

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Meetings held in the Windmill Centre Lounge, Deddington on Wednesday 10 May 2017 at 7.30pm

Present: One member of public, six parish councillors, County Cllr A Fatemian, the Clerk and minutes secretary.

Minutes May 2016 The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for May 2016 were unanimously approved by those in attendance.

Report from the Chair 2017 – David Rogers

Jim Flux. David Rogers recognised the work Jim had done for the Parish Council and the community.

Thank you. He thanked all those whose efforts have helped, improved and supported both the Parish and the lives of Parishioners. He thanked the volunteers who have turned out for a wide variety of causes including the Neighbourhood Plan, the Windmill redevelopment, Speedwatch, Spring Clean, those who help maintain the green spaces, playing fields, sports facilities, allotments and monitor the footpaths, the Friends of Castle Grounds, the Snow Wardens and the countless others that have given their time and talents so freely. He also thanked the staff, Lorraine, Richard and Susan, and all those who have been Councillors over the last year, parish district and county, for their time and support.

Parish Projects. The successes over the last year included the Windmill Centre refurbishment, the installation of the fitness trail and obtaining various grants for LED lighting in the Windmill main hall and the imminent installation of four defibrillators across the parish.

Clifton. The re-opening of the Duke of Cumberland's Head is a huge boon for that community and locals have also put plenty of effort into trying to improve drainage in Clifton. Consultation is underway about how best to repair the damage done by storm Doris and improve the play facilities at Welford's Piece. The new speed sign seems to have made a difference to the speed of cars entering the village.

Hempton. The Chairman recognised the efforts that the Friends of Hempton Church had put into improving the Old School Room. An increase to the grass cutting schedule has been agreed with OCC for two cuts per year in the Lane. The Hempton Allotments continue to be great success and thanks were passed to Derek Parker and others who help keep the site looking so nice.

Deddington. Wimborn Close play area is to be reviewed. One piece of replacement play equipment is currently on order and the PC will apply for a grant when it becomes available later in the year to fund further improvements to this play area. Satin Lane allotments are looking good and will be open to the public as part of the National Garden Scheme in June which raises money for charity. The Chairman thanked the Allotment Society for its good work and particularly to Lynda Lake-Stewart and Judy Williams for helping the Parish Council with rent collection. The Castle Grounds are looking especially good and the clearing work is making a real difference with new paths being opened, wild flowers planted and the return of swathes of bluebells thanks to ivy clearance. Well done to the Friends of Castle Grounds. The Thames Water Angelinos trunk main is progressing, a little behind schedule, but the chance of improved water pressure for Hempton will be a welcome benefit once work is complete. The gas main work caused traffic and parking problems for a number of weeks and the David Wilson Homes development has brought its own noise, mud and dust issues. When complete, the Chair hopes that the community will welcome our new neighbours. The PC is determined to ensure that the developer delivers all of the promised benefits.

In summary. It has been a good year although tinged with sadness. There is much work in progress to improve and expand public facilities across the parish.

Planning: The current members are Cllr's S O'Neill, J Reeve and D Rogers. The Councillors on the working group were thanked for their contribution.

Highways & Transport: The current members are Cllrs M Cox (Chair); J Higham; H Oldfield, D Rogers. The Councillors on the working group were thanked for their contribution. The group has met every month over the past year prior to the PC meeting. All members are happy to remain on the working group although one member is willing to swap if this would help balance the PC's work load. Three members is considered sufficient to continue the work of this group.

Highways. The PC has continued to receive support from OCC and CDC for which it is grateful. County Cllr A Fatemian and District Cllr B Williams were thanked for their help and support. Many site visits and face to face meetings have been held with parishioners throughout the parish during the last year.

Ongoing issues with Parking. It was noted that there is little the PC can do regarding parking related issues. Parishioners were advised to make any complaints to OCC as Highways matters come under their remit. It was suggested that Fix My Street was a good web site for parishioners to use to report problems.

Speed monitoring/ speed watch. There have not been any recent speed watches because of TVP equipment failure. New equipment had to be approved and purchased.

Monitoring of VAS. The VAS and monitoring in Clifton confirms that vehicles are slowing down on entering the village.

Traffic lights. A meeting took place regarding the timing of the phasing and future timings when the new school field site has been built and occupied. Inevitable hold ups occur when more than 3 vehicles are waiting to turn right from Banbury into Hempton Road. This will continue to be monitored. This area continues to be a high accident injury site.

Windmill and Windmill Close car park. After years of negotiation and meetings CDC finally accepted responsibility for these areas and replaced the surface. Further damage has been averted by negotiating with the drivers of the bin lorries.

School field Site. The working group has been active in making suggestions and following up the ongoing traffic and highway issues such as a pedestrian pathway.

Pot holes. There is some dissatisfaction with the current patching and this has been notified to OCC.

OALC. Cllr M Cox is a member of the executive committee – all relevant information is sent to Councillors.

