



# CROWMARSH PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting  
Held at Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
starting at 7.30pm**

**Present:**

Mr John Griffin (Chair)	Mrs Fleur Stevenson
Ms Anna Best	Ms Julia Streete
Prof Andrew Johnson	Mr David Topliss
Mr Stephen Sherbourne	

**Attending:** Dr Yvonne Peet and Mrs Sue Rance. District Cllr Andrea Powell and Dr Nick Robins attended part of the meeting as did two members of the public.

**Apologies:** Received from Mr Julian Park, Mr David Rowley and Mrs Liz Ryall.

**Declarations of interest:** APP/Q3115/W/23/3331221: Change of use of land east of Reading Road Wallingford OX10 9HG. Cllr Griffin declared an interest in this appeal and took no part in the discussion.

The meeting was quorate.

NO.		ACTION
5560	<b>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2024</b>  It was noted that Cllr Sherbourne had declared an interest in planning application P23/4344/FUL Black Barn Farm, and not P24/S0157/LDE Hatchery Cottage, as recorded in the minutes.  Subject to this correction, the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2024 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.	
5561	<b>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES</b>  <u>Item 5547</u> : Google Drive is now being used as a platform for storage of parish council documents. Some councillors who are Mac users, are having problems using the system. This is in hand.	<b>Clerk</b>

	<p><u>Item 5547</u>: Donation for Crowmarsh Treasure: The Clerk has confirmed to the Oxfordshire Museums service that they may retain the additional £50 donated by the parish council.</p> <p><u>Item 5547</u>: Contact with Crowmarsh Gifford School. A letter has been sent to the headteacher confirming that the council would welcome improved liaison with the school.</p> <p><u>Item 5540</u>: The tree work at Newnham Murren Churchyard has been carried out. Thanks were expressed to Cllr Sherbourne for organizing this.</p> <p><u>Item 5551</u>: Following the recent pay review, officers have now received a letter confirming their salary point.</p> <p><u>Item 5552</u>: The Clerk has requested Core Clean Services to proceed with the removal of graffiti from the bus shelters. The shelters outside CABI have been cleaned at a cost of £80 per shelter. The Clerk will upload photos to Google Drive.</p> <p><u>Item 5552</u>: The Code of Conduct has been recirculated by the Clerk.</p> <p><u>Item 5554</u>: Cllr Best has researched the available automated booking systems and has obtained three quotes which will be discussed by the Environment and Recreation Ground Committee.</p> <p><u>Item 5559</u>: The overflowing litter bin at French Gardens has been reported to Bloor Homes. It was noted that a resident is using this bin for all their domestic rubbish. This is adding to the severity of the problem. The dog waste bin has now been installed. The Clerk will make enquiries about when the estate roads will be adopted by the County Council.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Env/Rec</b></p> <p><b>Clerk</b></p>
<p><b>5562</b></p>	<p><b>REPORT FROM THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR</b></p> <p>No report had been received from County Councillor Bloomfield but District Councillor Powell had forwarded County Councillor Bennett's report to Warborough Parish Council.</p>	
<p><b>5563</b></p>	<p><b>REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS</b></p> <p>The District Councillors' report had been circulated and the following points were noted:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consultation events on the local plan were attended by 1300 residents and the Crowmarsh event was attended by the highest number of people.</li> <li>• SODC has approved a balanced budget with no planned cuts.</li> <li>• The community hub is now permanent and is well used.</li> <li>• The district council has a new policy on empty houses to try to get them back into use. SODC only deals with private dwellings as SOHA deals with their own.</li> <li>• A free compost giveaway will be held on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March at the former SODC office site.</li> </ul>	
5564	<p><b>PLANNING</b></p> <p><b>Decisions by SODC</b></p> <p><a href="#">P23/S4344/FUL</a> Black Barn Farm, Church Lane, Ipsden OX10 6AE Conversion of redundant pig building to commercial (small workshops or storage Use Class B2, E(g)(iii) or B8) (including alterations to front). Planning Permission</p> <p><b>Consultations</b></p> <p>None from SODC</p> <p>OCC – gravel extraction at White Cross Farm (adjoining parish): re-consideration of <a href="#">P21/S3961/CM</a> Land at White Cross Farm, Wallingford (Cholsey parish). Extraction and processing of sand and gravel including the construction of new site access roads, landscaping and screening bunds, minerals washing plant and other associated infrastructure with restoration to agriculture and nature conservation areas, using inert fill. SODC recommended refusal on 18th May 2022.</p> <p>Recommend refusal: intrusive development having a harmful impact on the River Thames, the setting of the listed boathouse and gallery at the former Carmel College and the Thames Path national trail, including loss of amenity for users of the River Thames and the Thames Path. The proposals would be detrimental to the landscape and enjoyment of the Chilterns and N Wessex Downs National Landscapes (AONBs). Possible hydrological impact on the river and its baseflow, so the Environment Agency must be consulted. The previous application for the same extraction plus a marina was already refused by OCC.</p>	

Appeal Reference APP/Q3115/W/23/331221 Land East of Reading Road. Change of use of land to informal private leisure use (Cholsey parish). An appeal was lodged on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

### **Major developments**

District Cllr Powell reported on a meeting held with Avant Homes regarding OCC's objection to the school drop off zone. The reserved matters application will be submitted soon.

Likely uses of former SODC office site were discussed briefly and might include care accommodation with facilities for community use. There is likely to be a consultation on specialist housing, which was one of the options presented at the Joint Local Plan consultation.

### **Neighbourhood plan**

Dr Nick Robins reported on plans for a review of the neighbourhood plan and the following points were noted.

