

## DEDDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Hempton Lounge, Windmill Centre, Deddington at 7:00pm on Wednesday 27 April 2022.

**Present:** Ten parish councillors, District Councillor B Williams, Deddington news representative and three members of the public.

#### Approval of Agenda.

**Minutes May 2021 and Matters arising.** Cllr H Oldfield proposed, Cllr M Cox seconded the motion and the Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous by those in attendance) that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for May 2021 a true record of the meeting.

**Matters arising.** None.

#### Report from the Chair 2022 – Cllr D Rogers reported;

As the Covid Pandemic eases and the rhythms of life restart I should start by thanking every medical professional, key worker and volunteer for assisting during this Pandemic. Deddington was fortunate to have such a strong Covid-19 group and a powerful and obdurate community spirit.

Could I also thank and congratulate all the groups, committees, volunteers and good citizens of Deddington that gave the time and efforts to support our community over the last twelve months. All the time invested and work done goes a long way to make this Parish the wonderful place it is to live.

The Parish Council has had another successful year in raising additional funding through grants for the Neighbourhood Plan and several other community activities. I'm delighted to see the Windmill Centre refurbishment continuing and the completion of the Archive Room is a welcome addition. Thank you to the Windmill Management team for all their efforts in and around the Centre and to the Archive group for this latest addition to facilities at the Windmill.

Parish councillors attend monthly council meetings and serve on working groups as well as meeting with parishioners, officers, contractors, suppliers, attending training courses and site visits. When necessary, they attend planning meetings and appeal hearings at Cherwell District Council and the OCC Cabinet Office.

Particular thanks are due to Susan Fuller our Clerk who has recently achieved the CiLCA qualification, our two stalwart Stewards, Richard Banister and Gareth Smith and our minutes secretary, Elen Squires.

I owe my gratitude to my fellow Cllrs who have worked incredibly hard for no reward to keep Deddington thriving and would like to thank those who did not stand for re-election and welcome new councillors on to the Parish Council. I would like to thank our District and County Councillors for their work and for their generosity towards this parish. Not forgetting the ex-Councillors who passed away this year, John Finnigan, Terry Clinch and James Bell and our minutes secretary, John Osborough.

Finally, we are a rural parish. The local farmers do a great deal to keep the Parish looking as good as it does. The countryside is ours to enjoy but it is also some of our neighbours' livelihood. Please may I encourage everyone to read and follow the Countryside Code.

#### Report from the Chairs of the Parish Council's Working Groups.

##### a) **Planning. Cllr M Swadling reported;**

Deddington Parish Council received a total of 76 Planning Applications for the 2021/2022 year – these were 36 residential building related, 10 Commercial related and 19 tree related applications and 11 applications covering other matters.

The 19 tree applications involved a total of some 45 trees. Of these, a total of 29 trees were to be felled for a variety of reasons, mostly overcrowding, poor/dangerous/diseased condition, overhanging roads, and undermining buildings, of this 29, 11 were overgrown shrubs in a single garden that hadn't been managed in very many years and had become dense and overgrown.

We requested that a number of the felled trees were to be replaced as appropriate, either on site or by recommending supporting the Woodlands Trust Scheme that gives away trees as a way of replacing what has been lost, but in a more suitable environment.

The remaining 16 trees were to pollard/reduce/crown/top trees, to maintain them in a good condition.

The 36 building related applications were mostly for renovations, modifications, single and two storey extensions, conservatories etc; however, of these 36 applications, there were only 3 applications for new residential dwellings throughout the Parish in this year, which would have provided three new dwellings. One of these applications was refused, the other remains undetermined at the time of writing.

The building related applications also included one for change of use for part of a double garage to a home office and two applications to convert part home commercial (existing home office/business premises) to residential use.

We have also dealt with 21 other applications for Discharge of Conditions, CLUP (Certificate of Lawfulness), Listed building consents and Reserved Matters. There have been 3 applications for commercial signage, of these, one was refused, resubmitted, and subsequently approved, another was retrospective and subsequently approved. 7 applications were made for other commercial matter, including additional grain store for a local farmer, a new portacabin meeting room at the surgery and a storage barn being converted to a Gymnasium and an 18m Telecoms pole!

Of the applications we received throughout the year; 5 were withdrawn before determination, including felling 4 Scots Pine, which was resubmitted as a management plan rather than felling, 5 applications were refused including one tree with a TPO on it, two applications went to appeal, one is still undetermined at the time of writing, while the other appeal was successful on behalf of the applicant.

