

Minutes of the Monthly Parish Council Meeting held on 12th June 2007
in the recreation ground pavilion at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Dr K Beswick (Chair) Mr. D Hayter Mr. M. Ricketts
Mr G Taylor Mr R Thomas Mr F Trembl
Mr C Lamont (County Cllr) Mrs M Turner (District Cllr)

Apologies: Mr J Fisher Mr D Marsh Mr S Lilly
Mrs D Boughton-Waite

1. Minutes of the previous meeting (PC/05/07)

Minutes of the May meeting and 2 co-option meetings were not signed at this meeting, pending correction of the May Minutes (1 address missed in the Planning section). Deferred to next meeting.

2. Matters Arising from previous Minutes – a) Affordable Housing

Dr Beswick welcomed representatives from Sovereign Housing, Mr S Roberts and Ms A Kennedy. Mr Roberts explained that in spite of numerous efforts, he has still been unable to contact the landowner of the preferred site. Funding secured for the project must be spent by March 2008. It is not too late to select an alternative site, should the landowner no longer be interested in selling the land, but it would be advisable to try and get things moving as soon as possible. The Council agreed to try and contact the landowner again, as alternative sites have proved unsuitable so far. Dr Beswick thanked Mr Roberts and Ms Kennedy for attending; they then left.

b) Code of Conduct

The Standards Board for England has sent out information on the new Code of Conduct, with advice for Parish Councils. All Councillors present received a copy of the information.

3. Reports from County & District Councillors & Police

Mr Lamont reported that there was a meeting in May to discuss the proposed reservoir. Thames Water has put its planning application on hold until 2010, partly because new regulations may affect the proposal.

The publishing of OCC's Minerals and Waste LDF consultation paper has been delayed by Government office.

There has been good feedback for the recent review in ICT; the shared services centre is now open in Botley; staff changes have led to fewer staff but no reduction in service.

Mr Ricketts asked whether advertisers who have placed signs on local roundabouts asked the Highways department for permission. Mr Lamont to find out.

CL

Mrs Turner apologised for missing the last meeting.

She is still on the UKAEA Liaison Committee and the Development Control Committee; Mr Waite is a member of the Shadow Cabinet on the Scrutiny Committee.

Changes in local governments by central government have meant more work for local councillors, e.g. changes to the planning system.

The UKAEA Liaison Committee is keen for a member from Harwell to join and attend its quarterly meetings.

Human tissue testing was done at Harwell in the past; a helpline for relatives has been set up.

Cutbacks in Government funding towards clearing up the Harwell site could set back the process by 5 years, and possibly lead to job losses.

The Food Standards Agency will be conducting a survey on eating habits later in the year; this will be related to work done at UKAEA.

Plans are shortly to be submitted to update the signs on the A4185.

No representative from the police attended the meeting.

4. Financial Matters – a) Audit – i) Statement of Income & Expenditure – Mrs Roberts made a short presentation on the Council’s finances, explaining that the Council was now in a sound financial position following several uncertain years, and emphasizing the need for Councillors to be aware of the financial state of the Council. Mrs Roberts presented the Statement of Income & Expenditure. Mr Ricketts pointed out a £20 discrepancy under Section 137 payments; this was amended. Mr Ricketts suggested the Statement should only be approved on the understanding that several Councillors were not members of the Council at the time of the Audit. After discussion, Mr Thomas proposed that the Statement be approved, subject to Mr Ricketts’ proviso; seconded by Mr Taylor and carried unanimously. The Statement was signed by Mrs Roberts as RFO (until the Audit is completed) and Dr Beswick as Chair.

ii) Annual Return – governance statement/statement of accounts – Mr Levey has completed the internal audit; The Council approved the governance statement and the statement of accounts.

iii) Auditor’s fee – Mr Ricketts proposed that Mr Levey be paid the £200 internal Auditor’s fee; seconded by Mr Taylor, passed unanimously. The Council expressed thanks to Mr Levey for his services as internal auditor for the past few years, and also approved the appointment of Mrs Roberts as internal auditor for next year.

