

Oxhill Parish Council
Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting
held on Tuesday 10th September at 8.00pm in the Village Hall

Councillors Present

Cllr Harbour (Chairperson), Cllr Rivers-Fletcher and Cllr Stuart

Clerk to the Council, Mrs C Coles, District Cllr John Feilding, County Cllr Chris Williams (arrived late), Bob Church (SDC Security Advisor – Safer Neighbourhood) and four villagers

19/56. Apologies for absence

These were received from Cllr Robertson and PC Craig Purcell (Shipston Police Safer Neighbourhood Team)

The Chair noted that a resignation letter had been received from Cllr Hunt due to ill health. She is a strong character, knows the village and curtilage very well and led the village plan. It is a sad loss. The vacancy will be advertised in due course and it is hoped the vacancy will be filled at the next meeting.

19/57. To receive Declarations of Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct relating to business on the agenda

There were no interests to declare.

19/58. To approve and sign the minutes of the meetings held on 9th July 2019

The minutes of the previous meetings were approved and signed.

19/59. To note any matters arising from the minutes not included on this agenda for report only

There were no matters to discuss.

19/60. Public Participation Session

A villager reported the condition of Gilks Lane and Whatcote Road (past Heritage Farm) which is subsiding.

Action: The Parish Clerk to report to Highways and copy Cllr Chris Williams.

A villager reported the Piper Homes Sign on Green Lane which he has asked to be removed.

Action: The Chair to write to Piper Homes.

A complaint was made about recent work carried out by BT and the damage to the frontage of that property.

19/61. To receive a report from the County and District Councillor

Cllr Feilding gave the following report:

The Policing Forum evening went well and 100 people attended. There will be grant funding schemes available for village halls. It will have to be match funded. Cllr Feilding is to keep the Chair updated.

A report from Cllr Williams had been received and circulated.

General

With the end of summer 2019, a year so far dominated by the indecision and political debate created by Brexit, and the consequent lack of information over Local Government finance, a new Prime Minister and subsequent Cabinet reshuffle, has not helped local government planning.

Although the County Council has developed a three-year plan we are told that this year we will only receive funding to cover this year. As I have already mentioned, Warwickshire County Council has a new Chief Executive and five new Directors and an organisation reshuffle of responsibilities at all levels of the organisation.

Finance

The financial clock does not stop ticking. We are already planning next year's (2020-21) Budget and although the Council's finances (including reserves) are healthy, pressures in the pipeline, especially Adults and Children, exist and without further dedicated funding will take funds from other services. The rise in crime, especially in rural areas, continues to cause concern. Council tax rises are presently capped and other sources of funding are limited. S106 monies continue to be received across the County. Major road schemes are being progressed but the process is slow and design work does not start until money is received from the developers.

Highways

The routine annual resurfacing programme is well underway and the final grass verge cut is nearing completion. Coordination of all the utilities works, associated with all the new housing, is causing concern as many developments are over running their planned schedule. We are fortunate to have excellent Highway Maintenance Engineers who look after our requirements so efficiently in our area.

Elderly Care

Public spending for the elderly covers a large area including Care at Home and Care Home provision. Also we have pressures on Health Services with hospital discharge criteria to ensure safe return from Hospital to the community. We are all living longer and generally enjoy good health as we grow old. However, age catches up with us and our brain deteriorate with, in particular, Dementia setting in. The County Council still run Care Homes together with the NHS Rehabilitation Homes to assist returning home after a period of hospitalisation. This all costs the County Council a significant portion of our annual budget. Private Care Homes are well used and generally popular but are costly and not always affordable.

Children in Care and at School

Warwickshire is not immune from the national crises of foster children and associated problems of child behaviour in many families. This is exacerbated by the increasing numbers of children with Special Education needs. Although Education (schools) is no longer the direct responsibility of the local authority as more and more schools become Academies, Free Schools or part of a Multi-Academy Trust, there are now only three Warwickshire Secondary Schools that are not academies. However, the provision of "Good, Suitable Schools" is still our responsibility. Locally, the large number of new housing development is putting pressure on this provision and new Primary Schools are being included in some of the developments. One new Secondary School will be necessary soon and its location is being debated. Wellesbourne or Kineton are possible locations. Any new school is automatically a Free School or Academy.

Climate Change

WCC, in common with other local councils nationally, has declared that it should be treated as an emergency state of affairs and will take action to reduce the County's carbon footprint. The possible cause is an international issue and although leading by example is to be encouraged, the rest of the world must follow

Cllr Stuart asked if there are plans to enforce solar panels on new developments? Cllr Williams replied no. However new properties have car charging sockets.

19/62. To receive an update on Traffic Calming

The Parish Council will continue to see where improvements can be made. Mixed comments have been received about the new road signage. Physical measures are better and any road safety improvements will have to be funded by the Parish Council. A speed survey was carried out over a year ago and the average speeds were not that high. The idea of parking cars on the road to slow speeds down could be developed. It will have to be costed.