Transport: Cancelled services. Last summer OCC stopped subsidising county bus services as part of their overall package of cuts. For Deddington parish this meant the loss of the 90, which ran one day a week to Upper Heyford via Hempton and Deddington; the '81' which ran on three days a week to Bicester via Clifton and Deddington, and a little add-on to the S4 service which ran between Deddington and the Bartons. The Dial-a-Ride service was also cancelled. At the same time, all administrative services to the regular Parish Transport Representative meetings were ended. The parish preventatives carry on, providing their own minute-takers etc.

Comet Service. A partial replacement service has been introduced - the Comet service. Some of OCC's fleet of mini-buses that are used for transporting school children are available for hire during their down-time between around 9.30 am and 2.30pm. Some parishes are using it, say for a weekly shopping trip for a group of villagers. It's not clear yet how successful the service is, or whether it will be expanded to cover evenings and school holidays. Leaflets concerning the Comet service were distributed to every house in Deddington parish - thanks to those who helped with the distribution: Cllrs D Anderson and J Watts.

Community bus. The PC has considered running a community bus of its own but has rejected the idea because of the difficulty in finding drivers and the likely poor take-up since we do have the Stagecoach-run S4 Oxford to Banbury service.

S4 bus route. This service has been improved to half-hourly between Deddington and Banbury, and there is a possibility - if the S106 contribution of some £85,000 is forthcoming from the David Wilson Homes School Ground development as promised - that Stagecoach will make the Deddington to Oxford stretch of the S4 route half-hourly as well, at least on a trial basis.

Bus diversions. On farmers' market days and the three-day spell when there is a fair in the Market Place, the S4 stops in the High Street rather than divert into the Market Place. Cllr J Reeve plans to publicise this when the fair is coming to town.

Trains. The Marylebone / Bicester / Oxford Parkway service has now been extended to Oxford City station.

Environment and Recreation. The current members are Cllr's J Finnigan, M Squires, T Timms, D Rogers and J Watts. The highlights from the year had been covered in the Chairman's report.

Finance and General Purposes. The current members are Cllr's B Wood, D Anderson and H Oldfield.

Accounts. Accounts for the year to 31 March 2017 have just been signed off by the internal auditor. They still need to be agreed by BDO (the external auditor appointed by the government). The accounts show a shortfall of £5,614, but this is after £16,175 was spent on Windmill Centre renovation. (The Windmill Centre is run by the Windmill committee but the building is owned by the PC, and the Windmill committee is responsible only for routine maintenance). The renovation was paid out of revenue reserves which were built up for such a contingency, and therefore there was an operating surplus of just over £10,000. The total spent on the Windmill last year and the previous year came to £35,379. Other areas showed similar results to last year and to the budget. £1,300 was spent extending the watering system at Satin Lane, but this was offset by £867 collected by the Satin Lane Allotments Committee. The precept at £37,055 was £3,670 higher than the previous year, but showed only as a 2.4% increase in the statement to council tax payers, as CDC used a higher tax base taking in some of the houses being built at Deddington Grange.

Interest. Interest on bonds at £4,459 was £734 lower than the previous year due to extremely low rates being paid, and indeed difficulty in finding sufficient places to put PC money and still remain within the Financial Services Compensation Scheme limit of £85,000.

Environment and Recreation spending. General spending on E&R was below budget in the year. Expenditure tends to reflect the incidence of issues which need to be addressed. The PC received a Big Lottery Fund grant of £10,000 which was spent on the fitness trail at the Windmill.

Investments. The Balance Sheet shows £374,000 invested in bonds and an unusually high figure of £163,000 in the Barclays current account. A bond has been bought for £85,000 since the year end. The Balance Sheet shows a capital fund of £481,075. This is money which came to the parish many years ago, and is ring fenced for spending on capital items. It cannot be used for routine expenditure, but the interest on the money invested is used to provide services in the parish. There is a policy to maintain at least £25,000 in the Current Account with the balance at the end last year of £41,500.

Jim Flux. It was noted that Jim Flux had been a member of the F&GP working group and also treasurer to the Windmill Centre and the PC will miss his contribution.

John Suckling. Thanks were passed to John Suckling who has stood down as the PC's honorary internal auditor after many years.

Report from Neighbourhood Plan (NP): This year has seen the culmination of the policy writing element of the NP activity as the feedback from the community was reflected in the 'Emerging Policies' and given to the community at the last drop in event. These changes had to be carefully couched in a way that

maintained consistency with the existing CDC Local Plan. This Local plan was due to be revised and published some months ago so the NP was paused so it could be modified to take into account any changes. However, the publication has been repeatedly delayed so the team have decided to carry on regardless. The group has had three meetings with CDC since then giving them first sight of the emerging plan and it has been well received. It is expected that few changes will be requested by CDC when formal submission starts later this year.

