

Minutes of the Monthly Parish Council Meeting held on 17th April 2007
in the recreation ground pavilion at 7.30 p.m.

Present:	Mrs. J. Blissett (Chair)	Mr. R. Thomas	Mrs. M. Turner
	Mr D Hayter	Mr. J. Mulford	Mr. M Sedwards
	Mrs P Staples	Dr K Beswick	Mr S Lilly (Vice Chair)
	Mrs A Fisher	Mrs D Boughton-Waite	Mr C Lamont (County Cllr)

1. Minutes of the previous meeting (PC/03/07)

The minutes of the meeting on 13TH March 2007 were signed as a true record.

2. Matters Arising – a) Affordable Housing – It has been suggested to Mr Roberts that he write a letter to the landowner via his solicitor.

b) APM responses – Thames Water have not yet responded. VOWHDC is willing to send documents for display at the meeting, Dr Hughes is willing to speak.

c) Code of Conduct – Copy to be examined before adoption of the new Code of Conduct. Must be adopted by October 2007.

3. Reports from County and District Councillors & Police

Mr. Lamont reported that Oxford City Council's bid to become Unitary has been rejected by the Secretary of State.

Information on Rights of Way is available on OCC's website.

The re-development at Oxford Castle has won awards, including an international award.

OCC has obtained a £960000 grant for local authority business initiative; to be spent on computers in libraries, repairs to Oxford Castle mound, road repairs, reducing arson (with the help of the Fire Service), and a thriving communities programme.

The Code of Conduct has been relaxed slightly, following a case concerning a councillor bringing a council (not OCC) into disrepute.

Mr Hayter was concerned that new fire regulations may have an effect on access to public buildings, or allowing local groups to use Council-owned buildings. Mr Lamont agreed to look into this matter. CL

Mrs Turner reported that VOWHDC cannot make long term decisions until after the election on 3 May.

The developers of Great Western Park have been granted a postponement for 7 months.

Re-development propositions for Abingdon's Old Gaol are to be considered.

Age Concern is holding a Forum for older residents, on 17th May, themed "Keeping Safe". Various classes are to be held for older residents, including keep fit and Driver Awareness.

All residents are entitled to a grant for loft/cavity wall insulation.

4. Update on proposed new changing rooms - Dr Delfosse

Mr Lilly declared an interest and took no part in this discussion.

Dr Delfosse, with the help of Mr East, explained that plans so far for new facilities had been discussed with representatives of the British Legion Club and village sports clubs, and that a youth programme was being developed with Harwell School. It is hoped that a legally-bound consortium could be set up to develop and run the new building. He asked for the Council's backing for the project, and a financial commitment from the Council to help with getting plans put in. Preliminary plans have been drawn, but nothing further can be achieved until Planning Permission has been requested. Once Planning Permission has been obtained, funding can be sought for the project. Dr Delfosse estimated it would take around 6 months to obtain funding. A feasibility study is to be done before a Planning Application is put in, then the Committee would provide an update to the Council. The Council is committed to this project as part of the Parish Plan, and in principle would be able to offer some initial help with start-up funds. Dr Delfosse explained that approximately £1500 would cover the start-up costs. The Council thanked Dr Delfosse and Mr East, who then left the meeting.

5. Planning Matters

Members of the Environment & Planning Committee had dealt with the following;

Permissions-

HAR/6825/7-LB & HAR/6825/6-LB Removal of existing staircase & formation of new staircase. Insertion of rooflight to rear and block up kitchen window. Formation of new ground floor opening at Rosemead, High Street, for Mr & Mrs P Herbert.

HAR/5196/6 Erection of rear conservatory at Brook House, Blenheim Hill, for Mr & Mrs Manning.

3 new applications ;

HAR/20004 Construction of new animal shelter at Land Rear of Froude Builders, Reading Road, for Ms C Thompson.