From the floor a villager noted that he saw a school bus drive down the pavement as the road is not appropriate for two large vehicles.

19/63. To receive a report from the Police Forum held on 4th September

Cllr Stuart gave the following report:

There will be a 12% increase in the number of police officers during 2019/20. By the end of the year there will be 1100 officers in Warwickshire which is the highest number there has ever been. Bob Church spoke about supported villages of which Oxhill is one. Oxhill has a 50% sign up, Long Itchington 10-15%, Priors Hardwick 33-50%. They are awaiting figures for Priors Marston and Avon Dasset.

Recent events include a van crime initiative in Brailles, community crime prevention in Oxhill, a Farmers Crime event at Stratford Livestock market, Operation Cordelia where baited vehicles are planted in the community e.g. quad bikes, tracked electric fence energisers. Operation Tempest is more overnight patrols in targeted rural areas. The police fit security equipment to isolated farm buildings for short periods. There is a new crime app www.Warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk and it has a newsletter.

The Chair had invited Bob Church to the meeting. There have been two incidents recently involving a car theft and burglary. Mr Church was able to advise of other incidents that had happened. He spoke about the theft of Audi vehicles across the border. It is an ongoing police operation. He spoke about people taking ownership as opportunist thieves are about. Cars are often left unlocked and insecure and windows left open and unlocked.

The Chair asked Mr Church if there is any more that the village can do? Window stickers were supplied with the Smartwater scheme but some people are of the opinion that a sticker in the window implies there are valuables inside. Mr Church disagreed with this point. There is additional village signage which can be ordered.

From the floor Mr Dominic Connelly spoke about two established Whats App Channels. The police actively support them. Anyone can join and they are fast and an instant resource. One is an alert channel and one is a chat channel.

Action: The Chair to write a note on security for the newsletter.

19/64. To receive an update on Leys Field

Grenville Moore (former Parish Councillor and Chairman) has agreed to continue the work on Leys Field. There continues to be lots of problems with the site. One house has been sold unlawfully and the Section 106 agreement has not been signed off. Footpaths are non-existent and the site is a mess. A letter was sent to Planning and Enforcement and a meeting has been arranged at the offices of Stratford District Council (SDC) with planning offers on 17th September at 2pm. The Chair, Cllr Stuart and Grenville Moore will attend.

Action: The Chair, Mr Moore, Cllr Stuart and Paul Sayer to meet up to discuss outstanding issues before the meeting on 17th September.

CLLr Feilding noted that several laws have been broken as some properties are occupied. Pressure will be put on the Enforcement Officer, Mr R Thatcher at SDC. It is unclear whether the selling agent knows the situation. Enforcement should stop any future sales. CLLr Feilding is due to receive a report from the Enforcement team and will forward it to the Parish Council.

From the floor, Mr Sayer raised several issues.

Noise - This has been ongoing for three years and work can start at 7am.

Weed growth - This is out of control and the site cannot be accessed on foot.

Planting - The front gardens are not planted.

Drainage - Drainage and attenuation has not been done. The whole area is littered with building materials.

Action: These issues to be raised at the meeting on 17.09.19.

19/65. To receive feedback from the planning training session

The Chair was due to attend a planning training session at Stratford District Council but it has been postponed until October. CLLr Stuart is attending a planning course on Saturday 14th September.

19/66. To receive an update on planning

New Applications

- 19/01773/FUL and 19/01774/FUL, Erection of a storage building at Windmill Farm, Red Horse Vale Ltd, Banbury Road. No objections.
- 19/02218/TREE, Tree work at Kisdon, Main Street. No objections.
- 19/02108/TREE, Tree work at the Granary, Rouse Lane. No objections.

Older Applications

- 18/03436/FUL and 18/03437/LBC, Change of use of existing stables and barn into office space, partial demolition and single storey rear extension at Oxhill Manor. Granted by SDC.
- 19/01530/FUL, Demolition of existing sun room and erection of single storey rear extension and new porch, replacement windows and new rooflight at Little Windmill, Whatcote Road. Granted by SDC.
- 19/01276/VARY, Conditions on Land on north side of Plot 2 Green Lane. Granted by SDC. A point of note was raised that they are planting laurel and not a native species. The Parish Council to write a letter.

19/67. Financial Report

To review the current budget and forecast to 31st March 2020

The Parish Council are currently working to budget.

The following payments were approved under statutory powers:

£19.76 to L Stuart (website)

£200.00 to Oxhill Village Hall (contribution to mowing)

£480.00 to Parish Clerk (hours)

£120.00 to HMRC

£44.57 to Parish Clerk (expenses)

£54.00 to Parish Clerk (mileage)

19/68. To receive the following correspondence

The following correspondence had been circulated:

- Erika Graham, Hogwood Pig Farm

19/69. To receive Councillors Reports

Dog fouling continues and bags are thrown in hedges. A note to be put in the next Link.

19/70. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 3rd December 2019 at 8pm

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting closed at 9.25pm.

DRAFT