

BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Binfield Heath Parish Council Meeting held on Monday September 21st 2020 at 6 pm by Zoom

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

17/20 Recreation Ground

17.01/20 The ROSPA report has been received and the hard copy will be passed on to the Chairman. **(Clerk to action)** A group of Councillors will undertake an inspection and make a list of the maintenance tasks required. No item was reported as dangerous and needing to be removed.

17.02/20 A group of parents are to reseed around the football goal areas. Topsoil has been laid in preparation. The new goalposts are on order. A Councillor Priority grant has provided half of the cost of the new posts.

17.03/20 A resident has suggested that a new piece of equipment be purchased for the recreation ground. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

18/20 Allotments The allotments have been inspected and are looking tidy and well cultivated.

19/20 Public Forum No question from the floor.

The meeting of the Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed the residents attending the meeting and introduced the Parish Councillors. **Present** Cllr P Rollason, Cllr L Ransom, Cllr S Summerland, Cllr H Lacey, Cllr Sarah Fulton-Urry and Cllr K Maher. Cllr D Bartholomew (OCC) and Cllr L Rawlins (SODC) Six members of the public.

74/20 Apologies for absence None

75/20 Declarations of Interest None

76/20 Minutes of the Committee meetings held on Monday July 20th 2020 and the short meeting on August 17th. Cllr Summerland proposed the minutes were accepted as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Ransom. All agreed.

77/20 Matters Arising None

78/20 County Councillor's report Cllr Bartholomew's full report will be attached to the minutes. On local matters he reported in particular that local work at Coppid Crossroads will take place next week and that officers will investigate the commercial parking outside Dragon Cottage. Cllr Bartholomew was thanked for his contribution of £1500 towards the new football posts from his Priority Fund.

79/20 District Councillor's report Cllr Rawlins introduced his report. His full report is attached to these minutes. He briefly discussed the Emerging Local Plan; the Consultation starts today. A response will be prepared. A member of the public queried public involvement and was reassured.

80/20 Public Forum/Correspondence Mr Stacey attended the meeting to talk about his application. Cllr Ransom listed the PC's initial concerns. Neighbours Mr and Mrs Packham were invited to respond. Discussion took place and an offer to compromise was expressed. The Parish Council will consider its response before the deadline.

81/20 Financial Situation

81.01/20 The financial position was circulated.

81.02/20 The September accounts were presented. Invoices to the value of £715.60 were authorised for payment by BACS. These payments were proposed by Cllr Ransom and seconded by Cllr Summerland. **(Clerk to action)**

81.03/20 Councillor expenses: It was agreed that the Chairman be reimbursed for the new lock for the bottom gate of the recreation ground. Keys have been issued to the relevant people.

82/20 Planning Matters

The new Govt. Planning Changes were briefly discussed but it was decided that a planning committee would read the new documents and prepare a response.

New Applications

P20/S3092/FUL Erection of a new detached cottage with garage accommodation. The Willows Kiln Lane Binfield Heath RG9 4EJ. Bearing in mind the discussion and the different

views expressed in the Public Forum, the Councillors will make a response to this application.

Applications Granted None

89/20 Community Matters Nothing for discussion this month.

90/20 Highways/Transport and General Maintenance Nothing for discussion this month.

91/20 Neighbourhood Watch Cllr Maher reported that police presence was visible every couple of weeks. Roger Roberts reported that there had been a number of ‘professional’ robberies in the village in the last month. The culprits had specific objectives in mind. Cllr Maher was not aware of these occurrences and will look into this. It was suggested that warnings to residents were made on the website and via the Village Newsletter.

