

Minutes of the Monthly Parish Council Meeting held on 11th September 2007
in the recreation ground pavilion at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Dr K Beswick (Chair) Mr. M. Ricketts Mr J Fisher
Mr G Taylor Mr R Thomas Mr D Marsh
Mrs D Boughton-Waite Mr S Lilly Mr D Hayter
Mr C Lamont (County Cllr) Mrs M Turner (District Cllr) Mr R Waite (District Cllr)

Apologies: Mr F Trembl

1. Minutes of the previous meeting (PC/06/07, PC/07/07)

The Minutes from the June and July meetings were signed as a true record.

2. County Councillor report

Mr Lamont was invited to speak at this point, as he was expected at another meeting. The Sustainable Communities Strategy had been discussed at length in a Full Council meeting earlier today. Government intends to introduce Partnerships in which OCC will have only a minority membership. This will undermine local democracy as the groups are not to be fully made up of elected members. Local people will have no say in the make-up of the Partnerships, which will have powers to spend public money independent of OCC, and will not be bound by the Code of Conduct. OCC is very concerned about these arrangements.

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

Sovereign Housing is now trying to contact the owner of the Orchard Way site.

b) Code of Conduct

All Councillors have now seen the new Code. Mr Lilly proposed that the new Code be adopted as applicable to Parish Councils, without paragraph 12(2). Seconded by Mrs Boughton-Waite, carried unanimously.

c) Local Sponsorship Fund

Clerk to contact East Hendred and Chilton PCs for further information.

d) Parish Council evening

Date set for 18th September, 7.00pm in the pavilion.

e) Didcot Forum/ Traveller Site survey

Mr Ricketts attended the last Forum event. It was not very productive, but the Council agreed that such meetings should be attended. More meetings are scheduled.

Mr Ricketts drafted a reply to the Traveller site survey – copy to be kept in the office. The survey appeared to be flawed, with too many assumptions made and not enough factual evidence used.

4. Planning Matters

Several items have been dealt with by Environment & Planning Committee members since the last meeting; listed separately as an annexe to these Minutes. In addition, Formal Notice of Permission has been received, in respect of;

HAR/20217 Demolition of existing rear conservatory. Erection of new garden room at March House, Townsend, for Mr & Mrs King.

HAR/7924/1 Change of use from agricultural/grazing land to burial ground at the cemetery extension, Harwell, for Harwell Parish Council.

1 new Application has been received, as follows;

HAR/20272 Proposed single storey rear extension to form larger kitchen & breakfast room, loft conversion with dormer window & rooflight to form bedroom with shower room at Hill View, Church Lane, for Mr & Mrs Jones.

Mrs Boughton-Waite declared an interest in this application as a neighbour, and took no part in the Discussion. The Council asked that neighbours' comments be borne in mind by Planners.

Dr Beswick reported that he had been approached by the press regarding the hotel application at UKAEA, and that he had reiterated the Council's former comments on this subject.

5. Financial Matters – a) Receipts & payments cashbook for June, July, August 2007- The receipts and payments cashbooks for June, July & August were signed as a true record. Dr Beswick had checked petty cash.

b) Bank problems – change of bank – Councillors were all aware of recent problems with Alliance & Leicester, and all had seen the weblink to Co-operative Bank, which has low charges and provides a cash card. Its deposit accounts do not pay much interest but allow instant access and low cost transfers. Mr Lilly proposed Co-operative Bank current and deposit accounts be opened for the Council, seconded by Mrs Boughton-Waite, carried unanimously. Mr Ricketts suggested internet banking be used where possible.

c) Request for funding – East Hendred Boys FC – the team has asked for a £100 donation towards the cost of new goals which it has recently purchased with help from grants. The Council felt that it could not provide financial aid in this instance, but fully supported the Club's other grant applications. Clerk to write to EHBFC and to VOWHDC.

d) Checking accounts – Dr Beswick asked that Councillors make frequent checks on the accounts, including bank reconciliation. Mrs Boughton-Waite agreed to take on this task, starting with the September Cashbook. DBW

e) British Legion rent review – after discussion, it was decided to leave the rent at £231 for the time being; to be reviewed should plans for the new pavilion move forward.

6. Matters relating to Council Owned Lands

a) Recommendations from the L&R Committee – damages deposit - The Committee had recommended waiving the damages deposit of £100 for Harwell FC, and instead billing the Club for any damage which occurs. Mr Ricketts proposed this recommendation be accepted, seconded by Mr Lilly, ratified.

b) Goals storage, showers, pavilion lock - Mr Taylor announced that he has undertaken a weekly inspection of the pavilion, and reported that all Clubs are so far leaving the building in a clean and tidy condition. Clerk to write to all Clubs to express the Council's satisfaction. All teams have written thanking the Council for the new goals storage; some minor problems with the showers had been dealt with. Mr Fisher wished to record a vote of thanks to Mr Taylor for his work with the football teams. Following problems with the pavilion keys, Mr Taylor to obtain prices for a new combination lock for the main door. GT

c) Tennis & Bowls Clubs – leases/ rent review - Mr Lilly is still working on the Leases; rent review was not undertaken.

