

HORSPATH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 27th April 2009
at 7.30pm in Horspath Village Hall.

Present: Mr Dobson
Mr C Goss
Mr M Harris
Mr D Horsley
Mrs H Palmer
Mr S Turnbull
Mrs S Woodcock
Mrs H Kogel, Clerk
Mrs J Carr (District Councillor)
Mr A Hodgson (District Councillor)
Mrs A Purse (County Councillor)

Apologies: Ms S Gray
Mrs A Julian
Mr C Henderson

Public: 20

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - Apologies given for Ms Gray, Mrs Julian and Mr Henderson.
2. **MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**
Mr Donald Gray proposed that the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 28th April 2008 be approved, seconded by Mrs Ena Tasker, all in favour. The minutes were signed as correct.
3. **STATEMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS 2008/09 – Un-audited.**
A statement of un-audited accounts for 2008/09 was circulated. The statement of accounts had not at this point been reconciled with end of year bank statements. There were no questions raised.
4. **STATEMENT OF PAROCHIAL CHARITIES ACCOUNTS 2008.**
A statement of accounts for the year ending 31.12.08 was circulated. No comments made.
5. **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT – Mrs Shirley Woodcock**
Mrs Woodcock welcomed residents, Councillors and District Councillors to the meeting.

Firstly, thank you to all residents who completed the **Parish Plan**. The Parish Plan was delivered to 585 households, 491 (84%) of which completed and returned the questionnaire. This is extremely important to the village when applying for grants, for example the play area, the area for older children, the Village Hall and the HVSA.

This year has seen a few successes such as another **bus stop** at the top of Gidley Way, a promise of making the existing bus stop near Sandy Lane user friendly. Following four meetings with Unipart, the **hedge** along the cycle track has finally been cut. Attempts to buy the **bridge** for £1 are still on-going.

We have had great success with applying for a grant from **Playbuilder**, who just last week confirmed a grant of £46,000.00. Many thanks to Angela Julian the main Councillor behind this project who has put in hours and hours of work both designing the play area and attending meetings. Some of the youngsters’ ideas were probably more suited to Disneyland than to Horspath, but it certainly showed their enthusiasm for the two separate projects and the Council has promised some money towards it. I met with Matthew Cox from WREN who was very impressed with the application. We should know around July time if we are to be awarded a grant to go towards updating the toddler area. Mr Cox has stated that due to the credit crunch, we will not be awarded the full £50,000.00 that we applied for.

Mrs Palmer and I were invited to SODC to explain why Horspath Parish Council was not very keen on a third phase of **Affordable Housing**. The Parish Council was very concerned as to the procedure for resale and re-let. Their booklet on this has the first phrase on guidance “The role of the Parish Council is central to successfully allocating homes”! There are at least ten instances where this has not been

adhered to, and we feel that in some cases more deserving people are being over-looked. Apart from the first couple of resale or re-lets we have had no idea who the new tenants were or where they came from and whilst we do not want to get involved in choices, we would at least like to know their claims were true!!

Thanks to Mr Horsley and Mr Dobson for their involvement with the **Chequer's Car Park**. The rent has now gone up to a more realistic figure – from £200.00 per year to £2850.00 per year.

Mr Horsley and Mr Henderson have both attended meetings with **Stagecoach** to discuss a new lease and of course the rent. At the moment they are still sitting pretty on £1300.00 per year!

Several requests for **allotments** have been made. We have been advised by Sidley's that in the first instance, the land needs to be reclaimed from the farmer.

CCTV for the **Village Hall** and the surrounding area has been considered but by the time the quotes were received from £10,000.00 downwards the spate of vandalism had been somewhat less. This matter has been put on hold for the time being.

Despite eight meetings with various contractors, the **drainage** in the **Burial Ground** has still not reached a satisfactory conclusion on how to solve the problem. Quotes have been received from £16,000.00 downwards. It is very important that we get this project right, so will be on-going.

There are plans in place to update the **Village Hall kitchen** area, including a new boiler and heating system. The tiler and the decorator are due to start work tomorrow.

We now have a new **Caretaker** – **Mr Ray Jeffs** who will be assisted by his wife – Olive. Contact details for Ray are displayed in the window of the Morgan Room. Many thanks to Mr John Trinder for all of his help over the past years.

Now a few **"Thank You's"**:- To all my fellow Councillors for their help and support. To Mrs Purse, Mrs Carr and Mr Hodgson. To Mark and Ena Tasker and finally to Hayley.

6. CHAIRMAN OF VILLAGE HALL & RECREATION COMMITTEE'S REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS – MR CHRIS GOSS.

The statement of accounts was circulated. Mr Horsley commented that the accounts had been prepared at very short notice. There is a minor error on the accounts as it should show an £800.00 increase in turnover from hiring fees and the Cricket Club. Mr Goss explained that there has been an increase in costs this year due to a new sink being fitted in the kitchen as well as new fire safety equipment. The HVSA has seen a reduction in turnover due to the outside bar functions decreasing.

Mr Dobson took over as Chairman of the HVHMC middle of last year. The committee is looking at a refurbishment programme to include replacing the boiler, updating the kitchen area and emergency exits. A maintenance programme will also be set up but will be prioritized to keep within the budget. Mr Dobson passed thanks to Mrs Woodcock for standing in as Caretaker in Mr Trinder's absence. Mr Dobson passed thanks to Mr Trinder for his help and support as caretaker of the Village Hall for the last 22 years. Mr Dobson presented Mr Trinder with a gift.

7. HVSA REPORT.

Mr Goss reported that in the last twelve months the HVSA has made progress with the Cricket Club as members and the football clubs contributing to the project. The Leylandi hedge has now been removed and the centre of the new Cricket square has been marked out. There will be several meetings to discuss raising funds for the drainage of the area. Mr Goss passed thanks to Mr Harris, Mr Murray and members of the Cricket Club for all of their help and support. Mr Harris asked Mr Goss if he has received any responses from Tennis Clubs showing interest in the HVSA. Mr Goss stated that no responses have been received from tennis clubs, however, there have been emails to the village website from parents of children in the village who are interested in playing tennis.

8. SOUTH OX'SHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILOR'S REPORT – Mr Andrew Hodgson.

Waste Collections – The new collection service begins on 8th June 2009. There will be a weekly collection of food waste in a kitchen caddy; fortnightly collection of non-recyclable waste, in wheeled bins; and a fortnightly collection of recycling, including glass, mixed plastics, cans and paper in wheeled bins or boxes. Residents can opt-in for fortnightly garden waste collections that will be charged for separately to individuals, in wheeled bins.

Council Tax 2009/10 - Savings have been made through the introduction of the new waste contract and the introduction of a new joint senior management structure with the Vale of White Horse District Council reducing 21 jobs down to 12, resulting in a saving of £500k and £750k respectively.

Greenbelt – Response to SODC Consultation - I want to state publicly to you my continued support for the greenbelt and to assure you of the district council's determination to do everything in its power to preserve the status quo as far as the greenbelt is concerned. At the current time, there is a consultation document called The Core Strategy that forms part of the Local Development Framework being considered by the parish council and they are due to formally respond before the end of this month.

There are some complex planning issues to be considered but the good news is that so far we have been successful in ensuring that encroachment into the greenbelt around Horspath is not being considered at this time. If any one has any comments about the consultation document then I would urge you make them to either myself or Martin Harris who is compiling the response.

Mrs Palmer asked how much it cost to supply all households with the new waste collection bins. Mr Hodgson was not sure but agreed to obtain this information. He did state that there has been substantial savings with the new waste collection contractor.

Mrs Palmer asked if it is likely that SODC & VWHDC will join together in the future. Mr Hodgson stated that there are no plans for this to happen at the moment, they are two separate administrations that are run with separate structures.

Mr Gray commented that there are cottages in the village that have limited space and have to store the wheelie bins in the garden which means taking them through the house on collection days. Mrs Carr stated that in this situation, the resident should inform SODC who will issue them with black sacks in place of wheelie bins.

Mrs Woodcock asked if elderly people could also have sacks as the bins will be too large. Mrs Carr stated that residents should contact SODC who will either issue sacks or smaller bins that are available if needed.

Mrs Lewis stated that the instruction leaflets that were delivered with the bins are not helpful. It is very confusing what goes into each bin. Mr Hodgson stated that for anyone who is not sure, detailed information is available on SODC's website.

Mr Turnbull asked what green credits are. Mr Hodgson stated that green credits are extra funding for recycling.

9. OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – Mrs Anne Purse.

The noise from the A40 is hardly a new issue, but it is one that has actually got considerably worse. Some years ago I got an assurance that when the road needed repairing, the County would do it in one of the new quiet surfaces. After years of pressing for this to happen, at last the County has bid for government money for the Oxford bound carriageway as that is the one which is most worn out. The government gives the money because of the need to repair the road, not because of the noise the road makes. The news is that this carriageway will be re-surfaced, but not until 2010/11. I have been lobbying for the County to do more to make this road quieter – there are four ways – reduce the amount of traffic (hardly likely!!!), reduce the speed of traffic, provide a quieter surface, install sound barriers. I intend to press for both carriageways to be resurfaced, and for proper sound measurements to be taken so that we can understand exactly how serious this issue is. Unfortunately, a recent County Council debate showed a lack of concern about these issues.

In the last couple of months we have seen the results of the rather severe winter, with pot holes and the breaking up of roads around ironworks (grids, manholes etc). I am very concerned that in this area we are not seeing the repairs I think we need and deserve. There are now some really bad areas which have been brought to my attention, and I continue to press for repairs as a matter of urgency.

Mrs Woodcock informed Mrs Purse that there is a very large dangerous pothole in Church Road by the school. Mrs Purse will report this to Highways Department for the second time.

I continue to hear rumours about possible new roads if the proposed development south of Grenoble Road goes ahead. I hope this is not the beginning of yet another chapter of road issues!!!

Mrs Tasker commented that cyclists need to dismount at the end of the cycle track as it is very dangerous for the cars reversing out of their drives. Mrs Purse will mention to OCC Highways Dept.

Mr Turnbull asked if it is possible for Horspath to introduce the 20mph speed limits. Mrs Purse stated that there is potential to introduce this new speed limit in villages around the county but the priority is initially for towns/cities. A review on speed limits is due to take place by OCC Highways Dept.

10. PARISH PLAN – Mr Martin Harris.

At the time of the Annual Parish Meeting in 2008, we were just beginning to distribute the Parish Plan Household Questionnaire to all Horspath residents. This was a carefully constructed questionnaire based on the questions which had been given priority in earlier consultations with different groups of people in the village. The final format of this Questionnaire was designed by Jane Boucher, the SODC Consultations Officer, and was fine-tuned and approved by the 15-member Horspath Parish Plan Steering Group. Retrieving the completed Questionnaires required the help of more than 40 village volunteers, but a very encouraging 84% of the households eventually replied. Jane Boucher carried out the statistical analysis using the SNAP software at SODC, and the statistical results were sent back for comment by all the volunteers, were printed out and posted on the notice boards, and were posted on the Horspath website www.horspath.org.uk. A few very useful comments were received back, and these were positive and supportive. The survey seemed to have worked well in producing a set of very clear statistics about Horspath residents' wishes and priorities for the future development of the village. Before this survey it had always been difficult for the Parish Council to know definitively how many people in the village would support specific initiatives and policies, but with these reliable statistics to hand, it was very clear that more than 90% of the population wanted Horspath to remain as a rural village in South Oxfordshire separated from Oxford City by a strip of Green Belt, and that more than 80% wanted the Horspath Village Sports Association to proceed with its Plan to establish a second sports field for cricket and football on part of the Bowley Field. The Parish Council was therefore able to reply very clearly to SODC when consulted in the autumn of 2008 about the future of the village in relation to the proposal to build an urban extension of Oxford City in the nearby Green Belt in Garsington Parish, and to reply to the Government Office of the South East with actual statistics when consulted for its views on a similar proposal in the South East Plan to build an urban extension of Oxford City in the Oxford Green Belt. The results of the survey concerning the Police and Community Safety were sent by e-mail to Thames Valley Police and to the local Neighbourhood Action Group in Wheatley.

The Parish Plan is an on-going process, and the results of last summer's survey are still capable of being analyzed further. The aim in 2009 will be to identify the priority actions which can be realistically taken to deliver the projects and initiatives which residents of Horspath have shown they support, and to include these in an Action Plan. Most of these projects will require grant funding, and the statistics produced by the Questionnaire survey will provide the necessary support to render the applications for these grants more successful. Within South Oxfordshire there are about twenty other villages now preparing Parish Plans, with Questionnaires similar to Horspath's being processed by SODC. In this way the Parish Councils, the District and County Councils, SEERA and GOSE will all have an up-to-date profile of the needs and priorities of our rural communities. Although all these Parish Plans are different

in both style and content, there is a surprisingly large common element, which serves to inform central government about the priorities and needs of our rural communities in a way which no other process can achieve at present.

11. STREET LIGHTING IN HORSPATH.

Mrs Woodcock explained that Oxfordshire County Council are under pressure to reduce the carbon footprint and are therefore proposing to turn off street lights between 2am – 5am. Members of the Parish Council have mixed views on the proposal so decided to discuss it at tonight's meeting. Mr Gray commented that when the traffic calming measures were installed, the lighting was upgraded – would this be a problem? It was agreed that the Parish Council would agree a trial of 6 months and then review.

12. AOB

- a. Mrs Palmer thanked Mrs Lewis for her assistance in tracking down the relevant person from the Diocese Head Quarters to contact regarding the allotments. The Diocese has agreed to discuss the allotments at their meeting in May 2009 to see if they are prepared to cover the cost of restoring the allotments. If this is agreed then Mrs Palmer will organise a meeting with the applicants to consider the planning and marking out of the plots. Mrs Palmer stated that there were originally 20 applicants that had expressed an interest in the allotments.
- b. Mr Horsley explained that the Stagecoach Depot owned by Horspath Stone Pit Charity. The lease is for 63 years with 12 years remaining. The current rent on the site is £1300.00 and is fixed with no reviews. Based on the current market value rent fees per square foot, there is a potential income of £500,000.00 per year. Mr Horsley has recently met with Stagecoach representatives to discuss the current lease and their future plans for the site, with a view to possibly renewing the lease. If they were to agree to renew the lease the rent could be fixed at £1300.00 for the remaining 12 years and then set at the current market value which would be confirmed by the District Auditor. A separate bank account is being set up solely for Horspath Stone pit Charity, where funds can only be used for the benefit of Horspath residents.
- c. A letter has been received from Mr Yeoman of Manor Drive, Horspath complaining about the amount of learner drivers using Horspath village as a test route. Mrs Woodcock explained that the Parish Council has written to the Cowley Test Centre in the past.
- d. Mrs Woodcock reported that PCSO Ken Cooney holds regular Police Surgeries in the Doctor's room. PCSO Cooney has commented that there are currently no issues in the village that he is aware of. Mr Goss asked if the VHSA football nets have been recovered yet? Two youths witnessed a man stealing the nets so took details of the car registration number and a description. This incident was reported to the Police as PCSO was on annual leave. Statements have now been taken from the two youths – ten days later!

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 26th April 2010.

14. REFRESHMENTS

Thanks to Gill Gray for organising the refreshments.