

HORSPATH PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd March 2010
At 8pm in HORSPATH VILLAGE HALL.

Present: Ms S Gray, Mr C Henderson, Mr D Horsley, Mrs H Palmer, Mr S Turnbull, Mrs S Woodcock, Mrs J Carr (District Councillor), Mrs A Purse (County Councillor). **Apologies** Mr P Dobson, Mr M Harris, Mrs A Julian, Mr A Hodgson (District Councillor).
Public: 2

40/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Apologies were made on behalf of Mr Dobson, Mr Harris and Mrs Julian.

41/10 MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd February 2010 were amended as follows:-

38/10 (b) AOB – Mrs Palmer reported that there are *15 allotments allocated*, with 7 spare plots available. The minutes were then agreed and signed by the Chairman.

42/10 MATTERS ARISING

28/10 - TREE OUTSIDE VILLAGE STORES

Mrs Woodcock has passed the relevant forms from SODC to Mr Patel that need to be completed by a qualified tree surgeon and returned back to the Parish Council. The forms will then need to be sent back to SODC to obtain permission.

27/10 HVHMC & PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – A meeting took place on Tuesday 16th February 2010 in the Morgan Room. A copy of the un-signed minutes is available from Mrs Woodcock if required.

43/10 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – There were no planning applications to be considered.

PLANNING PERMISSIONS/REFUSALS/APPEALS

APP/Q3115/C/09/2110836 137 Cuddesdon Road, Horspath (Appeal A)

The appeal is allowed subject to the enforcement notice being varied in the terms set out in the formal decision. – **Noted.**

APP/Q3115/C/09/2110837 137 Cuddesdon Road, Horspath (Appeal B)

The appeal is dismissed. – **Noted.**

44/10 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Mrs Ann Purse – County Councillor – Reported that there will be a scrutiny review on the services provided by OCC during the bad weather. Mrs Purse stated that she will inspect the roads and footpaths for pot holes and report to OCC Highways.

The plans to extend Thornhill Park & Ride have now been passed. There may be a charge for people using this service if travelling to London.

Mrs Janet Carr – District Councillor – Reported that the Council Tax for this year will remain the same as last year. Mrs Carr asked Councillors for their support in classing Wheatley as a rural village with regards to the recent application to Thames Valley Primary Care Agency from Morland Medical Ltd for consent for inclusion in the pharmaceutical list from the premises of Morland House Surgery, Wheatley. It was agreed that the Clerk will write in support of Wheatley Parish Council.

45/10 CLERK'S UPDATE.

Barclays Bank – As there has not been any further correspondence from Barclays Bank, it is assumed that the new mandate from has now gone through.

Trees at Manor Drive – The Clerk has written to the resident of Manor Drive who has asked for the tree branches to be cut back asking her to write directly to the owner of the trees - Dr Munt.

Gidley Way - Fence – SODC has inspected fence in question and reported that the fence is within the 2 metre permitted height, therefore the case has now been closed.

Horspath Parochial Charity – The Clerk has received a letter thanking the Parish Council for the recent donation.

46/10 REPORTS/UPDATES.

Wildlife Conservation Area – The three species of bats hibernating in the bat tunnel were monitored again on Sunday 28th February by a team from the Oxfordshire Bat Group, who reported that approximately half of the record number of bats found in there in mid-winter have now woken up and are feeding again on midges, with the other half still asleep in the special bat bricks and behind the bat boards inside the tunnel. The Horspath bat tunnel has become one of the most important sites for conserving bats in this part of England. The persistence of the severe weather has rendered it impossible to catch up with the routine seasonal path maintenance and the general clearing up accumulated leaves during February, but this will be started in the first week of March, if drier and milder weather prevails. The water level in the tunnel and in all three ponds/wetland areas has been very high throughout February, but all the sluices and overflow pipes have worked well, and some rapid preparation of the pond will now be undertaken before the expected hundreds of frogs arrive to breed during March.

Several consecutive weekends with severe weather have delayed the planting out of the 110 new trees on the Village Hall site, but with better weather, will now be undertaken by volunteers in early March.