92/20 Neighbourhood Plan This item has had to be deferred for a number of months as it was felt that it could not move forward until a public meeting of residents could be safely held and commitment from a group of enthusiastic residents could be found to help to take the process forward. However, it is of great concern to some of the residents present at this meeting that it should not be deferred any longer. Roger Roberts reminded the PC of the November 2019 meeting where Councillors agreed that a structure for the NP would be formulated and that this had not been done. He said that it was reported in the Henley Standard that the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan will be at the heart of the planning process. Cllr. Maher pointed out that he had attended local neighbourhood planning group meetings and was following the progress that EDPC were making and that some ideas could be shared. He reported that EDPC had sent out a questionnaire and that posters had reminded people about completion. Cllr Maher will ascertain the response rate from EDPC as it could be the way forward for BHPC. Cllr Maher will talk to EDPC. **(Cllr Maher to action)**

93/20 New Standing Orders The Councillors have received the NALC suggested revised Standing Orders and they will be read prior to the October meeting when they will be proposed for adoption.

94/20 Matters for future consideration e-mails; Neighbourhood Plan; CIL money.

The meeting finished at 7.51pm

Date of next meeting: Monday October 26th 2020

REPORT TO BINFIELD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL SEPT 2020

FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND CHILDCARE PROVIDERS WELCOME CHILDREN BACK

Schools, colleges and early years providers have been working closely with OCC to make sure that all children are welcomed back safely in September. Education and childcare providers are following guidance from the Department for Education, Public Health England and the County Council. Risk assessments have been carried out and hygiene measures are in place across all education and early years settings. All Oxfordshire education settings, including our special schools, will be open in September. Arrangements will vary, as what is needed in a small primary will be different from a large secondary or upper school. Classes may be different as measures, such as teaching children in separate groups or ‘bubbles’, may have to be put in place to help keep children and staff safe. Childcare providers’ arrangements may also vary, as what is needed in a childminder’s home will be different to a larger nursery or preschool.

BRAKES COULD BE APPLIED TO OXFORD’S LOCKDOWN EMERGENCE AS COVID CASES RISE

Measures that could put the brakes on Oxford’s gradual emergence from lockdown have moved a step closer as a result of another week of uncomfortably high rises in COVID cases in the city. The number of cases in Oxford in the week ending August 21 was 41 – which is 26.9 cases per 100,000 and sees the city moving ever closer to figures in parts of the country that have been labelled by central Government as areas of concern or that require intervention.

REPORT INTO OXFORDSHIRE COUNCILS REORGANISATION

Management consultants PwC have taken a fresh look at the different options for local government structures that could emerge for debate among communities and councillors in Oxfordshire as the nation awaits a Government blueprint for the future. During the Autumn the Government will publish a White Paper on recovery and devolution, which will act as a guide to setting out how local government structures may be reorganised across the whole country – taking into account the changed landscape following the COVID-19 pandemic. Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council recently commissioned a piece of work to look at the various options that may be viable in the county. This followed a motion unanimously agreed by county councillors in July. Both councils asked experts at PwC to complete the work. PwC are currently acting in an advisory capacity to Government and other local authorities undertaking similar pieces of work. The options reviewed are:

1. Optimising the existing two-tier collaboration
2. Establishing a new single unitary authority
3. Establishing two new unitary authorities, based on a 50/50 split of the population to meet Government criteria around size.

The report can be downloaded from the OCC website.

READING TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2036 (INCLUDING THIRD READING BRIDGE)

I emailed all clerks in my Division on 17th May to advise that Reading was consulting on its Transport Strategy 2036. Several proposals would have major impacts on South Oxfordshire. I urged all parish councils in my Division to respond to the consultation and am delighted that most have, either individually or as part of a cooperative effort led by Kidmore End PC.

OCC and SODC have also submitted their responses.

OCC states:

“We are opposed to the Plan in its present form, as we do not agree with the proposed schemes and measures it includes for cross boundary travel between Reading and Oxfordshire. We are particularly concerned about the approach proposed to developing large-scale ‘multi-modal schemes’ to the north of Reading, in particular the proposed Thames Crossing, Reading Orbital Route and North of Reading Park & Ride sites.”