d) Dilapidated stable – Mr Lilly has contacted a surveyor to obtain an independent valuation of the land. The interested party has provided a valuation of £3000 and has agreed to cover the Council's legal costs up to £1000, and make a donation to Little Pippins for any inconvenience. Demolition of the

old stable would take place in the school holidays. As the building is shown erroneously as part of the Pre-School's Lease, Mr Lilly to contact Mr Ferguson to get that changed. SL

e) Office – Broadband installed – Mr Marsh has overseen the installation of Broadband. He has also contacted Mr Mackerness about past practice; Mr Mackerness is still responsible for the renewal of the domain names, but Mr Marsh will liaise with him; no bill has been received from the company which currently provides the hosting. Mr Marsh explained that the hosting was very basic and offered to transfer it free of charge to a server which he runs. This would facilitate upgrades to the Council website. The Council agreed, and thanked Mr Marsh for his assistance. Mr Mackerness to be contacted and thanked for his services to date. The Council also agreed to Mr Marsh posting a note to inform users of his other Harwell website. DM

f) RoSPA report – the report has been received; no major problems have been highlighted.

g) Child Protection Policy – all Councillors had seen a draft policy, and amendments suggested by Dr Beswick. Mr Fisher explained that the PC needs to be aware of child protection, even though it is not directly involved with children. In line with the draft Policy, all groups using Council facilities and working with children should be included in a Council register of users. Mr Lilly proposed that the Council adopt the draft Child Protection Policy with the amendments suggested by Dr Beswick; seconded by Mr Fisher, carried unanimously. Policy to be included on Publications List, and a copy of the Policy to be sent to all users. All staff to be made aware of the Policy.

h) Dogs on recreation ground – the Council does not have a definite policy regarding dogs on the rec, and the Clerk had not received a reply to enquiries about VOWHDC's policies. Mr Ricketts was concerned that anyone taking several dogs onto the ground could not clear up mess after every dog. Mr Thomas reported that he had been monitoring the problem, which does not seem extreme. Clerk to contact any professional dog walking firm and ask that any mess is cleared up.

i) Publication Scheme – Mr Ricketts suggested that information should be available electronically where possible. Mr Marsh proposed that the Council provide this service via the website, seconded by Mr Lilly, carried unanimously. Child Protection Policy to be added to the Scheme.

j) Harwell News printing/ adverts - Mr Ricketts proposed that adverts for charity should be free of charge if relevant to Harwell villagers; seconded by Mrs Boughton-Waite, carried unanimously. Printing costs are at present down by around £70 per issue; Mr Ricketts has looked into the cost of adding colour printing (eg for future Harwell Feasts) – 4 colour pages would cost an extra £100. Mr Lilly proposed that colour pages be inserted for major events, seconded by Mr Taylor, carried unanimously.

District Councillors Waite and Turner arrived at 9.00pm, and were invited to address the meeting.

Mr Waite reported that he had attended a Planning meeting concerned with Chilton Fields and the Hotel/UKAEA application. 275 homes were approved for Chilton Fields; the Hotel application was approved - local residents are to be given the opportunity to join the new facility; light pollution is to be minimised.

A meeting to discuss flooding is to be held on 12th September, to discuss grants for householders affected by recent flooding, and future preparations. The meeting is open to the public.

VOWHDC is to introduce half-size brown bins – they will cost £29 per annum.

Vale Housing Association is to check gardens of its properties following complaints about overgrown trees and rubbish. Harwell has a large turnover of VHA properties, leading to some being left empty.

Mrs Turner reported on a meeting with Mr Gilbert from VOWHDC Planning re: Section 106 Agreements in Great Western Park. Harwell Parish population could increase by 60% once GWP is

built, and District Councillors feel more facilities are needed urgently – Mr Waite wrote to Mr Gilbert after the meeting to highlight possible problems and ask that funding be secured for Harwell. Mr Gilbert has replied verbally to this letter, indicating that Harwell is unlikely to receive substantial funds.

VOWHDC is to carry out a review of polling stations. Any comments should be sent in by 21/9. The South East Plan EiP report has been published. It recommends that Oxford receives a larger number of houses, but numbers elsewhere have not been reduced. See WVA/04/07 for a fuller report.

Mr Fisher felt a strong response should be sent to District Councils following some of the comments in the report; to be discussed at the Ideas meeting.

Dr Beswick to ask for a meeting with Mr Gilbert; other Councillors would attend such a meeting.

District Councillors left at 9.30pm.

7. Environment – a) traffic signs on Reading Road – OCC has said there is no funding for VA Signs. Mr Fisher to investigate. JF

b) Bus service review – Ongoing. Mr Lilly to report as necessary. SL

c) Election expenses – Expenses for the Uncontested Election were £76.07.

d) Footpath rear of Manor Green – residents have complained about this footpath. Landowner has been contacted, but the land is let; landowner to pass Council's letter to tenant for action.

8. Any Other Business

VOWHDC – vacancy on Remuneration Panel; comments by 28/9.

Draft Statement of Licensing Policy – comments by 30/10.

Planning Evening 9/10 – 3 Councillors may attend.

Reception on 17/9. None of the Councillors able to attend this meeting.

Graffiti on the High Street bus shelter has now been removed.

ORCC AGM is on 3/10. Mr Ricketts to attend. MR

OPFA AGM is on 1/10. Mr Fisher may be able to attend.

Repairs are needed to the van, approximate cost £100.

The large strimmer has broken and spares are now unavailable. Replacement to cost approximately £400. Spares for the large rollers on the tractor are needed; approximate cost £400.

Mr Fisher has reported damage to the pavement in Burr Street to OCC.

Mr Marsh reported that there are bogus charity collectors operating in Upton.

Mr Ricketts to put notice in HNews re: fly tipping.

He has volunteered to prepare an application to add the Bargain Stone to the list of Listed Buildings.

The meeting ended at 10.05pm.