South East Plan – The legal challenge, brought by SODC in 2009 to the inclusion in the South East Plan by the Secretary of State (Department of Communities and Local Government) of a review of the Green Belt south of Oxford and the building of an urban extension to Oxford City in the Green Belt near Garsington, has still not been settled. Mr. Harris has sought legal advice for the Parish Council and represented it at a 'procedural meeting' meeting on 9th February with Inspector Stephen Pratt of the Planning Inspectorate to discuss the progress of the Oxford City Core Strategy which also included this urban extension of 4,000 houses, in order to follow the strategy of the South East Plan. Oxford City Council will adjust their Core Strategy when the final version of a 'repaired' South East Plan is known. No decision was made at the procedural meeting, and the Inspector asked the City Council to consider seeking legal advice, and has given it until 3rd March to produce a timetable for resuming the Examination in Public of its Core Strategy. If the present Labour government is re-elected, it is very likely that this urban extension "south of Grenoble Road" will be built, AND a review of the boundary of the nearby Oxford Green Belt will go ahead. The Conservative party's Green Paper 14 on Planning, published last month, makes it clear that if a Conservative government is elected, it will protect the Green Belt, abolish the South East Plan, and will consider using additional powers to undo any unwelcome parts of the Regional Spatial Strategies before primary legislation is in place, which means that the urban extension and Green Belt review would be deleted from government policy. It is realistically not expected that much progress will now be made to resolve this problem until after the General Election.

HVSA – No meeting of the HVSA had taken place, so there was nothing to report.

HVHMC – A meeting took place on 16th February 2010 and copies of the minutes are available to Councillors if required. Copies of the recommendations made by Mr Henderson with regards to the current lease were circulated to Councillors. Mr Dobson has asked that a meeting of the new committee members be arranged as soon as possible. Mr Henderson suggested that between the Parish Council and HVHMC a new agreement should be drawn up as well as defining responsibilities to resolve the on-

going issues. Mr Henderson will liaise with Mr Harris. Mr Henderson also suggested that the HVHMC need to nominate a person/s who Ray Jeffs can contact when necessary.

47/10 DRAINS ON THE GREEN

A property owner on The Green has recently reported that his drains are blocked. Thames Water has been in and flushed the drains through from The Green to the main road but has stated that it is tree roots that are causing the blockage. The resident has asked if drains are covered by the easement on the property. Mr Horsley stated that the tree was there before the house was built in 1937, therefore, when the pipes were laid the contractor should have made necessary provisions. It was agreed that the responsibility lies with the owner of the property. The Clerk to write to the resident informing them of the Parish Council's decision and also stating that as trustees of the Village Green the resident will need to write to the Parish Council for permission to carry out the necessary works. This request will not be withheld as long as the Village Green land is put back to its original condition on completion of works.

48/10 PLAY AREA UPDATE.

Mrs Woodcock reported that the play area is very wet and muddy at the moment. Part of the structures are up but will be a few weeks before any landscaping commences. The contractor contacted Mrs Woodcock to report that someone had jammed the lock on the barrier so he was unable to get in. He then realised that his storage container had been broken into and a container of diesel was stolen. Mrs Julian authorised the Clerk to send payment of £29,375.00 to All Play Services.

49/10 BURIAL GROUND DRAINAGE

Mr Turnbull will draw up some plans of his suggestions for the drainage.

50/10 WATER BOARD

Mr Turnbull met with the representative from Thames Water. Photos of the water tank have been taken and will be forwarded on to Thames Water.

51/10 UPDATE ON VILLAGE HALL –NEW BOILER & HEATING SYSTEM.

Mr Turnbull has drawn up a spec for the heating so that all contractors are quoting for the same works. One quote has already been received. The quote for the removal of asbestos has been accepted in the grant application. One of the grants is valid for one year, but Mr Henderson will liaise with the grantor in supporting our grant application due to the changes. Mrs Woodcock asked if the Village Hall will need to be closed down when the work takes place. Mr Turnbull stated that the work on the boilers can be carried out without much disruption but there will be a time when the main hall needs to be closed when the new radiators are fitted. Mrs Woodcock commented that Mr Jeffs has stated that at the moment there are no bookings for the village hall in August. Mr Turnbull stated that the Village Hall will probably need re-decorating after the work has been completed which will be the responsibility of the HVHMC. Mr Henderson suggested that the Parish Council could make a contribution to HVHMC towards this cost.

52/10 AFFORDABLE HOUSING – Ms Anna Kennedy ORCC and Ms Sarah Jones SODC.

Ms Kennedy explained to Councillors that a survey was carried out over two years ago on the need for affordable housing and two sites were identified. One is adjacent to the existing site and the other at the end of College Way. SODC has been trying to contact the landowners – Punch Taverns but have had no response. The other land owner has contacted SOHA Housing and is willing in principle to discuss a possible development. It is the number of issues regarding the allocation process that is preventing a 3rd phase moving any further forward.

Ms Sarah Jones commented that discussions between SODC and the Parish Council have previously taken place. From SODC's view a need for further affordable housing has been identified through the

survey and they view Horspath as a very high priority. SODC would like to build on a mutual aim with the Parish Council to provide more housing.

