

Minutes of the Meeting of Sonning Common Parish Council held in the Village Hall at 20.00 on 20 June 2011

Present: Mr Rooke, Chairman. Mr Fort; Mr Greenwood; Miss Hunt; Mr Jones; Mr Kedge; Mrs Lewis; Ms Noble; Mrs Phillips-Tilbury; Mr Reynolds and Mrs Diwell (from 20.55).
Also present: two members of the public.

- 12/31 Apologies for absence: Mr Stoves.
- 12/32 Declarations of Interests by Members on Agenda Items: None
- 12/33 Public Question Time under Section 30 of Standing Orders. No questions
- 12/34 To receive Minutes of previous meetings:
- 34.01 Planning Committees held on 16 May, 6 June and 13 June 2011. Both approved.
 - 34.02 Parish Council held on 16 May 2011. Approved.
 - 34.03 Finance Committee held on 8 June May 2011. Approved and ratified.
- 12/35 Matters arising from those minutes. None
- 12/36 The County Councillor's Report. Mrs Viney was unable to attend. The clerk read out highlights of her written report which is attached as Appendix A.
- 12/37 The District Councillor's Report. Mr Harrison reported (text in Appendix B) on the fines recently levied for fly tipping and failing to ensure that contractors are licensed for waste removal. He asked that the search for Olympic torch Bearers be publicised as it is seeking 'inspirational people'.
He outlined progress with the Core Strategy as it affects larger villages. This generated some discussion about how it might affect Sonning Common and what the Parish Council should do in response. A request was made for a representative of the SODC Planning Committee to come and explain how it all works when it has been agreed.
- 12/38 The Police Report. PCSO Forrest described the local focus on speeding backed up by surveys and the use of a mobile Speed Indicating Device. He was urged to keep enforcing parking rules on the corner of Wood Lane and Woodlands Road.
- 12/39 Insurance renewal It was resolved to approve the Finance Committee recommendation to accept the Zurich Insurance renewal offer of a discount for a five year commitment by the council saving of £2,353.20 over the period.
- 12/40 Internal Audit, Annual report and Financial regulations It was resolved approve the Internal Audit Report, the proposed Annual Report and the Parish Council's Financial Regulations modified in light of the Internal Audit report to require the RFO (Parish Clerk) to be a signatory on all cheques and banking instructions. Clerk to action.
Mr Kedge asked the meeting to note the comment made at the end of the Internal Audit Report viz: 'The new accounting system has enhanced the financial reporting and produces clear and reliable audit trails. The Parish Clerk has a thorough understanding of the system and uses it effectively.'
- 12/40 Parish Clerk's Report This was discussed with reference to the importance of Members receiving training. The Chairman emphasised the vital part that this has in Councillors being able to discharge their duties effectively. It was resolved that at least six places should be taken on the OALC course being held on 12 October. Clerk to action.
Mr Fort asked that progress be made with online reporting on Play Areas. Clerk to action.
- 12/41 Office assistance It was resolved to approve the employment of a student on a temporary basis during the summer holidays assist the Clerk in carrying out the weeding out and sorting the paperwork in filing cabinets.
- 12/42 Footpaths, Green, Village Gardeners and Open Spaces Mrs Phillips-Tilbury's report on The Village Gardeners is attached as Appendix 3.

12/43 Working Parties (Advisory Committees) reports

43.01 Play area security Mr Kedge outlined the urgent needs for remedial and new work on fencing, gates etc. It was resolved that the Clerk should be supplied with a specification of the requirements to seek formal quotes as quickly as possible.

It was also resolved that the Clerk should ensure that hedges on the Baskerville Road Play Area and in Naish way should be cut as a matter of urgency. The Clerk was also instructed to expedite the provision/replacement of a second litter bin by the seat in Baskerville Road Play Area.

There was a discussion of the serious need to find and equip an area suitable for teenagers. The Advisory Committee will explore options during the summer.

Clerk to action matters as appropriate.

43.02 Footpath improvements Ms Noble advised that she and Mr Stoves will be reporting later in the year.

43.03 Noticeboards Mrs Phillips-Tilbury outlined the thinking to date. There was no dissent on the need for improvements on the existing notice boards but widely varying views on the merits or otherwise of lockability. This issue will have to be resolved when a proposal is presented with views being sought from all quarters in the meantime.

12/44 Village Hall PA System The Parish Clerk outlined the three proposals that had been received and evaluated . After some discussion it was resolved to accept the one from Messrs BioAcoustics costing £2,583.

Additional agenda items 46 and 47 were taken here.

12/46 Memberships of External Bodies. Members agreed to confirm to the Clerk information needed to ensure that their Register of Interests entries are accurate.

12/47 Japanese Knotweed. Mr Jones proposed that the Parish Council should take a lead on the coordination of external resources and expertise towards the eradication of the Knotweed problem in the village. It was resolved that wide publicity should be given to the outbreak in all media to help parishioners know how local outbreaks should be handled within the law. No decision was taken on any application of funds to the problem. It was resolved to support Mr Jones in maximising awareness, identifying where extra effort is needed and seeking expertise in eradication.