The full response is available on the OCC website here: <https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/response-to-readings-local-transport-plan/>

SODC states:

“We are particularly concerned about the approach proposed to developing large-scale ‘multi-modal schemes’ to the north of Reading, in particular the proposed Thames Crossing, Reading Orbital Route and North Reading Park and Rides. We believe that development and delivery of these major schemes is inconsistent with the objectives and many of the policies of the plan, they will not be effective in managing cross-boundary travel movements, and are likely to have significant negative impacts on South Oxfordshire.”

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BINFIELD HEATH

COUNCILLOR PRIORITY FUND

The PC submitted an application for £1500 towards new goalposts for the playground. I was pleased to approve this and it has now been paid.

TRAFFIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AT COPPID CROSSROADS

As previously advised, I have agreed with officers that the improvements detailed below will be introduced in order to improve safety at the spot.

- A new entrance Gateway feature – ‘Coppid crossroads’
- A new advanced crossroads map sign
- Enhanced Stop signs
- Enhanced advanced stop signs
- New dragons teeth road markings
- An additional length of centreline
- Additional slow markings
- Refurbishment of slightly worn road markings

The work is scheduled to commence next week (w/c 28/09).

COMMERCIAL PARKING ON THE VERGE AT DRAGON COTTAGE

I have asked officers to investigate this matter.

IMPACT OF ROAD WIDENING ON A4155 AT THAMES FARM

I have received complaints about the impact of the road-widening that fall into two categories: 1) There is a kink in the road where the widened section meets the old road near Bolney Lane and this allegedly causes some drivers to poorly position themselves, endangering other road users; 2) The widened road has increased speeding by motorists. With regard to 1), I reported the matter to officers and they said the changes were in accordance with specification and there were no safety issues. With regard to 2), Shiplake PC has agreed to fund a speed survey which will provide hard evidence (or not).

SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR BINFIELD HEATH

THAMES FARM: P20/S2825/EX (EXTENSION OF TIME) & P20/S2808/DIS (DRAINAGE)

The application from Taylor Wimpey (TW) to extend the construction schedule by one year attracted over 50 objections from residents. Their concern is not that construction is delayed, but that TW are planning to delay the tree replanting until construction commences. I have corresponded with TW in relation to this, as has John Howell MP and the SODC Planning department. TW have not changed their position. Officers have advised that the TW reply to the Planning department is a public document and it can be viewed on the SODC website:

Go to

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P20/S2825/EX>

then open the folder marked [2020-09-11-Letter from applicant received post decision on planting timetable](#)

SODC WARD COUNCILLOR'S REPORT **BINFIELD HEATH – 21ST SEPTEMBER** **2020 Covid-19**

After a summer of growing relaxation, Covid cases are now showing some resurgence. Schools have returned and pubs and restaurants have resumed – benefiting from the “eat out to help out” support. It remains to be seen how much Covid cases will grow, in the short-term it appears that hospitalisations and deaths are not spiking sharply, but of course continued vigilance and care is called for. As the autumn winter season of flu and viruses develops there are reasons for concern and for expectations of new challenges. More powers are being devolved to local government to effect “local lockdowns” where necessary. Government is beginning to revise guidance – including the “rule of six” to limit the scale of gatherings. The Covid support structure across Oxfordshire

remains in place with South Oxfordshire council ready to respond as may be required.

Local Plan 2035

The Inspector has issued an interim letter following the Examination in Public. He has agreed that the plan period should extend to 2035 – with an additional year of housing requirements for SODC. He has approved the housing requirements as submitted – including the high SHMA numbers both for SODC and its obligations to meet unmet housing need from Oxford City. He did not choose to take account of the much lower household projections now released by ONS based on the 2018 base which show much lower numbers – particularly for Oxford. In addition he has shockingly approved ALL the strategic sites, mostly in the Green Belt but also including the Chalgrove site with its isolation, safety issues and real questions concerning its availability. The result is a very high requirement for housing and a plan supply with a vast amount of “headroom” above that requirement – both in terms of numbers and site areas; if built this must mean a sharp increase in the number of households – which the housing formula approach will then use to project even more housing “need”. The Inspector is indicating support for stronger policy on Climate Change, revisions to the submitted policy on density and more emphasis on special housing for the elderly – including extra care. He did not support demands for more development around Reading or in the market towns and villages but is making policy for infills and windfalls more permissive. In due course, after some drafting exchanges with the district planning policy team, a further consultation will take place over a six-week period on the “Main Modifications” proposed by the Inspector; these will include those changes which he judges of greatest materiality – rather than simply details of drafting. Under the Secretary of State’s diktat or “direction” he seeks to have a local Plan adopted by the end of December 2020.

