

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Orchard Hall, High Street, Harwell at
7.30 pm on Friday 18th May 2018**

Present: Mrs D Turner (Chair, Harwell Parish Council), 4 other parish councillors, the parish clerk, around 20 members of the public

Apologies from 2 members of the parish council & Mr Fox-Davies (County Councillor)

Mrs Turner chaired the meeting & welcomed those present.

1. Minutes from the last meeting

Brief notes from last year's Annual Parish Meeting were approved & signed.

2. Parish Council Chairman's report

Mrs Turner introduced the parish councillors who were present & proceeded to thank various individuals on behalf of the parish – county & district councillors, parish councillors (former & current), grounds staff & clerk, editor, delivery co-ordinator, deliverers & other volunteers connected with Harwell News, the webmaster, & all others within the parish who give their time and efforts on behalf of parishioners.

She mentioned there are 3 vacancies on the parish council which may be filled by co-option.

Parish council business in the past year included the move to the new office in the village hall, change to meeting venue (now held in the village hall committee room), projects for improvements to recreation ground facilities including extending the tractor shed to provide new premises for the grounds staff, handing over the pavilion to the scouts group (Lease to be finalised), traffic calming options, meetings to do with Didcot Garden Town & Harwell Campus, and planning matters.

3. Address by Land Trust re: Great Western Park land management

Unable to attend as the handover of land in Great Western Park is not yet complete.

4. Discussion of traffic calming options and proposals, &

5. Address by OCC officers re: traffic calming in Harwell

Mrs Yvonne Brown, resident, with an employment background in traffic & air quality, had researched traffic calming options & Mrs Convery presented a slide show which included options put forward by OCC & additional suggestions. Mr Aron Wisdom represented OCC. A questionnaire was handed out for residents to add any comments.

Known local problems include poor drainage, potholes, lack of cleaning of roads, increased traffic at Rowstock during A34 closures, lack of safe crossings, lack of cohesive cycle lanes, poor surfaces, no safe walking/cycling route to Harwell school, village roads used as rat runs in spite of the link road, speeding, narrow pavements, parking problems.

Mrs Convery suggested it would be useful to have a holistic approach to traffic management, from district & county councils as well as at local level, with the aim of reducing traffic on Harwell High Street, reducing traffic speeds through Harwell village, preventing rat runs, providing safe crossings,

safe cycling/walking routes & improving school journeys, promoting a rural aspect on High Street, tackling light pollution where necessary & encouraging use of the link road. Potholes & local flooding/poor drainage should be reported to OCC via FixMyStreet – Mr Fox-Davies is liaising with OCC officers re: blocked drains & Mr Wisdom said funding may be available to tackle more serious flooding problems through planning applications. Funding from Great Western Park developers is available, as previously discussed in parish council meetings; the developers are consulting with OCC on traffic calming schemes for the B4493.

Options suggested at the meeting included

Speed management, eg 20 mph zones, 30 mph zone along A417 to Rowstock & Grove Road, policing of speeding, speed indication devices

Managing obstructed pavements, eg cleaning, cutting back of overgrown hedges, clearing drains
Improved signage at key points, to direct through traffic away from the village (acknowledging the requirements of local businesses)

Width restrictions/road narrowing

Build-outs, with or without planters (similar to chicanes – reduce road width), being aware of red route for emergency vehicles & use of roads for annual Feast parade

Cycle path between A417 & link road

Junction alterations eg at Westfield/Wantage Road

Safe pedestrian crossings eg Wantage Road, outside village hall, opposite Church Lane, opposite shops, Grove Road, Burr Street, Rowstock

Cushioned platform speed humps

Removal of central white lines to give impression of narrowed road

Cycle lanes, including ongoing proposals for a roundabout at the junction of Reading Road/Wantage Road/Winnaway, possibly using a narrow section adjacent to the recreation ground for a cycle lane
5 mph school safety zone during school drop off/pick up times

Residents were encouraged to send feedback as soon as possible. Mr Wisdom mentioned that the trigger point for release of developer funding has been reached, and the sooner decisions are made about traffic calming requirements, the sooner work can start.

6. Brief discussion on Didcot Garden Town

Maps used by the consultants were found to be out of date; consultations are ongoing. Proposals include keeping surrounding villages separate.

7. Address by village hall Trustees

Viv Smith & David Marsh reported on progress since last year. Thanks were expressed to all donors, fundraisers, trustees, builders, architects, volunteers & users who have all helped to ensure the hall has fully opened & continues to thrive. Recently praise was received from Community First Oxfordshire. New trustees will be needed to carry on the running of the hall. The final retention payment to the builders is due, and revenues are up on last year. The loan taken out (£340,000) has been repaid except for £120,000 which is to be paid back over 25 years on a mortgage-type basis. Donations are still welcome.

8. Address by Harwell Feast Committee

Martin Ricketts announced that the Feast Committee is now very busy preparing for this year's Feast, & briefly outlined the day's events. Volunteers on the day are most welcome.

9. Address by Harwell Scout group

Brian Zimmerman reported that since the Licence of Use for the pavilion was drawn up between the parish council & the scout group, work has begun on alterations to the building to address equipment storage problems. A slide show was played. One resident asked about the parish council grounds staff – they are still using the building until the tractor shed can be extended. This project is being held up while issues about machinery are addressed. Mr Zimmerman confirmed the scout group liaises daily with the grounds staff.

10. Update from Taylor Wimpey on construction at Grove Road North

No report had been sent by the time of the meeting, but since, the following information has been received by the clerk from the Alder View sales office team –

There are 17 new residents living on the Alder View development and another one due in shortly. When completed (2020), there will be 207 families calling Harwell home. Four separate open areas are planned, and two of them will include play equipment for children of various ages to explore. In addition, benches, bike racks and waste receptacles will be on hand, so parents can supervise the children as well as meeting new friends.

11. Any Other Business

Residents again encouraged to respond on traffic calming as soon as possible.

Concerns were expressed about the possibility of gates being installed at the recreation ground car park entrance – it could encourage drivers to park on surrounding roads and verges. Parish councillors explained that the proposal was the result of many discussions to tackle overnight parking, which was against the recreation ground rules of use (available since 2014 on the parish council website). Gates would be a low-cost deterrent, and initial support was obtained from the Harwellian Club, however the club has very recently changed its stance on the issue of gates. Recent comments left on facebook against installing gates & attendance by a resident at the May parish council meeting were the first intimation that there was opposition to the proposals. One resident commented that there used to be gates at the entrance, which worked at that time. Parish councillors promised to consider all comments & options again before making a final decision.

Meeting closed 9.40 pm.