18 applications submitted to CDC that have been on our planning reports during the year have not been determined at the time of writing, including an application from September 2021!

We have dealt with other matters too, correspondence from residents, and other ad-hoc applications, we have also engaged with CDC's Draft Statement of Community Involvement and an application for ground mounted solar panels on a local farm.

A very varied year this year!

CDC has the final say on applications and there have been some occasions where they have not agreed with the PC's recommendations, and we may not have agreed with their determinations, though both scenarios are few. In general, though, we believe our views are heard by CDC.

The PC in most cases approve applications that meet planning criteria and are regarded as sustainable development, always having regard to legitimate concerns and objections of neighbours and other parishioners.

**b) Highways and Transport. Cllr M Cox reported;**

Another difficult year due to COVID but we have managed to meet monthly either via Skype, face to face or a mixture of both with almost 100% attendance ensuring the best possible diversity of views to ensure quality recommendations for action or discussions of highway and transport issues at DPC meetings.

We thank our brilliant Chairman, vice chair and Parish Clerk for their hard work and guidance. We hope that our chairperson and vice chair will give consideration to standing again to be re-elected to those positions.

Wheelie Bins. We look at the site and safety of the bins on the Highway next to the listed building of the Town Hall, we agenda this on a monthly basis. The bins have been forced open and one had to be replaced as a result of damage. Fly tipping has been an issue in the bin area and is zero tolerated offenders will be reported and prosecuted. They are strictly for Parish Council use only.

Speeding Tractors complaints of speeding in Hempton road — this was successfully resolved by our Parish Clerk.

Electric Charging Points. It was not possible to install points in Earls Lane however we are still actively pursuing other possibilities in the Parish.

Hempton Road — Stone pit development. This has been a constant and ongoing source of complaints and issues including damage to the cemetery lay by kerbs and planting. Vehicle parking in the lay by interfering with access by families visiting deceased in the cemetery. A sign was requested and OCC obliged by very quickly erecting a 'No goods vehicle parking' there have also been complaints of mud constantly on the Hempton road and other Parish roads. In addition inconsiderate parking and behaviour by builders in nearby roads has annoyed residents.

However, the Clerk and chair are quick to contact the developers and muster them into action to resolve issues.

FIX MY STREET. Parishioners are asked to report any Highway problems themselves by using this site. <https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk>.

Bollard outside Finishing Touch — Hairdressers. This is regularly knocked down we will try to chase a solution for this problem.

Super Users (Pothole Tsars) now eventually trained and in action identifying and reporting to OCC. Trained super users have a swifter response than fix my street. A big thank you to our volunteer super users.

Hempton Road Light. Finally after over 2 years of constant chasing the installation of the light by the Daedings turn was installed to the delight of local residents. The HTWG wish to thank C.Cllr. A. Fatemian for gifting us the grant to fund the installation of this light.

Crossing —Grove Court. Following the road marking and elderly crossing sign near the library we asked for an addition sign to be install Close pole — OCC erected this. However HTWG continue to stress that the safest way to cross the busy road is to walk to the safe crossing at the traffic lights.

Traffic Lights. This continues to be the site for vehicle accident and injury. Most collisions occur when vehicles turn right into Hempton road. It is reported that vehicles ignore red lights and speed through the lights. Not helped by the disappearing road arrow direction arrows. HTWG has requested that the road marking be reinstated and cameras be installed at the traffic lights. In spite of requesting these issues have been slow to be resolved.

Hempton Pinch Point 18.5.21. The accident at the point resulted in some highway changes.

VAS in Clifton. This had to be replaced but fortunately still under guarantee.

Yellow Lines. T.V. Police will no longer be responsible for enforcing unlawful parking where there are yellow lines. Unlawful parking on yellow lines will be enforced in the near future — residents beware this is going to happen.

A Boards and Posters. The Highway Authority, may remove any picture, letter, sign or other mark which has, without consent or authorisation or an enactment, been painted or inscribed or fixed on the highway or on any tree, structure or works on or in the highway, in order to:

1. Consider the safety and convenience of all pedestrians, especially those with poor eyesight, elderly or disabled people and those with prams, wheelchairs etc.
2. To ensure the clear visibility which is vital at road junctions, where pedestrians cross, and at other access points
3. To ensure a driver's attention is not distracted by any unnecessary increase in the number of these signs.

OCC can delegate powers to an agent - usually a parish, town or district council, which will carry out the removal on our behalf. HTWG have asked that DPC be an agent in order to legally remove posters which contravene the above 3 points especially at the traffic lights and road entrances.