During the last year the Steering Group became aware of a number of issues affecting planning matters that have gained a national profile that many of the Steering Committee thought should be reflected in our plan. These matters were the failure to require developers to make the development infrastructure (roads and play areas for example) available for adoption and maintenance by the local authority. If the roads are not of a statutory standard OCC will not adopt and not maintain them and CDC have a policy of NOT sending refuse collection vehicles down those roads meaning residents will have to wheel their bins out to the adopted highway. Also, some neighbouring developments have play equipment not adopted by the local authority so maintenance is paid for by the residents and this has led some residents expressing concern that non-resident children should not play there, thus creating an 'apartheid' where school friends cannot play together unless they all live there.

Secondly, the practice of developers not granting freehold title to the home owners but granting leasehold title only. Many people will recognise this concept if we have owned a flat as this is standard practice and paying ground rent is an obligation. If it was not the case who owns the land the flats are built on and who has responsibility for the maintenance of the roof? Leasehold is an established way of resolving this and sharing maintenance responsibilities and having a body responsible for the management of the building, who charge a management fee.

For houses however this is not commonly the case and the hazard the team were keen to avoid is the ownership of the land and thus the lease being sold on to a financial institution who see the ground rent as an ever appreciating asset. They may also charge for giving permission for changes of the use of that land should an extension or other improvements be planned. The NP team suggest that this is a blight on ownership that could penalise people not fully informed or advised during purchase.

CDC considered these to be reasonable concerns and so supported the NP team in seeking the essential evidence so that countermeasures can be included in the plan. Therefore, a 'Two More Questions' survey was recently undertaken to get parishioner feedback. 32% of residents responded and the NP team thanked them for doing so. The evidence provided is currently being analysed so the controls can properly be incorporated. The NP team will seek PC approval in June, followed by a July submission to CDC for their initial comments. These are expected to be received in August and the CDC comments will then be responded to. It is anticipated that in November there will be the formal public consultation. In February it is expected that the response will be fed back and then any changes that are required will be made. It is anticipated that in March 2018 the NP will be submitted to the External examiner for consideration – this has sometimes taken 9 months before a response is received. Any changes the examiner wants to see will then be made with formal PC sign off and the Parish ballot held at the end of 2018.

The Chair thanked the NP team for doing a great job noting that there was a good mix of skills and one sharp legal minds.

County Cllr A Fatemian report: Cllr Fatemian said that he was grateful for being re-elected to the County Council and said that he felt humbled.

Unitary. Over the past year there have been a number of proposals from both OCC and the district councils on alternative methods of local government in Oxfordshire. This has now reached a pivotal moment with OCC's submission to government for a county wide unitary. This is now with the Secretary of State to decide.

Phasing of Lights. Hempton Road phasing of lights. After investigation, it was felt that the crossing does offer enough time. The green man goes out well before the lights change to discourage others from stepping on to the road. Additionally, the lights from the new development will be linked to those at the crossing, providing the option to synchronise to improve traffic flow should this be an issue.

Keep Horton General. County Cllr A Fatemian is part of a cross-party campaign led by Victoria Prentis MP to prevent downgrading of the maternity unit at the Horton and seconded the CC motion in July 2016 which called for the council to examine the business case for continuing this vital service. This has provided an effective challenge to the temporary material changings in the provision of maternity care. On 2 February members resolved to refer the matter to the Secretary of State and asked that he refer the issue of the provision of maternity services at The Horton General Hospital to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel.

Highways. The new Fix My Street has been launched. It will improve the quality and consistency of public reports. Member of the public who consistently give good information can be rewarded with 'trusted reporter' status, meaning OCC will fast track future reports to the contractor, resulting in quicker resolution. A second dragon patcher will soon be put to work on rural routes. The first one is shared with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The dragon patcher is five times faster than traditional methods and can do more work for the money.

Farmers Market. County Cllr A Fatemian noted that he enjoys attending the Farmers Market most months.

Remembrance Day Parade. Cllr Fatemian said that it was an honour and privilege to be invited to take part in the Parish parade.

Ambulance meeting. Concerns have been raised regarding Blue Light Ambulance services to the JR from the Horton, with regard to short cuts, whether there would be an ambulance if downgraded etc. He said that this was something Victoria Prentis hoped to take up after the election (if she is re-elected).

OCC future priorities. Cllr Fatemian said that the future priorities of the County Council would depend on the ruling administration as dictated by the outcome of the general election. There may be an alliance. He suggested that the main areas were likely to be (1) Unitary. (2) Health and Social Care – integration so wastage and duplication avoided – the use of home for rehabilitation and recovery (Hospital at Home scheme) better quality of care at reduced prices (3) Roads – these are falling into dis-repair although they are a county council asset.

Blandford Fly. Concern was raised about the increased cases of people being bitten by the Blandford Fly and the lack of spraying. He had received complaints from residents.

Open discussions. None.

Cllr D Rogers thanked those in attendance. The meeting closed at 8:03pm.

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