3rd Reading Bridge and Reading Transport Strategy

The consultation period has now closed. Oxfordshire councils and local parishes have strongly challenged the draft strategy but indicated a willingness to engage on finding proportionate measures for mutual benefit.

Consultation on South Oxfordshire Corporate Plan, 2020-2024

The consultation on this has closed. The response levels were higher than in the past and overall very positive. They are now being analysed.

National Planning changes

The government have announced proposals for the most radical change in planning since the 1947. Local Plans would be “simplified” and planning policy be set by Whitehall. Plans would include zones for Growth, Renewal and Protected areas. In Growth areas developers would already enjoy effective “outline” planning permission automatically. In Renewal areas developers could assume rights to demolition and development up to a “gentle densification” limit by area, but widely suggested to be at least 4 storeys in urban/suburban areas, In Protected areas developers would face constraints – unless particular needs apply. It is suggested that these new simple plans could get done in 30 months rather than 60 months. It is suggested that planning applications would in future be determined according to black and white “decision rules” – without democratic interpretation. It is suggested that this would make life simpler and less costly for developers, simplify workloads for local government and reduce or remove the input of aging councillors and their Nimby residents.

Whoopie! Any input to review of a planning application would be digital and the intent is that rules would be crisp and simple. There is also a promise that enforcement of breaches of these easy rules would be firmer to increase public confidence! The above is for consultation under the

Government’s “Planning for the Future” document :-

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907956/Planning_for_the_Future_web_accessible_version.pdf Before then more Permitted

Development is proposed to make it easier to change uses from commercial property and shops to homes. A radical change of Planning Use classes came into effect on 1st September :-

https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use Use classes A, B1 and D are revoked and replaced with changed new classes E and F with a changed “Sui Generis” group. The “Standard Method” formula for calculating “Local Housing Need” has been radically changed. It will now use the most recent ONS household projections (presently those on the 2018 base) but these will also be subject to uplifts according to the median house-price earnings

ratio and how that have increased in the Local Planning authority over the past 10 years. These latter uplifts provide a very strong uplift in areas with high house prices – like the South East. In the rare event such as in Oxford City where household projections actually fall there is a default based on a percentage of the housing stock – but this is still subject to uplifts for the earnings ratio. Under the old method the figure for SODC would have been 608 per annum (using the ONS 2014- base household projections). Using the more current 2018 base household projections that would have fallen to 522 per annum. But the new formula forces that up to 723 (whilst using the 2018 base household projections). This great increase is because of the uplift factor for the earnings ratio. In future – as the effects of the Local Plan 2035 cut in and vastly increase the SODC household numbers then this figure is likely to go sharply higher yet. It is questionable whether such increased housing will in fact reduce house prices in this district; rather they are simply likely to attract more people moving out of the infinite demand represented by London. So it would appear that the new formula will dramatically increase development in South Oxfordshire in future.

District finance

The government have announced further support for local government as regards certain types of losses of income. They will not compensate for lost commercial or investment income. However, they will make a contribution to other losses. For such 5% of loss is disregarded and then the government will compensate 75% of the rest. This, together with other compensation for Covid related costs, has helped to staunch district losses. However there remain risks to come in autumn/winter.

Car parking charges

After a very long period without increase (2007 and some minor changes in 2012) the charges in SODC car parks are set to increase by 20p for 2 and three hours. From February 2021, to give 1 hour's free parking in Henley - in line with other SODC car parks in other towns and to start charging on a Sunday.

Leigh Rawlins
District Councillor