12/45 Matters for future consideration:

New Bus stop seat on Peppard Road – what has happened to it?

Requests for seats elsewhere in the village.

The next Meeting will be on 18 July 2011 at 20.00 hrs.

Chairman.....Date.....

Appendix A - County Councillor's Report to Sonning Common Parish Council Monday 20th June 2011

HM Queen's Birthday Honours I am delighted that HM The Queen has appointed Joanna Simons a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in her Birthday Honours. Joanna has served as Chief Executive of the County Council for over six years and has made a huge contribution to the council's position as a leading edge authority. She has also operated at a regional and national level, bringing great credit to Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire first to launch Armed Forces Community Covenant. Oxfordshire County Council is proud to be the first local authority to launch the Armed Forces Community Covenant on Monday 20 June 2011.

The Community Covenant aims to encourage charities, local authorities, businesses, communities and individuals to work together with the military to offer support to service personnel and their families as well as reservists and veterans.

The county council has been chosen to launch the scheme due to its existing good practice supporting 8,200 members of the Armed Forces including setting up the military/civilian partnership, a health liaison group, financial support and the excellent support offered to children of service personnel in the county's schools.

The Government has now published the tri-Service Armed Forces Covenant for the first time and announced that, with an amendment to the Armed Forces Bill, its principles will be enshrined in law. The core principles are that members of the Armed Forces Community do not suffer disadvantages as a result of their service and that they receive special treatment where appropriate.

Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, Councillor Keith Mitchell, said: "We are very proud of our armed forces in Oxfordshire and we want to support the work of the military whenever we can. As a county council, we already have many positive links with the military through our schools and partnership projects. This community covenant is a very positive way of helping us to work even more closely and in a more joined up fashion. We hope that other partner organisations and businesses will join us in helping to embrace military and civilian needs in the county."

Supporting service leavers

The council has set aside £100,000 for 2011/12 which will be used for a specific project to support service leavers resettling in Oxfordshire, particularly those with physical or mental health issues, to gain skills and employment.

Armed Forces Day - Flag Raising Ceremony

The Community Covenant was launched to coincide with Armed Forces Day on June 20. Chairman of Oxfordshire County Council, Cllr Patrick Greene hosted a ceremony at the front of County Hall today. Members of Oxfordshire Officers Training Corps raised the flag for Armed Forces Day. The Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire will take the salute.

Chiltern Edge Youth Club

The Management Committee of the Youth Club, sited on the premises of Chiltern Edge School, will take over the management of the youth club with effect from 1st September 2011.

OCC ceases funding us at the end of August and the Management Committee, who are all local volunteers, are working hard ensuring the funding is in place to continue the youth club for the future. We are looking to fund raise from local businesses and charities. The County Council have a fund we are bidding for to keep us afloat in the meantime and, of course, the OCC 'Chill Out Fund' is not ceasing and we can bid for funds from this.

We have two new Members joining the Committee next month and we are always looking for volunteers for youth work in the club and for the Management Committee. If anyone wishes to volunteer for however little time they can spare we would be delighted to meet them.

The club continues to go from strength to strength. We intend to continue opening the youth club through the summer on Wednesdays and Thursday evenings. We want to provide a safe and happy place for local youngsters to 'hang out' with their friends and we would be delighted to receive any ideas from young people about things they might like to introduce to make it an even more enjoyable experience.

It is going to be a local club, for local youngsters run and managed by local people. It will be fun, vibrant and inclusive.

If you require any information about the club or would like to volunteer some time, equipment or funding, please contact the Chairman, Mrs. B Dobson on 01189 72 3266 or 07979811318 or Mrs. R. Edgington on 01189 72 3076.

Sonning Common Library

Now that the range and scope of the Consultation has been agreed it has begun. It is good news in that a core service will be maintained. This is a testament to the pressure exerted by the threatened libraries working as a unit. I and my colleagues whose libraries have been under threat have also lobbied other members hard to retain a fairer system.

This is the result. Areas with large footfalls (towns and the City) will be safe. Also areas with the greatest deprivation will keep two thirds of the funding. Those areas where there is more affluence, where the libraries are sited within schools etc. will still keep a core service from County and a third of the funding. It will mean if we want to remain open for more hours than we are funded, we will need to recruit some volunteers. It will be a bit like the volunteers in the police offices. Not perfect, but it much better than closure or struggling to run the library with no back up, no book stock, and no Librarian at all. All, including the main libraries, will have a self service machine.

