

The Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council took place in the Village Hall on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2007 commencing at 7.30 p.m.

The Chairman, Cllr K Bryan, presided; present were Cllrs Mrs M Metcalfe (Vice-Chairman), M Day, S Gibbons, C. Hill, and M Stevenson with G Russell in attendance. Also present for part of the meeting were County Cllr John Howell and District Cllr John Cotton.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Jenny Nudds & Mark Williams who had other commitments.

2 Declarations of Interest

None

3 Minutes of the Meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> August 2007

The Minutes as circulated were approved and signed as true record

4 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- a. The Clerk reported that 21 residents had attended the Police 'surgery' on 28<sup>th</sup> August. The police community support officers were delighted at such a large turnout.
- b. Bike racks; a quote from Accord for the base is awaited.
- c. The reply from Thames Water about the Parish Council's concerns regarding the capacity of the sewers and drains in Queen St had been received and clearly stated that the system is currently working at less than half its potential capacity. Several things in the letter were unclear and the comments of County and District Council officials had been requested. Further contact will be made with the company.
- d. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had both attended the South Oxon Partnership meeting at Didcot, along with Clerk. Some interesting statistics about the District had been presented and the Clerk will circulate details of their sources. The Council noted that more consultation will follow on two of the documents next year.
- e. The Council was disappointed that there has been no progress on the footpath and new gates at Overy Mill and the Overy/Hurst boundary. The Clerk had asked the County for a report but had received no comment so far.
- f. Residents had continued to comment about the poor finish of the new High Street surface dressing. The matter has again been raised with County Cllr John Howell who will comment later.
- g. The County's highways engineer has been asked to comment about safety at the High Street Bridge End junction now that the new houses have been built.
- h. The property department at the Co-op have been asked about the status of the proposed electricity supply for the Parish Christmas tree
- i. The Clerk said that he had not written to the occupants of 8 The Limes about the plants overgrowing the path in Oxford Road. He asked if there were councillors who could raise the matter in a less formal way.

5 District Councillor's Report

District Cllr John Cotton said that his Council is conducting a number of surveys. The survey about residents' problems with the supply of broadband services had been completed. Parish councils would be hearing soon about proposals for the new planning design guide. Responses to the survey about rubbish and recycling, which is internet based, have been better than in previous surveys.

Cllr Cotton said that the District Council is campaigning against the findings of the recent planning report which suggested that homes could be built in the green belt south of Grenoble Road. The District believed that the City could and should agree to take more of the new housing scheduled for the County. It is dubious at law that the City should be allowed to review plans for land within the District's boundary. A meeting of the parish councils in the Oxford green belt will be held soon.

#### 6 County Councillor's Report

County Cllr John Howell confirmed that the County is equally against the proposals which will impact upon the Oxford green belt. Building south of Grenoble Road is completely unsustainable.

Cllr Howell said that the police have been very vigilant in monitoring the bikers who gather at Fox's diner each Monday but commented that the surveillance is needed more on the approach roads to the gatherings than the venue itself. There is also an HGV number plate recognition survey in progress. This will help the police decide where their action to enforce weight restriction orders should be concentrated. Shillingford Bridge will be closed to all traffic from 1<sup>st</sup> October with the works scheduled to take a maximum of eight weeks. Pedestrians and cyclists may occasionally be allowed to cross the bridge before the end of this period.

#### 7 Finance:

Reserve Account at 29 <sup>th</sup> June	£23,705.86	no change
Current Account at 30 <sup>th</sup> August	<u>£10,991.86</u>	
	£34,697.72	

The following accounts were approved for payment.

Wallingford Glass & Glazing Ltd (pavilion)	£342.22
Berinsfield Community Business (grass – August)	£294.24
Berinsfield Community Business (Allotments)	£193.88
Scion Estates Limited (grass cutting)	£319.46
Dorchester Sports Club (grass cutting 2007 season)	£750.00
Total Pest Control (quarterly contract)	£176.25
GGD Russell – Clerk's salary	£401.82
Geoff Willis Handyman – 5 weeks	<u>£277.50</u>
	£2,755.37

The Council asked the Clerk to prepare a statement of the Council's expenditure for the six months ended 30<sup>th</sup> September compared to the budget for the year.

The Council agreed that £300 should be a maximum amount which can spent at the Chairman's discretion in an emergency which might arise between meetings.

The Clerk confirmed that the review of the Council's records and Annual Return is booked in with Douglas Jupp as the internal auditor. The Council's VAT claim has already been filed. Another VAT claim will be made at the end of September because of substantial expenditure in the first half year, especially on the Play Area.

#### 8 Correspondence and Other Business

##### i). Sports Club Pavilion & Playground;

The Council noted that Planning Permission for the proposed security shutters has been approved. The work now needs to be requested by at least two suppliers.

Following the installation of new play equipment a new edition of the weekly inspection sheet is required.

The area which was recently excavated needs further work to restore it to its previous condition. A site meeting will be organised with Oxford Archaeology.

Paul Jenks has quoted £150 for carrying out a survey of the Recreation Ground and the Cemetery trees and for making recommendations about a maintenance programme. It was agreed that this should be done.

Reports of a widespread infestation of rats have been received. The cost of solving this has been quoted at around £500. Contact will be made with local residents and the angling club to find out on whose lands the rats actually live.