HAR/19998 Proposed ground floor rear kitchen extension & attic conversion forming bedroom & bathroom at Ballut, Church Lane, for P Knibbs & C Woodland. (Mrs Boughton-Waite had declared an interest in this application as a neighbour, and took no part in the decision made about it).

HAR/5721/2 Erection of new dwelling & garage (Re-submission of Application HAR/5721/1) at The Orchard, Wantage Road, for Miss C Thompson.

The Committee had no objections to these applications but asked that neighbours' comments be borne in mind. In addition, the Committee asked that in application number HAR/5721/2, sightlines be maintained regarding the proposed access onto Wantage Road.

Notification of Work to Trees;

GF/KAP PD/18/01/31 Various work to trees at Little Dell and Belga, Church Lane, including the felling of 2 diseased beech trees.

Since the Committee responded to the above items, 2 further permissions have been received, in respect of;

HAR/19950 Proposed extensions to side & rear of bungalow at Margo, Didcot Road, for Mr K Jones.

HAR/14934/2 Conversion of loft with side dormer to provide bedroom & shower room at Sunny Side Cottage, Didcot Road, for Mr D Tye.

1 new application has been received, as follows;

HAR/18254/2 Erection of 15m monopole with associated equipment cabinets at Princes Manor Farm, Cow lane, for T-Mobile UK Ltd.

The Council asked that neighbours' comments be taken into consideration.

1 Refusal has been received, as follows;

HAR/19966 Demolition of shed, erection of 2 detached dwellings, alteration of access, provision of additional parking spaces at Land Rear of Blenheim Terrace, Burr Street, for Bellwood Homes Ltd.

Planners refused this application as they felt it was not in keeping with existing building and would harm the appearance of the conservation area.

A letter has been received from Harwell Royal British Legion Club, requesting permission to build a small decking area at the rear of the club building. This is to comply with new smoking regulations, and will not be a licensed part of the premises. Mrs Fisher, Mr Mulford and Mr Thomas declared an interest in this matter as members of the Club, and took no part in the discussion. The Council had no objection to the proposal.

6. Financial Matters – a) Receipts and Payments cash book for March 2007 – The receipts and payments cash book for March was signed as a true record. Mrs Boughton-Waite had checked the petty cash.

b) Requests for Funding – i) Oxfordshire Chinese Community & Advice Centre – no funds available.

ii) Childline – no funds available, but the Council would be happy to display information on the notice boards.

iii) Vitalise – Regretfully there are still no funds available, but information could be displayed as above.

c) Harwell church tower - no money has been requested, but the Council felt it was justified in making a donation to the fund towards rebuilding the church tower. After some discussion, Mr Thomas proposed a donation of £100; seconded by Mr Hayter, carried unanimously.

d) Salaries/staff leaving gifts – Council discussed appropriate leaving gifts for the 2 staff members who have recently left. A gift voucher and bouquet up to the value of £50 for Mrs Roberts, and a small gift for Mr Blissett, up to the value of £10, were proposed by Mr Thomas, seconded by Dr Beswick, and carried unanimously.

e) OALC subscription – payment of the annual subscription of £405.77 was proposed by Mrs Turner, seconded by Mr Thomas, and carried unanimously.

f) Little Pippins – payments finished – the Pre-School has now paid the full amount owing on the Council's loan.

g) Proposed new changing rooms – Mr Lilly left the room while this item was discussed. Mrs Blissett suggested that if the sports clubs involved in the project could raise £500, this amount could be matched by the Council. Mr Mulford felt a public meeting would be required to inform residents of the plans. Dr Beswick agreed, but pointed out that the £500 would be towards preliminary planning reports and applications only, which should be made clear to the Committee, and that a public meeting could be held after planning permission was gained. After much discussion, Mrs Boughton-Waite proposed a donation of £500 to the project; seconded by Mrs Staples. The proposal was put to a vote in which there were 9 for and 1 abstention; the proposal was duly carried.