Councillor Carol Viney Oxfordshire County Council Sonning Common Division

Appendix B – District Councillor’s Report

Council prosecutes Ballards Estate Agents and local handyman

The council’s environmental health and legal teams have successfully prosecuted Ballards Estate Agents of Henley on Thames and Andy McNab, of Sonning Common, for failing to dispose of rubbish correctly. Ballards were ordered to pay nearly £5,000 for passing rubbish to McNab, who later passed it onto an unregistered waste carrier that fly-tipped their rubbish in Mill Lane, Lower Shiplake on or around the 7 September 2009.

McNab, a handyman from Maple Close in Sonning Common, was finally brought to justice on 25 May 2011, after at first pleading not-guilty, for failing to ensure rubbish from Ballards Estate Agents was disposed of properly. Tim Feaviour, a director of Ballards, pled guilty back on 15 November 2010 for not ensuring their rubbish was disposed of legally, or using someone with a registered waste carriers license. Magistrates ordered Ballards to pay a fine of £3,000 plus £15 surcharge, and half the prosecution costs of £1,908. McNab was given a conditional discharge of six months and ordered to pay costs of £200 due to his limited financial means.

The council’s environmental health officers found evidence in black bags linking to former tenants of a property let by Ballards Estate Agents. When formally interviewed, a representative of Ballards admitted to passing the waste to McNab, of *Your One Stop Property Maintenance*. They also formally interviewed McNab, who admitted to passing waste to a trader that he’d failed to check was properly registered.

Changes to the SODC Core Strategy Document

The core strategy document which was sent to the inspectorate was rejected by the planning inspector because they said we cannot rely on the windfall housing sites to meet need between 2022 and 2027.

The core strategy is the most important element of the suite of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that comprise the Local Development Framework (LDF). When all elements of the LDF have been adopted they will replace the adopted South Oxfordshire District Local Plan 2011. The Core strategy is set for 15 years.

The District Council therefore has to find 814 extra homes and due to the 60/40 split between the towns and the larger villages it means the larger villages will need to find an extra 326 homes. There are 12 larger villages in South Oxfordshire so you can see this will impact Sonning Common.

The planning team have stressed the need for a village plan to assist them planning for extra houses in the future. As the Core strategy does not document any specific plan for the villages.

Inspirational 2012 torchbearers wanted!

Residents are being encouraged to put forward their nominations and give someone they know a “Moment to Shine” as a torchbearer for the London 2012 Olympics torch relay.

The Olympic torch reaches the United Kingdom on 19 May 2012 at Land’s End and will then travel the length and breadth of the country before entering the Olympic Stadium in London on 27 July 2012 to mark the official opening of the 2012 Olympiad.

On 9 July 2012 the torch reaches Oxford and it is anticipated that on the following day the relay will travel through towns and villages in Southern Oxfordshire on the way to its next stop in Reading. As part of the torch relay, the London 2012 Olympics is looking for 8,000 individuals throughout the country to be torchbearers, with 2,012 places being allocated via a public nomination programme designed to reward inspirational members of the public.

If you know a truly inspirational person from Southern Oxfordshire, then why not nominate them to receive a once in a lifetime opportunity to be part of history and carry the Olympic flame when it travels through the region on 10 July 2012. The nomination programme is now open and runs until the end of Wednesday 29 June 2011, after which nomination panels will select individual torchbearers in each region of the UK.

Council approves order tackling anti-social drinking in Henley

South Oxfordshire District Council has approved an order to tackle anti-social drinking in Henley that will come into force on 29 June 2011.

The Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) allows police to confiscate alcohol from people behaving in an anti-social way in public areas in the town if they refuse to stop drinking or hand over drinks containers. Licensed premises will not be affected.

Anti-social behavior can include violence, criminal damage and disorderly behavior.

If the person refuses to hand over their alcohol they could be arrested and fined up to £500.

Paul Harrison District Councillor for Sonning Common

Appendix C – Village Gardeners Report

The Village Gardeners met as usual on the 1st Sunday and the 2nd Thursday in June. We had 13 volunteers working and planting up 11 tubs and 3 hanging baskets.

We have completed the weeding and planting of all the beds apart from the chemist's bed which we hope to finish at our next session. The bed has not been touched for some years and proved a real challenge with some strong armed men tackling it with mattocks.

Cllr Noble who is a professional garden designer is advising us and buying plants at cost.

Cllr Fort is waging a war against the bind weed in the Occasions bed and is gradually winning. The library window boxes and beds have been replenished and despite the battering from the elements look healthy. We have some done some preliminary work at the wine store and have encouraged the young staff to lend a hand.

I fund raise once a year in the early spring and we spend the money throughout the year. There are no admin costs. Most of our bedding plants are raised from seed by our volunteers.

Heath and Watkins feed the planters on the village hall wall and various volunteers including FISH volunteers keep them watered. We had a one off anonymous donation of £250 which will enable us to continue to improve the look of the village.

It is worth noting that in this our second year we have had no theft or vandalism. The youth survey asked that the village centre be improved and I believe that the young people in the village have taken note and are treating what the Village Gardeners have achieved with respect.

Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury