

HORSPATH PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 6th July 2010
At 8pm in HORSPATH VILLAGE HALL.

Present: Mr P Dobson, Mr M Harris, Mr D Horsley, Mrs A Julian, Mrs H Palmer, Mr S Turnbull, Mrs A Purse (County Councillor), Mrs H Kogel – Clerk.

Apologies Ms S Gray, Mr C Henderson, Mrs S Woodcock, Mr A Hodgson (District Councillor), Mrs J Carr (District Councillor).

Public: 1

123/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Apologies were made on behalf of Ms Gray, Mr Henderson, Mrs Woodcock, Mr Hodgson and Mrs Carr.

124/10 MINUTES FOR APPROVAL - Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1st June 2010 were agreed and signed by the Vice Chairman.

125/10 MATTERS ARISING

Trees along Church Road – Mr Dobson reported that there are tree branches and ivy over-hanging an empty property in Church Road. Mrs Woodcock has already reported this to OCC and they have confirmed that they will attend.

Mr Dobson also reported that someone has attended to the trees by the fence of the Primary School leaving all the branches etc on the ground. The Clerk to contact OCC.

126/10 ESTIMATES FOR THE REPLACEMENT BOILER.

Mr Turnbull suggested to Councillors that both he and Mr Jonathan Stobart will be the coordination committee when the work commences in the village hall so that they are able to make urgent decisions if necessary. The three quotes received will be discussed at the end of the meeting.

127/10 PLANNING APPLICATIONS.

P10/W0928/ Orchard Flat, 147 Cuddesdon Road, Horspath

LD Use of garage building and small area of adjoining land as a single dwelling unit since 13 December 2004. – **Councillors voted unanimously to recommend refusal on this application as it is an unauthorised backland development that extends the village perimeter in the greenbelt. If SODC are minded to approve this application, it would have to remain in the curtilage of the existing dwelling.**

P10/W0802 Honeysuckle Cottage, 24 Blenheim Road, Horspath

Demolition of utility room/conservatory and erection of single storey kitchen extension/garden room. – **Councillors recommended refusal on this application unless there is sufficient parking spaces for a minimum of 2 cars on the property.**

10/01564/ BMW UK Manufacturing Ltd, Garsington Road, Oxford

FUL New manufacturing facilities consisting of part demolition and recladding of “T” building, extension to “Body in White” building, bridge link to paint shop, new pump house and tanks, canopies to logistics hall, temporary logistics building and temporary modification to gate 7. – **Councillors voted to recommend approval on this application.**

P10/W0943/ Rear of 61 Gidley Way, Horspath

LD 3m rear extension to existing dwelling. (Seeking a Lawful Development Certificate and confirmation that the use, operation or activity named in the application is lawful and can

continue or commence without the need for planning permission). – **Councillors have No Strong Views on this application and will leave for SODC to determine.**

R3.0100/10 Pre-School Nursery, Horspath Primary School, Horspath

The retention of existing porta-cabin and renewal of temporary (5 year) planning permission for the siting of the nursery within the grounds of Horspath Primary School.

– **Councillors recommend approval on this application.**

PLANNING PERMISSIONS/REFUSALS/APPEALS.

P10/W0249 31 Manor Farm Road, Horspath (Other)

Two storey rear extension and replacing outbuildings with new detached garage and store (as amended by drawing no S09) 32/PL01A accompanying email from agent. – **Granted.**

P10/W0445 Land to the rear of 41 Manor Drive Horspath

Erection of dwelling. – **Granted.**

P10/W0419 54 Gidley Way, Horspath

Two storey extension to the rear and conversion of loft to living accommodation. (Re-submission of P08/W0467). – **Granted.**

P10/W0578/ 2 Church Road, Horspath (Other)

2 x externally illuminated fascia signs and window imagery. – **Granted.**

128/10 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS.

Mrs Anne Purse – County Councillor – There have been statements from the Coalition government about Planning that are generally favourable to the Green Belt. Planning will be decided far more at the local level (Districts, City) but as yet there is no guidance as to what role the County might play. The South East plan has been scrapped, but there appear not to be any plans to replace it with anything like the old Structure Plan. Unless it is a Statutory Duty it is hard to see what role the County will play. The cuts in spending have meant that projects that were in the pipeline have been frozen. There is concern at the moment over whether or not the extension to Thornhill Park and Ride will go ahead because of lack of money. If there had still been parking charges for on street parking in St Giles in the evenings and on Sundays, there would have been money raised that could have been used for Park and Rides. There is a very urgent need for an extension at Thornhill. The Local Transport Plan is nearing its final stage in consultation.

129/10 CLERK'S UPDATE.

Mower Insurance – – The Smallholder tractor insurance has now been amended to fully comprehensive cover on the commercial policy.

VAT Claim – HMRC has requested copies of certain invoices, so amount not re-paid as yet.

Damaged Bollards on the Green – Waiting for DVLA to reply.

Green Recycling Bins at Village Hall – These bins are not for waste from the village hall they are for use by residents of the village who have too much recyclable waste for their own bins. It was agreed that the Clerk will arrange for three of the recycling bins to be removed and leave one remaining. Mrs Julian will arrange for another black bin to be delivered by Grundons.

Horspath Feast – Clerk to inform Mr Pettigrove of the confirmed date - 20th September 2010. .

PCSO Dawn Hunt – Has looked at village hall car park and confirmed that they would like 8 spaces up by the wooden fence area. To be used from 8.30 – 9.15am and 3 – 3.45pm on school days. A letter regarding the plans to reduce the traffic at the school at peak times has been received from the School. Councillors agreed that the Clerk write to the Headmistress supporting this scheme.

130/10 REPORTS/UPDATES.

Wildlife Conservation Area – There has already been a very diverse bloom of wildflowers this summer, with more still to come, and all three wetlands are supporting a diversity of invertebrates. The

water level is quite low in the frog breeding pond, and the surprisingly small batch of this year's froglets have already dispersed, while some tadpoles remain immature in the pond, which is largely covered with duckweed. Preventive maintenance will be required soon to the wooden footbridge, and some half-round wooden stakes will be ordered for this, and for the securing of the new wooden steps during the major volunteer working party on 31.7.10, with preparatory work for this taking place on Saturday 24th July. Councillors agreed for Mr Harris to purchase the wooden stakes at a cost of approx £100.00.

South East Plan – Awaiting a final decision on legislation from central government.

HVSA – Mr Horsley suggested that HVSA merge with the HVHMC but the accounts side should be kept separate. HVSA has covered the cost of the materials for the works carried out in the Scout Hut with the labour carried out by volunteers. Mr Horsley also stated that HVSA & HVHMC should also state that as they have covered the costs of this work the facilities are not available free of charge. Mr Horsley suggested that Mr Jonathan Stobart or Mr Max Eason become the second signatory on the accounts now that Mr Goss has resigned. Mrs Palmer will mention to Mr Murray that there are tiles coming off of the right hand side of the Scout Hall roof. It was agreed that the Clerk will write to SODC informing them that the Scout Hut is now being used as a temporary storage facility/changing rooms.

HVHMC – The new lease is to be deferred until the next meeting. Mrs Julian reported that the two new cleaners are now in place. Mrs Julian and Mr Stobart are now dealing with all bookings and invoicing. The new rates effective from 1st September 2010 have now been agreed and details are available on the website. The new terms & conditions have almost been finalised. The suppliers for gas and telephone have been changed to reduce costs. The painting of the lines in the car park will soon be done. Councillors agreed that the Parish Council would cover the cost of £599.04 recently spent on replacing fire extinguishers. Mrs Julian will check with Mrs Woodcock to see if she has the template documents for running a village hall.

131/10 INTERNAL AUDIT YEAR ENDING 31.3.10.

A copy of the Internal Audit Report was circulated to all Councillors and the following points raised:-

Section 137 Payments – All future payments made on S137 will be clearly marked in the minutes. The Clerk will obtain further information on S137 payments.

Review & Completeness of Minutes – Councillors are given the opportunity to declare an interest in any item on the agenda at any time of the meeting.

Policy Review – The Register of Member's Interests will be reviewed at the August/September meeting.

Policy Review – The Clerk will ensure that the last review date is listed on the financial regulations.

Risk Management Arrangements – Councillors agreed again this year that they are satisfied with the level of Fidelity Guarantee Insurance and that there is no requirement to increase the level of cover.

Review of Internal Audit – Councillors agreed that a review of the Internal Audit would be carried out after the new Internal Auditor had completed the first audit, therefore it will be carried out August/September 2010.

The Clerk will now forward all necessary documents to BDO Stoy Hayward for the External Audit to take place.

132/10 WIND TURBINE MEETING.

Mr Harris has recently written to local MP John Howell regarding the proposed wind turbine. CPRE are also involved and have sent through a lot of evidence to Mr Harris. It is very likely that Oxford City Council will approve the planning application once it is submitted. As soon as a planning application is submitted the Parish Council will circulate the information to every household in the village listing the "fors" and "against" points relating to a wind turbine, followed by a public meeting to be held in the village hall.

Mrs Palmer circulated an email received from Jo Reeves (PfR) inviting Councillors on a day trip to visit two operational wind energy schemes. Any Councillors who would like to attend then let the Clerk

know in time to inform Jo Reeves. Mr Harris commented that the wind turbines in this day visit are much smaller than the proposed wind turbine in Horspath.

133/10 PLAY AREA UPDATE.

Mrs Julian reported that the top play area is now finished. The Rospa inspection has been carried out highlighting a few minor points that have now been rectified. All play equipment is now fully covered on the Parish Council's insurance policy. The contractor will be providing a seat for the play area free of charge. Work in the existing play area will start this week.

134/10 BURIAL GROUND DRAINAGE – Nothing to report. Project on-going.

135/10 DR'S SURGERY – Quotes to be considered at the end of the meeting.

136/10 SHOTOVER COUNTRY PARK & THE BRASENOSE WOOD & SHOTOVER SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI) – Mr Harris gave the following report.

One part of the Country Park and SSSI falls within the parish of Horspath, with the other two parts in Oxford City and the Parish of Forest Hill with Shotover. The proximity of this important Country Park and SSSI to Horspath village has added much to the high biodiversity and high quality of the landscape around Horspath, and this close proximity has been taken into account, to the village's advantage, in many Planning Inspector's decisions which have protected the rural character of Horspath. Horspath village is also included within the 'Shotover Conservation Target Area' (CTA) of Oxfordshire's Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) which is centred on the SSSI, for which national standards of maintenance are set by Natural England. It is obvious that Shotover is very important to Horspath, and to the many Horspath residents who regularly walk there.

Natural England has published its assessment in 2009 that Shotover SSSI is currently managed in an "unfavourable" condition by Oxford City Council, which as the owner of all of the Country Park and SSSI is responsible for its appropriate management as an ecological site of national importance. Oxford City Council decided in 2009 to give the lowest priority for spending to its Countryside Service, whose Countryside Manager and Countryside Rangers did the practical maintenance work on Shotover, and imposed severe cuts in its resources. In 2010 Oxford City Council has extinguished the post of the Countryside Manager, who is now deployed to other duties elsewhere, and has relocated the two Countryside Rangers out of their tied accommodation within the Country Park in Westhill Farm and Brasenose Farm, and has now stated that it wishes to sell these two unique properties near Horspath on the open market. Oxford City Council has grossly reduced the number of hours which the Countryside Rangers are permitted to spend on maintaining Shotover, and has also terminated the arrangement whereby one of the Rangers with a zoology degree regularly supervised local volunteers in conservation work to maintain and improve the Country Park. As a result, in 2010 the only volunteer conservation work undertaken on Shotover is that very competently carried out by Shotover Wildlife, a local Horspath-based volunteer conservation organisation. Oxford City Council has effectively lost control of the SSSI, and barely manages it adequately even as a Country Park, with a high incidence this summer of dog-fouling and litter deposition, illegal camping and fire lighting, large night-time parties, and illegal motorcycle racing. It is a very difficult area to police, and without any resident Countryside Rangers, it is difficult to see how this decline can be halted unless Oxford City Council deploys more resources for the management of Shotover, and follows more closely the advice of Natural England.

The decision by the City Council to sell off the two farmhouses, raising the possibility that they will become private residences raises a number of issues of relevance to Horspath. The Westhill Farm house is in the centre of the south slope of Shotover Hill overlooking Horspath, and as a Countryside Ranger's residence, it has contributed little traffic, generated negligible noise, and little light or other pollution to the detriment of the SSSI or the wider rural environment. In private ownership this unique property will be valued in millions of pounds, and it is absolutely inevitable that much greater disturbance will occur to the SSSI and this very quiet part of Shotover. However, Westhill Farm is protected by a legal

Covenant held by Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT) which restricts its uses to those activities related to the maintenance of the park or to agriculture. So it would be within the power of OPT to legally restrain the City Council from selling this farm which OPT transferred as a free gift to the City Council in 1953. It is to be hoped that the Trustees of OPT will defend this Covenant to thwart the City's plan for profiteering out of OPT's generous gift, in order to protect the rural environment to which they have always given a high priority in the past. Furthermore, Westhill Farm is within the Parish of Forest Hill with Shotover, not under the City Council's Planning jurisdiction, and is therefore subject to the policies of South Oxfordshire District Council's adopted Local Plan, which do not permit private housing in this part of the Green Belt. Changing the use of Westhill Farm to become a private residence would therefore also be illegal, and it is to be hoped that SODC Planning Officers and SODC's Planning Committee will be alert to the permanent and serious harm which would result to this sensitive part of the Green Belt, and to Horspath, if a change of use is permitted as a departure from the Local Plan.