The Clerk said that Wicksteed have advised that the new pendulum swing is intended for use by children aged 8-12 years but that many can use it at the same time since the maximum load weight is 1 ton. A notice will be put into Dorchester News and this will include a request that residents do not use the Recreation Ground to practice golf. Cllr Hill reported that the Sports Club plans to refurbish the pavilion are on hold.

ii). Footpaths;

Pending BCB's availability to take on more path clearance work (when the grass-cutting season ends) Geoff Willis has been asked to do what he can to clear Footpath 13, off Watling Lane, Albert Place and the paths leading to the by-pass bus-stops. A supply of woodchippings at the top of Drayton Road is available as required.

iii). Cemetery;

Paul Jenks agrees that it would be more sensible to remove the damaged horse chestnut and has been asked for a price.

Cllr Day has carried out a review of proposed hedge work and will put the jobs in their order of priority. The Clerk has agreed with Peter Keable that he will cut the hedge around the perimeter of the Recreation Ground as in previous years but Mr Keable will only undertake hedge cutting where he able to access the work by tractor and do the cutting mechanically. Other lengths of hedgerow must be cut by different contractors, perhaps on an annual hedge maintenance contract.

The Council noted that there been some damage to one of the legs of 'Simon's bench'. It was thought that this might have been done whilst Scion Estates were carrying out grass cutting. This has not been admitted by the contractor but the bench will be taken back to Scion's workshop and repaired as a goodwill gesture.

The Rector has considered the application from the Bowles family for the erection of a wooden cross. She felt that this was an entirely appropriate memorial and recommended that the Council should give its approval. The Council agreed.

Mrs Kestner's application for a memorial straddling two grave spaces was approved.

iv). Allotments;

The area of unused allotments has been cut back by BCB.

v). Hidden Britain;

The arrival of the finger posts is expected later this month and the new walking guides (3 & 4) have just been printed. Progress with the digital copy of the Millennium album and touch screen displays is underway. The celebration of the completion of the programme by holding a public event is to be held over until Easter Monday in March 2008. The orientation board near Day's Lock has now been installed.

vi). Other letters to Chairman and Clerk

The County is carrying out a review of subsidised buses in this area. ORCC has offered its help in conducting a transport needs survey and this offer will be accepted. The Council is helping to promote attendance at the 'Trickster' musical in Berinsfield 24<sup>th</sup> September 10 am. This warns people about the activities of rogue traders.

Cllrs Margot Metcalfe and Mark Stevenson will represent the Council at the Town & Parish Council Forum (where OCC & SODC are joint hosts) at Crowmarsh on 8<sup>th</sup> October starting at 6 pm.

#### 9 Planning

a) Application: PO7/W1039 Green Acre, 19 Bridge End; single storey rear extension to replace existing conservatory which is to be demolished. The Council agreed to recommend that this application be approved.

b) Report on planning decisions, amendments etc  
PO7/W0668/LB Thatchers Cottage, 15 Queens Street; Internal alterations to existing cottage. This application has been rejected on the grounds that there would be loss of the historic fabric of the building. The Parish Council agreed that this is an inappropriate decision.

It was reported that two more dormer windows have been installed at Lantern Cottage, Bridge End. The result of the planning appeal is still awaited.

#### 10 Village Carbon Project

Cllr Stevenson reported that the group now has a clear structure and has set its objectives. The first step is to assist residents by facilitating the recycling of things like tetrapacks and to encourage the re-use of containers by offering a re-fill service for the most popular commodities. It is proposed that the Village Hall be used as the centre for these activities.

#### 11 Watling Lane & other Highways maintenance matters

The meeting of Watling Lane residents on the previous evening had been attended by twenty people. Some people felt that this work should be carried out by the County Council as in previous years and wished to have the opportunity of lobbying the Council on this matter direct. Others were concerned that the work as costed might not be effective in the long-run, while there was also a group who worried that if there was a significant improvement to the surface it would encourage faster driving along what is a narrow road shared with pedestrians and cyclists. It was agreed that a price should be obtained for clearing the loose debris and filling the potholes only. County Cllr John Howell said that Highways engineers are aware of residents' comments about the poor quality of workmanship in the High Street and that the contractors would be asked to revisit this job, possibly when they come to resurface Bridge End, which is scheduled for week ending 28<sup>th</sup> September.

#### 12 Free Tree Scheme 2007

Requests must be in by the end of September. The project will be co-ordinated by Cllrs Hill and Stevenson and they will submit the Council's request by the due date.

#### 13 Headstone Safety

A report has been received from IMI, one of the firms identified in the ICCM Journal, which says that according to the opinion of the Association of Burial Authorities, inside a closed churchyard the memorial owner, where known, is ultimately responsible for the safety of a memorial. The church wardens, under occupier's liability, are generally responsible for safety including memorials within the Abbey cemetery (excluding items in the closure order), and the Parish Council is responsible for the safety of its own staff and outside contractors carrying out work on its behalf.

IMI has advised that the cost of inspecting up to 1,000 memorials is £500 and that some parish councils combine together to share this cost when the number of memorials to be inspected is less than 1,000.

It was agreed that the Chairman together with Cllrs Day and Gibbons and the Clerk should make site visits to the Cemetery and check the safety of all memorials.

14 Any Other Business

a. Cllr Day said that he would ask BCB to take on the maintenance of the hedge on the boundary between the Abbey and Mr Feeney's Thatched Cottage.

b. Cllr Gibbons said that the Playground Committee has agreed to take over the running of the Village Fête next year for the benefit of play equipment fund raising. The date will be fixed with reference to the Pilgrimage and cricket fixtures.

c. Cllr Hill said that he and Cllr Stevenson have been talking to the residents of Bridge End about the management of the area around the car park. There has been talk about improved management of litter and also the possibility of replacing the metal fence on each side of the access to the underpass with brick walls which could incorporate a form of flood defence barrier to prevent water from reaching the road.

Meeting closed at 10.15 p.m.