b) Receipts and Payments cashbook for April/May 2007 – the cashbooks were signed as a true record. Dr Beswick had checked petty cash.

c) Little Pippins – annual rent – Mr Hayter proposed that the Council continue to accept an annual rent of £10 from Little Pippins, instead of the £1440 which appears on the lease; seconded by Mr Ricketts, passed unanimously.

d) Request for funding – Didcot CAB – Mr Thomas proposed a donation of £25, seconded by Mr Treml, passed unanimously.

e) Football/Rugby fees & terms – It is estimated that pitch fees last season did not cover maintenance, and Mr Taylor suggested raising the pitch fees for the next season to a more realistic level, and instigating agreements with the sports clubs on such matters as clearing up after games and paying a refundable breakages deposit. Work on the shower area has almost finished, involving re-tiling and painting, costs being kept to a minimum as Mr Taylor has done much of the work with the groundsmen. 2 teams from East Hendred Boys FC have asked to play at Harwell next season; the Council felt that “Harwell” should be included in the team name. Referred for discussion at the next Lands & Recreation Committee meeting. The Council thanked Mr Taylor for dealing with this matter.

f) Aunt Sally pitch fee – Referred to Lands & Recreation Committee.

g) Cleansing grant – a grant of £1092 has been received from VOWHDC towards litter picking.

5. Planning Matters

Formal Notice of Permission has been received in respect of;

HAR/3250/1 Erection of rear conservatory at 6 Brookside, for Mr & Mrs Walker.

5 applications were dealt with by various Councillors, as no Committees have been set up yet;

HAR/11514/1 Change of use from single dwelling to 2 dwellings, erection of new dwelling at 52 Westfield for Mr & Mrs Lagden.

The council asked that neighbours’ comments be taken into consideration in this application, and expressed concerns that a large tree in the garden was not mentioned in the plans.

- HAR/18254/3 Erection of 15m monopole with associated equipment cabin and compound at Princes Manor Farm, Cow Lane, for T-Mobile Ltd.
- HAR/20096 Alteration & extension to existing dwelling at Chequers Cottage, Wantage Road, for Mr & Mrs Coombes.
- HAR/20108 Erection of extension to form bathroom, bedroom & garage at Holloway Cottage, The Holloway, for B Southgate.

The Councillors asked that neighbours' comments be taken into consideration in these applications.

- HAR/20085-LB Proposed repairs to party wall at Thatch Cottage, Reading Road, for Mrs Lewis.

The Councillors fully supported this application as the repairs are needed to keep the cottage waterproof and inhabitable.

5 new applications have been received, as follows;

- HAR/4984/14, Renewal of Planning Permission HAR/4984/11-T for retention of temporary
HAR/4984/15, & office buildings until December 31st 2015 at 173 Curie Avenue for UKAEA.
HAR/4984/16

- HAR/19950/1 Erection of single dwelling at Margo, Didcot Road, for Mr Jones.
- HAR/20123-LB Replacement of 2 windows with full height glass panels and reposition of stud walls at 2 Locktons Barns, Church Lane, for J Stockdale.
- HAR/5371/4 Erection of single storey side extension at Little Dell, Church Lane, for Mr & Mrs MacArthur.
- HAR/20130 Erection of 24 directional & welcome signs at Harwell Business Centre for UKAEA.

The Council asked that neighbours' comments be taken into consideration when these applications are discussed by planners.

A letter has been received from residents of Trescowe, Didcot Road, informing the Council of forthcoming plans to rebuild at that address.

Dr Hughes has written to thank the Council for its donation to the church tower appeal, and to advise that once scaffolding is in place, it may obstruct a footpath for a short time.