Mrs Woodcock and Mrs Palmer attended a meeting with SODC to discuss the allocation process and on the allocation process list there are approximately ten points that clearly state that SODC will contact the Parish Council to discuss and this has rarely happened in the past. Ms Jones stated that they cannot contact the Parish Council regarding individual cases and they are not allowed to name names.

Ms Gray stated that going on past experience, there are people living in the affordable homes that nobody knows, so how can SODC guarantee that the third phase be any different. Ms Jones stated that SODC has checked through all of the people allocated the houses and the correct process has been followed. Anyone wanting to be considered for affordable housing has to be registered on the SODC housing register and priority will be given to the people with the greatest need with the strongest local connection to the village.

Mr Horsley stated that when the last phase of housing was complete a resident in the village who was on the SODC housing register contacted SODC on the closing date for applications and was told that he was the only person on the allocation list. This person went and arranged a mortgage etc and was then told by SODC that there was now another application that had been received and therefore he lost the house. Nobody in the village knows the people that were allocated the house and after that the Parish Council stated that they would not support another phase of housing unless they were able to verify the local connection for the successful applicants.

Ms Jones stated that the allocation process is not straight forward. SODC will notify the Parish Council when a property becomes available. Each applicant must be on the housing register, they are then put into banding groups depending on their needs where they have the right to bid on properties within their banding group. Applicants are not allowed to bid on under occupancy or rented properties but if it is shared ownership then it is permitted to allow for the family to grow. If they are eligible to bid on a property they must have done so within two weeks. When all bids are received, people with a strong village connection take priority. People who meet the criteria will be ranked in order of the number of people and the size of the property required. Shared ownership is very complicated as some people do not have the finances available to cover a mortgage and rent.

Mr Henderson asked if there is a person bidding on an affordable home that has a strong village connection, is it possible that the property will be allocated to someone that does not have the village connection. Ms Jones stated that it is possible for this to happen if for example a four bedroom house became available and there were only two people in the family who had the village connection.

Mr Horsley asked if the same could happen on a two/three bedroom house. Ms Jones stated that in this case the person with the strong village connection would take priority, but if there were no applications suitable for the property then they would look outside of Horspath.

Ms Gray commented that people move out of Horspath to live because they can't afford to buy a house in the village but some of those people would like to move back into the village if it was possible. Ms Gray stated that the allocation process should be altered as those people would not be considered as having a local connection in the allocation process. Ms Kennedy stated that a strong local connection includes living in the village for 5 out of the last 8 years or if a parent or child has been a resident for at least 10 years. Mr Horsley stated that in the last phase of housing there were 12 applications all of who had a local village connection and not one of those people were allocated a property.

Mr Turnbull asked how many people with a local connection from the village are living in the two phases of housing. Mr Horsley stated that is probably about half. Mr Turnbull asked how many villages in the area have 3 phases of affordable housing. Ms Kennedy stated that Marcham have three and Kingston Bagpuize is looking at a third scheme.

Ms Gray asked how many properties they are proposing to build. Ms Kennedy stated that if the Parish Council agrees to a third phase the next step is to update the survey as it is nearly 3 years old. This would be done when they are at the stage of drawing the plans. Ms Gray stated that it will take approximately two years until the houses are built so again the survey will be out of date.

Mr Horsley asked Ms Jones, when the new data is available from the survey would they be prepared to pass the list of applicants to the Parish Council so that local connections can be clarified. Ms Jones stated that due to data protection this would definitely not be possible. Mr Horsley stated that it can be added to the application form that all information will be passed to the Parish Council for clarification. Mr Turnbull stated that if the results of the survey are the same as last time how many properties would they build. Ms Kennedy stated that it would probably be between 6-10 houses.

Mr Horsley stated that the Parish Council would support another phase of affordable housing at Cuddesdon Road but would insist on verifying the applicants local connection and would require that people who have moved out of the village be added to the local connections list. Ms Jones stated that there is a privacy matter involved and it is not possible according to local government acts to disclose personal information.

Mrs Woodcock thanked Ms Kennedy and Ms Jones for attending the meeting.

Ms Kennedy and Ms Jones left the meeting.

Mr Henderson commented that affordable housing is wanted in the village and there is clearly a need. The issues are that the SODC guidelines on the allocation process are fine but there is great concern on the lack of consultation with the Parish Council. The Parish Council needs confirmation that SODC will consult the Parish Council to confirm the local connections on all applications before any allocations are made. Mr Horsley stated that we also need confirmation that the final applicants must be those on the list that have been clarified by the Parish Council. Mr Henderson suggested that two Councillors could be nominated to clarify the information who will not disclose the information to the public. Mr Horsley also stated that SODC should be aware that if a 3rd phase of housing does go ahead the Parish Council would prefer it to be at Cuddesdon Road. It was agreed that the Clerk will write to Anna Kennedy and Sarah Jones.