ACTION: Clearly the crucial decision does not rest with Horspath Parish Council, but it is for the Parish Council to decide if it can take any useful action by formally communicating its concern that Westhill Farm should not become a private residence, to the Councils of the neighbouring parishes around Horspath, to SODC, to Oxford City Council, to the Oxford Green Belt Network, to the Oxfordshire CPRE, to Natural England and to Oxford Preservation Trust, and to any other notable stakeholders in the protection of Shotover as an undeveloped, beautiful and wild place for informal public recreation, which also happens to be an important SSSI.

It was agreed that Mr Harris act on behalf of the Parish Council.

137/10 CORRESPONDENCE.

- a. Anonymous Letter – Parking Issues & Planning Ref P10/W0802. – **The issue with parking by the school is currently being dealt with by the Police and the School and cannot be stopped by the Parish Council. The issue with the planning application at Honeysuckle Cottage has been noted and Councillors have recommended refusal on this application unless there is sufficient parking spaces for a minimum of 2 cars on this property.**
- b. Rospa – Post Installation Inspection at Village Hall Playing Field. – (Passed to Mrs Julian).
- c. NHS Litigation Authority – Appeal against Oxfordshire PCT determination of rurality in respect of Wheatley & Littleworth.*
- d. NHS Oxfordshire – News for Parish Councils – Talking Health with your local NHS. – **Noted.**
- e. Air Ambulance – Donation Request. – **Councillors agreed a donation on £50.00.**
- f. Open Spaces Society – Annual Report, Accounts & Summer Newsletter.*
- g. Open Spaces Society – Renewal of Annual Subscription - £40.00.*
- h. Wheatley Parish Council – June/July Newsletter.*
- i. Clerks & Councils Direct – Newsletter July 2010.*
- j. SODC – Revocation Order – Tree Preservation Order No 07/1994 (Horspath). – **Mr Harris agreed to read the report from SODC and report back at the next meeting.**
- k. SODC – June Outpost, news from South Oxfordshire. (Circulated via email).
- l. Rural Services Community – Weekly Rural Focus. (Circulated via email).
- m. OGBN – June 2010 Newsletter. (Circulated via email).
- n. SODC – New management guide. (Circulated via email).
- o. OALC – June Edition for Members. (Circulated via email).

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

displayed on Village Hall & village notice boards.

138/10 PAYMENTS.

Chq	To Whom Paid	Details	Vat	Total £
1991	Allplay Services	Payment for Play Area	1,958.25	13,148.25
1992	Playsafety Ltd	Post Installation Inspection	69.13	464.13

1993	Mr D Gray	Managing Bur/Grd Apr/May/June 10		125.00
1994	Mrs H Kogel	Salary Apr/May/June 2010		1138.29
		Postage/Stationery	4.69	46.10
		Home Office Allow		90.00
1995	Open Spaces Society	Annual Subscription		40.00
1996	Cummings Signs	Lettering to recycling bins		85.00
1997	Arrow Accounting	Internal Audit Fees 09/10		206.00
1998	Maylarch	Removal of Asbestos from Village Hall	126.00	846.00
1999	Allianz Insurance	Mowers & Trailer Insurance		277.20
2000	OPFA	Annual Subscription		34.00
2001	Executive Fire Protection	New Fire Equipment at Village Hall	89.23	599.04
2002	Air Ambulance	Donation (S137)		50.00
2003	CBI (Oxon) Ltd	Deposit for new Boiler System	148.93	1000.00
		TOTAL	2396.23	£18,149.01

139/10 RECEIPTS

Date	From Who Received	Details	Total £
		TOTAL	0.00

140/10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Mr Harris reported that he attended the Oxfordshire County Rural Forum meeting on 5th July 2010. SODC do not seem keen on a rural policy. Mr Harris has received large amounts of correspondence relating to the Wind Turbine meeting. A summary will be given at the next meeting.

Public:

- b. The resident from Honeysuckle Cottage asked about the parking spaces required at her property. Mr Harris stated that the planning application doesn't show if there is sufficient parking. Mr Horsley explained that a representative from SODC will visit the owner for a pre-application consultation.

The meeting was officially closed, and members of the public left the room.

141/10 ESTIMATES FOR THE REPLACEMENT BOILER.

Having considered all three quotes, Mr Turnbull proposed that the quote from CBI (Oxon) Ltd be accepted as they are the most competitive and are highly recommended and very flexible. Seconded by Mr Harris, - Unanimous.

The plan is that the work will be carried out the first two weeks in August. It was agreed that the Clerk raise a cheque for £1,000.00 to pay to the contractor as a deposit.

142/10 DR'S SURGERY

Having considered both quotes received, Councillors agreed to instruct Mr Currell who was the most competitive quote to go ahead with the works.

143/10 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS.

Parish Council Planning Meeting – Tuesday 20 July 2010 (To be confirmed)
Horspath Parish Council Meeting – Tuesday 3 August 2010.