20MPH The proposal. Oxfordshire County Council is considering plans to deliver more 20mph restrictions in towns and villages across the county. The proposal is aimed to: make streets safer. Encourage residents to walk or cycle. Reduce noise and pollution.

DPC has applied to be considered for this scheme.

Which areas are eligible?

The area of the proposed restriction should not have a speed limit that is greater than 40mph. It can be a whole village or town or just one street within the area.

It should be in an area with features that justify a lower speed limit to drivers, for example, an area which has:

- evidence of traffic incidents or potential dangers
- visible homes, shops and businesses
- a school or a school route
- a cycling route
- a quiet lane designation.

Town and parish councils are encouraged to set up community speed watch programmes.

Sadly, we do not have a community speed watch group. This should be organised by the community and so far, no volunteers have come forward. Every individual who has sent a supportive letter/mail in favour of this scheme, in spite of asking, have not volunteered to be a member of the Speed Watch group. There needs to be evidence of an active effective, trained speed watch team to ensure success of the application of the scheme. Please put your name forward if you are interested.

When DPC hears more the intention is to consider setting up a '20 mph group', headed by the HTWG, to consider the implications of the scheme for the whole Parish. However, we have to point out that at the last time of inquiring this is a 3 year project and 60 parishes/towns have already applied to be considered for the scheme — where this Parish will come in the list has yet to be discovered. Watch this space.

**c) Transport. Cllr H Oldfield reported;**

The pandemic has had a severe effect on bus services throughout the county. Operators have been long been anxious that patronage has not picked up sufficiently to make the network viable. A package of government support for bus services across the country ends this month. A new package has been promised beginning in May, but the amount on offer is halved to £150m.

Stagecoach have reduced some services in Oxfordshire — although not yet the S4 route serving Deddington. The hourly service continues although — as can be seen — it often carries few passengers. The two last buses between Oxford and Banbury are subsidised — at least for now — by Oxfordshire County Council. In fact the last bus from Oxford leaves at 23.15 making visits to concerts, plays and other evening events feasible for Deddington bus passengers.

There are two H4 buses each way each day connecting Deddington with the John Radcliffe Hospital. These are not subsidised and are considered to be at risk. Changes to the 700, 800 and 900 bus services that begin on May 9 may make the loss of the H4s more likely. The three buses will be replaced by one half-hourly service connecting the park and ride at Oxford Parkway station (ie, on the S4 route after Kidlington) with the JR, the Churchill, the Nuffield Orthopaedic hospital and Oxford Brookes university.

The S4 (and the H4) is the only public transport that serves Deddington. The message is the same as always — use it or lose it.

There is one lifeline: S106 for transport. The developers of two new estates, one already being built on the Stone Pits site on the Hempton Road, the other pending on the Clifton Road, have pledged S106 contributions for transport, most likely the S4 service - £21,000 and £5,000 respectively.

Comet Service: This minibus service in Oxfordshire, operating from 10am to 2pm on weekdays, is still available on demand but there are no scheduled services of the Comet.

Volunteer Driver Service: The car service, for hospital trips and other journeys, provided by volunteers and organised by Citizens Advice in Banbury continues operating complete with masks and wipes. The number to call is 0300 3030 125. The service is currently appealing for more drivers to meet high demand. Passengers pay 45p per mile to help cover the driver's fuel costs.

Transport Survey: The new administration in Oxfordshire County Council is seeking to focus on transport and combatting climate change. At the beginning of the year, local councils and individuals were invited to take part in a survey on OCC's aims and policies.

It began "Our Local Transport Plan Vision is for a zero-carbon Oxfordshire transport system that enables all parts of the county to thrive. Our plan sets out to achieve this by reducing the need to travel and discouraging unnecessary individual private vehicle use making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice. " Their target is to replace or remove 1 out of every 4 current car trips in Oxfordshire by 2030 and 1 out of 3 car trips by 2040.

The parish council's response applauded OCC's idealism and many of the methods proposed to reach their targets. However, we wondered if the vision was unrealistic with limited funds in a rural county where public transport was poor or non-existent in many of the villages. We expressed doubt about "reducing need to travel" if it meant people being trapped in their homes; and on the grounds that businesses in towns would suffer if people from villages didn't come to town to frequent cinemas, theatres, restaurants, shops, offices etc.

