by GPs – not dedicated staff. Many individuals need support and can't get that at their home!

D) Call for government schemes for making public buildings more efficient with renewables and insulation to be focussed on leisure and swimming pool buildings – without regard to the purchaser of energy. Previous schemes have been obtuse and have excluded buildings where the council is not the direct purchaser of energy (thus penalising any who have outsourced the operations inclusive of utility purchases)!

E) Call for Universal Credit reduction of £20 per week to be stopped. Affects those in greatest need, emerging from worst of Covid and with vast increases in fuel and heating costs. These problems are likely to translate into increased problems for stretched councils.

F) Highlighting the need to retrofit homes for efficiency. Government have scrapped their previous scheme - yet there is a clear need for Climate and social reasons. There is sound payback, but it is not getting done. Skills training and householder support is needed.

Henley & District Housing Trust

At its council meeting on 7th October SODC agreed award grant funding of more than £450,000 towards the cost of creating new affordable housing in Henley. The funding came from commuted s106 contributions from developers across the district and has gone to the Henley and District Housing Trust to develop properties for Social Rent. The plan is to develop two two-bedroomed properties and convert a third property into two one-bedroomed flats. This award will fund 50 per cent of the cost of creating these new homes, which will also be fitted with solar panels to reduce their carbon footprint. Planning consent has been obtained by the trust. The two properties are situated next to five existing cottages within the trust's ownership. These are at School Cottages, Greys Green. A third property in Henley – also owned by the trust - will be converted to two flats. This results in a net gain of three new affordable properties. Rents on all the properties will be charged at Social Rent levels – these are calculated using a government formula based on relative property values and relative local earnings. They normally fall significantly below Affordable Rent levels, which can be up to 80 per cent of prevailing market rents in a given area. Social Rent ensures that rents are as affordable as possible in an area of very high market values. There is significant demand for affordable housing in the Henley on Thames area, with 338 households on the council's housing register stating Henley as their first preference (As at August 2021). It should be noted that many of those registered are seeking 1 bedroom properties, although many such don't rank highly for social priority; some however with particular needs do.

Grants

The capital grants scheme is now open for applications from voluntary and community sector organisations and town and parish councils until mid-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. For further information about the grants scheme and scoring criteria please take a look at the website southoxon.gov.uk/grants. The Community Enablement Team on communityenablement@southandvale.gov.uk will welcome enquiries for help and advice. This is expected to be a very competitive funding round. The Councillor grants scheme - round 2 of 2 will re-open on 22nd November.

Keep safe!

Leigh Rawlins
District Councillor