7. Matters relating to Council-owned lands –

a) New smoking regulations – New regulations come into force on 1st July, and 2 signs will be required for the pavilion, with a further sign for the van. Fines of up to £2500 are payable for not ensuring the smoking ban is enforced on Council property. Clerk to order the signs.

b) Scout camp – the Council ratified the decision made last month to allow the Scouts to camp overnight on the recreation ground on 25th May.

c) Adventure play area – the play area has been praised by members of the public. The large swings are now too low; groundsmen to adjust them as necessary.

d) Pavilion cleaning - Mrs Blissett and Mr Mulford met members of the football teams this week after the pavilion was left in an appalling state, with rubbish all over the floor. Some members came in to help clean up the mess. The Sunday team has now finished playing.

1 person has expressed an interest in the cleaning job, and will come in to see what needs to be done. The Council felt that wages should be slightly above the minimum wage, and that 11/2 hours a week should be sufficient, after a longer initial clean

e) Change of RFO – The Clerk is now the Responsible Financial Officer. She and Mrs Blissett signed a new employment contract. Mrs Roberts will still come back to provide end of year figures and oversee the Audit.

f) Archivist – Mr Staples has offered to catalogue parish documents over a period of 2 years. The former Clerk Mr Woollen may still be in possession of Council files; Mr Hayter to speak to him about retrieving these documents for Mr Staples to look through. Mr Ricketts has already begun to catalogue Minutes held in the office. Mrs Boughton-Waite proposed that the Council accept Mr Staples' offer; seconded by Mr Sedwards, carried unanimously. DH

8. Website – local talent/business links – Mr Marsh has suggested a page for local talent (eg for people who have made achievements in music, sports, etc), and a business links facility. The Council agreed with the suggestions.

9. Environment –

a) Footpaths Walk - the Footpaths Walk was arranged for Sunday 24th June, starting at 2pm outside the village hall.

Dr Beswick reported that the footpath to the rear of houses in the Holloway was in a dangerous condition; Clerk to report to OCC.

b) OCC Agreements on grass cutting/removal of signs – Formal agreements from OCC were signed by Mrs Blissett and Mr Lilly.

c) Best Kept Village competition - Mr Lund from ORCC has contacted the Council re: the trophy for last year's competition. A certificate is being offered in lieu of this trophy, as ORCC is no longer running the competition. The Council decided to accept a certificate.

d) Postwatch – response to Government consultation – this organisation is monitoring the Government's proposed changes to post office services, including closures.

e) North Wessex Downs AONB – Forum on climate change - no-one from the Council is able to attend.

f) Abingdon Museum – the museum is holding a public consultation on access for the disabled, on 18th April.

g) National Transport tokens – a new scheme involving pre-payment for transport has been developed. VOWHDC has not adopted it so far.

10. Any Other Business

An allotment holder has requested permission to buy part of an allotment to create vehicular access to his property nearby. There is a waiting list for allotments, and this request was denied.

VOWHDC has produced a Core Strategy Report – Clerk has sent for a copy.

Dr Beswick complained that some residents put bins out early; notice to be put in Harwell News to ask residents to check whether collection dates are changed around public holidays.

Mr Mulford reported that a new sprayer wand had recently been purchased.

Mrs Staples said she would be happy to continue as the Harwell News delivery co-ordinator after the election. New Council to be asked to provide cover in case of holidays.

Mrs Boughton-Waite reported that an increase in the amount of work/time involved has meant that Mrs Levey has asked for an extra £5 per issue for producing Harwell News. To be decided next meeting.

Mrs Blissett has drafted a Lease for the Tennis/Bowls Clubs for the next Council to discuss.

Mr Lilly reported that buses travelling through Harwell are to be reviewed. He will attend a meeting at Wantage Civic Hall and report to the Council. Parish responses are required by the first week in July. Residents to be advised of the review via Harwell News/ website.

Mr Lilly led a vote of thanks to all Councillors who will be leaving the Council, and particular thanks to the Chairman.

The meeting ended at 10.00pm.