6. Committees/Councillors' interests/Publicity

The Lands & Recreation Committee; Mr Fisher, Mr Thomas, Mr Taylor, Mr Ricketts, Mr Hayter. Environment & Planning Committee; Mrs Boughton-Waite, Dr Beswick, Mr Lilly and Mr Treml. Mr Marsh to confirm his preference at a later date.

Councillors expressed particular areas of interest as follows;

Mr Lilly – transport & bus routes; Mr Taylor – sports and recreation; Mr Ricketts – environmental concerns, including representing the Council on the UKAEA Liaison Committee. Mr Marsh is still the Council's webmaster.

Mr Treml felt that more could be done to raise awareness of the PC in the parish; other Councillors felt that the noticeboards, website and newsletter were sufficient, and pointed out that surgeries were very poorly attended in the past, with only one or two people attending.

7. Matters relating to Council-owned Lands –

a) Tennis/Bowls Club leases - To be discussed at the next L&R Committee meeting; Mr Lilly to be asked to help.

b) Old Stable, Freeman Orchard – prospective purchasers have renewed their interest in the building. Mr Lilly to be asked to get the land/building valued by the District Valuer.

c) Recreation ground – letter/fire/van access – a resident has requested a gate or style at the gap in the fence next to Reading Road. Mr Thomas to report at the next L&R meeting. RT

A fire on 20th May damaged one of the picnic tables in the adventure play area. Cost of replacing 2 planks to be assessed.

Van access from Wantage Road – referred to next L&R meeting.

Mr Ricketts asked that 2 holes be filled in near the bank. Mr Taylor reported that the fallen tree had now been cut up as small as possible; root stump to be removed. Mr Ricketts reported there are Bee Orchids growing at the edge of the rugby field, and has asked the groundsmen not to cut the grass in that area. He also suggested that more police presence may deter gangs of teenagers who currently drink on the rec.; Mr Taylor had heard complaints that this was occurring on Friday evenings, and that the teenagers were from Didcot, not Harwell. Police to be asked again to attend next meeting.

d) Allotments – signs/dog fouling – following recent problems with dogs fouling the allotment site, Mr Ricketts requested a new “No Dogs” sign. After discussion, it was decided to write to allotment holders and ask if there have been any problems recently. It was felt that a sign may not be enough of a deterrent.

8. Parish business –

a) Bus service review – Mr Lilly is dealing with this matter. SL

b) Harwell reception – to be held on 22nd June.

c) School Governor vacancy – there are still 2 vacancies for Community Governors at Harwell School; anyone interested should contact the school clerk. Mr Ricketts pointed out that there is also a vacancy on the Village Hall Committee, of which he is a member.

d) Harwell News – editors retiring – the editors of Harwell News are retiring; the Council expressed grateful thanks for the work of the editors over several years. Mr Ricketts has volunteered to be the new editor.

9. Any Other Business

Mason’s Fair has asked to use the rec later in the month. The fair would last 2 days, but the company would need the rec for a week. After discussion, the Council decided to decline the request on the grounds that damage to the rec would result.

VOWHDC Chair has written expressing an interest in visiting the parish. Dr Beswick reported that the Feast Committee intend to hold a small fair in the rectory garden later this year, and that it may be a good idea to invite the Chair to that. Part of the land intended for the fair is PC land; the Council had no objection to the Committee using the land.

The Children’s Centre of Stephen Freeman School would like to use the rec on 16th August to hold children’s activities. The Council had no objection.

Diamond Light Source is holding a Public Open Day on 14th July.

A film company recently used the rec to make a short film; a pilot for a comedy series.

Mr Ricketts reported that he had prepared a response to OCC's Minerals & Waste consultation. The Council was happy for the Clerk to respond as per Mr Ricketts' suggestions. He also reported that he is still assessing the new fire safety laws.

Mr Thomas reported that the dog bin is still missing from The Holloway. Clerk to investigate.

Harwell Reception is being held on 22nd June.

The meeting ended at 10.05pm.