53/10 CORRESPONDENCE.

- a. SODC – Outpost Magazine for Town & Parish Councils.* (Circulated via email)
- b. Thames Valley Police – Invite to Meeting Ref – Neighbourhood Policing & Neighbourhood Action Groups on 19/3/2010 at 7pm at Thame Police Station.* - (Circulated via email).
- c. SODC – Advertisement for 2 Independent Representatives on the Standards Committee.* - (Circulated via email).*
- d. SODC – Free Tree Scheme – No longer available.* - (Circulated via email).
- e. Energy 4 All Ltd – Open Day Saturday 19th June 2010.* - (Circulated via email).
- f. SODC – Minutes from the Standards Committee Meeting held on 28.1.10.* - (Circulated via email).
- g. OALC – January/February 2010 Update for Members.* - (Circulated via email)
- h. CPRE – Oxfordshire Campaign Briefing January 2010.* - (Circulated via email).
- i. ORCC – 90th Birthday Publication.*
- j. SODC – Dog Bin Collections. – **Clerk to contact SODC to see if it is possible to put an additional dog bin at the entrance to Shotover.**
- k. Town & Country Trees Ltd – Introductory Letter.*
- l. NSPCC – Campaign to raise awareness of the NSPCC Helpline.*#
- m. Oxfordshire Business Education Alliance – Donation Request. – **No request made.**
- n. OGBN – Annual Subscription - £15.00.*
- o. NHS – Determination of Rurality of Wheatley & Littleworth.*
- p. Wheatley Parish Council – February/March 2010 Newsletter.*
- q. Astons Parish Councils – Copy of letter sent to Margaret Reed SODC re Planning Referrals. – **Mr Henderson recommended that the Parish Council do not comment.**

** original held by the Clerk, copy available on request.*

displayed on Village Hall & village noticeboards

54/10 PAYMENTS.

Chq	To Whom Paid	Details	Vat	Total £
1965	Mrs S Woodcock	New Lock	6.52	43.79
1966	All Play Services	Play Area equipment	4375.00	29375.00
1967	OGBN	Annual Subscription		15.00
1968	PWLB	Loan payment for Village Hall		1169.25
		TOTAL	£4381.52	£30603.04

55/10 RECEIPTS

Date	From Who Received	Details	Total £
10.3.10	Horspath Nursery	Annual Rent	250.00
10.3.10	SODC	Refund for emptying Dog Bins (Error)	617.91
			£867.91

56/10 ANY OTHER BUSIUNESS

- a. Mrs Woodcock reminded Councillors that the Annual Parish Meeting will be held in April. Date to be advised.
- b. Mr Horsley commented that the date for the next meeting is 6.4.10. Mr Horsley, Ms Gray and Mr Turnbull will be away.
- c. Ms Gray asked if a letter has been sent to SODC regarding the damage to the grass at Gateley being caused by the refuse lorries. The Clerk will follow up with SODC.
- d. Mr Henderson commented on the recent wind turbine exhibition. It appears that there will be community funds available to local Parish Councils each year that will be decided by the Carbon Trust organisation. The Parish Council should ask Oxford City Council to add to the community funds out of their profits from the wind turbines. Mr Horsley stated that the elections are four weeks away and no application for a trial mast has been submitted, so there is not enough time for any application to be decided by the Secretary of State.
- e. Mr Turnbull asked if it was possible to take bookings for the village hall on the website. Mrs Palmer stated that we do not have the technology to do that, however, some of the bookings are already made via email. Mr Turnbull stated that the software could be purchased to enable this facility.
- f. Mrs Woodcock reported that the hedge outside Manor Cottage in Church Road needs cutting. The Clerk will notify OCC Highways Department. Also, there is a very large pothole outside of the school. Clerk to report to OCC Highways.
- g. Mrs Palmer reported that Cycle Speedway will be on site every Tuesday evening from now on so is it possible that they could use the over-flow car park.
- h. Mrs Purse stated that there could possibly be a case for the Parish Council to request a share of any benefits or to receive a payment or possibly cheaper electricity if the wind turbine does go ahead. Mr Horsley stated that the Parish Council are against all/any developments in the green belt. Ms Gray commented that the Parish Council has never discussed any views on the wind turbines.

57/10. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS.

Parish Council Planning Meeting – Tuesday 16 March 2010 (To be confirmed)

Horspath Parish Council Meeting – Tuesday 6 April 2010.

Horspath Annual Parish Meeting – Monday 26th April 2010 (To be confirmed).