We suggested the council

- should prioritise connecting the villages to main towns by safe cycle routes - for example, along the A4260 Oxford to Banbury.
- should foster transport by minibuses which would be crucial for connecting outlying communities where commercial bus services are highly unlikely
- should support electric vehicle charging infrastructure, especially in the villages, including Deddington, where many residents in older properties could not access charging points in their own homes.

Whether as a result of the survey or not, OCC is now exploring the possibility of setting up banks of electric car charging points.

**d) Environment and Recreation. Cllr M Robinson reported;**

2021 was a year when life slowly and in judders got back to pre-pandemic 'normal'. It was also a year in which we faced rising prices for products and services, bringing the task of balancing the E&R budget with what needs to be done to keep the parish safe and attractive while being mindful of increasing environmental concerns.

Children's play areas: Our recently upgraded children's play areas at the Windmill proved invaluable in a year when many families chose to holiday at home. It also showed a need for an outside access toilet at the Windmill, so we've been working on adding two disabled loos on the west side of the building. We're not quite there yet but are hopeful it will be achieved early this summer. Thanks to grants and donations reported last year we are very fortunate in having leisure and play facilities of this standard in a parish our size. But they do need ongoing funds for their maintenance and ultimate replacement.

The Windmill Centre: reopened in 2021 when restrictions allowed. Meanwhile the Parish Council and Management Committee worked in partnership on the rolling programme of improvements:

- (1) a new wooden floor has been laid in the Hempton Lounge
- (2) the Clifton Room has been kitted out with high-spec conference facilities
- (3) a permanent solution to leaks and condensation around the roof is still being worked on
- (4) the internal toilet refurbishment is underway, providing gender neutral toilets, a disabled loo and baby change on the ground floor
- (5) the pop-up café at the Lookout (the former bowls pavilion) has proved very successful, and the Windmill people are looking at more improvements
- (6) the new Parish Archive Room is finished, and the contents of the Archive are being moved in
- (7) the container has been fitted out as a workshop for the steward in advance of the new disabled toilets being built
- (8) the old play area has been dismantled as it was end of life. Research on the future use of the space is underway

Environmental concerns: most grass cutting will continue and there will be another 'No Mow May—June' experiment around some of the parish greens to encourage wildflowers and pollinators for bees; wildflower seeds and bulbs have been planted at the Windmill Park; tree work, continues, including for ash dieback; and Deddington Environmental Network was supported by the PC in planting an orchard at Welford's Piece in Clifton.

Dogs: Comments on aspects of parish life often come in via social media. Even if we don't reply we do read them all and take action where needed. A particularly irritating ongoing problem often aired there is that of dog poo left on the ground, it's a dangerous practice, it's unhealthy and it's antisocial. However hard we try to get the message across there's a stubborn small minority of residents who think it is their unalienable right to indulge in this disgusting habit. We provide dog poo bins: if the nearest one is full, please find another or take it home. We pay CDC around E2,500 a year for this service: dog lovers think it is essential and complain if bins are full; non-dog lovers complain about the cost. Please, everyone, do your bit by calling out the perpetrators or providing evidence to CDC's dog warden. And it is particularly upsetting when the only reply is verbal abuse.

Our thanks as always go to our overworked Clerk, Susan Fuller, the two parish stewards, Richard and Gareth, who keep the place in good nick, and to Cllr Terry Timms for all his willing, hands-on help around the parish. Thank you all.

**e) Finance and General Purposes. Cllr C Snashall reported;**

Though F&GP's main concern is with the financial accounts and budget control, the working group considers every development in the parish and assesses its financial implications. As many of these are covered in other working groups' reports they will not all be covered here.

The revenue account shows a small excess of income over expenditure of £4,700

The Balance Sheet shows a capital fund of £401,726. 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 (very much more in the past than today) can be used to provide services in the parish.

Total funds held by the Council are £601,638, much of which is allocated to known future projects (such as roof repairs for the Windmill and future replacement of playground equipment and sports surfaces)

Interest on bonds at £4,638 was lower than the previous year due to extremely low rates being paid at the moment, and indeed difficulty in finding sufficient places to put our money and still remain within the Financial Services Compensation Scheme limit of £85,000 for any one bond.

The annual financial report will be published on the Parish Council website once it has been audited I would like to thank the Clerk for all her work on keeping the finances in order, especially during the time we were changing the computer system we use.

**Report about the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr H Oldfield reported;**

The Neighbourhood Plan consultation is more or less ready to go. There is a list of sites that have already been offered and a set of policies that people can look over. It is the aim that this consultation document is distributed soon.

**Open discussion where individuals can raise issues of interest or concern. None.**