- The existing plan is now four years old and needs to be revised to incorporate government changes in policy before it becomes outdated and will need to include the former SODC office site.
- SODC does not finance reviews of neighbourhood plans but a district council officer has agreed to help with drafting. There will be a cost for a review but it will not be cost effective to apply for a grant. The likely cost is £3,000 in each of the next two financial years. Consultancy is not likely to be needed but there could be a cost of £1,000.
- The revised plan should be made in autumn 2025, around the same time as the district joint local plan.
- An initial meeting of the steering group was held on 9<sup>th</sup> February. A 'light touch' was agreed as the existing plan has served us well. This will avoid the need to go for an outside consultation or a referendum.
- We will need to canvass opinions on good and bad points in the existing plan. Public consultation will take place in April and a questionnaire will be put on the parish website, to include the preferred options for the SODC site and for the Jewson site and any concerns such as speeding, infrastructure and sewerage. The steering group will consider these and it is hoped to hold an exhibition at Crowmarsh Village Hall on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April alongside the community café. A similar exhibition will also be held at North Stoke Village Hall on a date to be agreed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Robins would like to gather opinions on future use of the recreation ground in North Stoke.</li> <li>• There are three significant development sites in the parish, the former SODC office site, the proposed housing development at Newnham Manor and the Jewson site, which is classed as an infill site and includes a Grade II listed building. Dr Robins may be able to speak to the SODC personnel involved with the former SODC site.</li> </ul>																																																	
5565	<p><b>FINANCE</b></p> <p>a) <u>Consider and agree payments since last meeting</u></p> <p>The Finance officer had circulated a list of payments to be authorized. In addition to salaries and PAYE these were as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="363 797 1217 1294"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Company</th> <th>Details</th> <th>£ inc VAT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>23<sup>rd</sup> Feb</td> <td>Shield</td> <td>Dog bins</td> <td>£166.39</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31 Jan</td> <td>Grundon</td> <td>Refuse</td> <td>£131.44</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1<sup>st</sup> March</td> <td>OALC</td> <td>Membership</td> <td>£453.14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19<sup>th</sup> Feb</td> <td>Core Clean</td> <td>Bus shelters</td> <td>£160.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14<sup>th</sup> Feb</td> <td>Simpson</td> <td>Architect fees</td> <td>£600.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16<sup>th</sup> Jan</td> <td>LAN Concepts</td> <td>HVAC</td> <td>£600.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1<sup>st</sup> Feb</td> <td>Public Internet</td> <td>Web hosting</td> <td>£6.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31<sup>st</sup> Jan</td> <td>Village Hall</td> <td>Hire x 3</td> <td>£60.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14<sup>th</sup> Feb</td> <td>RefreshPro</td> <td>Clean windows</td> <td>£84.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19<sup>th</sup> Feb</td> <td>SSE</td> <td>Electricity</td> <td>£357.05</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7<sup>th</sup> March</td> <td>OALC training</td> <td>J Steele</td> <td>£132.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Johnson and seconded by Cllr Steele that the above payments be approved and this was agreed.</p> <p>b) <u>Review of accounts status for year to date</u></p> <p>The accounts status at 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 was noted. The bank balance was £185,113.91.</p> <p>Income for the year to date was £228,362.52 and payments were £289,398.63.</p> <p>c) <u>Review of financial regulations</u></p> <p>The financial regulations were reviewed and some minor amendments were made. It was proposed by Cllr Griffin and</p>	Date	Company	Details	£ inc VAT	23 <sup>rd</sup> Feb	Shield	Dog bins	£166.39	31 Jan	Grundon	Refuse	£131.44	1 <sup>st</sup> March	OALC	Membership	£453.14	19 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Core Clean	Bus shelters	£160.00	14 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Simpson	Architect fees	£600.00	16 <sup>th</sup> Jan	LAN Concepts	HVAC	£600.00	1 <sup>st</sup> Feb	Public Internet	Web hosting	£6.00	31 <sup>st</sup> Jan	Village Hall	Hire x 3	£60.00	14 <sup>th</sup> Feb	RefreshPro	Clean windows	£84.00	19 <sup>th</sup> Feb	SSE	Electricity	£357.05	7 <sup>th</sup> March	OALC training	J Steele	£132.00	
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seconded by Cllr Sherbourne that the amended document be approved and this was agreed.

d) Review of Financial Risk Register

The financial risk register was reviewed and some minor amendments were made. It was proposed by Cllr Steele and seconded by Cllr Sherbourne that the amended document be approved and this was agreed.

e) Review of Asset List

The asset list had been reviewed by Chris Strange and the Finance Officer and is now on a spreadsheet. All new items have been added with dates. Replacement costs are for parish council reference only. Anything valued at £100 or more is included. After consideration it was proposed by Cllr Griffin and seconded by Cllr Sherbourne that the asset list be approved and this was agreed. Fixed assets are £876,336 as of March 2024.

f) 2024/25 Budget Review

The Finance Officer reported that the parish council needs to justify its high level of reserves to the auditors. After discussion, the following items of projected expenditure were identified as earmarked reserves.

Replacement sewage pump: £5,000

Watery Lane surface improvement (active travel) £30,000

Traffic calming and pedestrian safety £40,000

(including Benson Lane and footpath 2)

It was proposed by Cllr Sherbourne and seconded by Cllr Johnson that these figures be approved and this was agreed.

g) Utility Review

The Finance Officer recommended using Utility Aid, which is a broker for energy contracts. Their fee is included in the price quoted for their service. After discussion, this was agreed.

h) Grass Cutting Contract

Quotes had been obtained for grass cutting at Newnham Murren Churchyard, verges in Crowmarsh Gifford and North Stoke recreation ground. After discussion it was agreed to use

	<p>the current contractor, Ashburton, who has agreed not to increase their price. Cllr Sherbourne will let them know.</p> <p>i) <u>Complaint from former allotment holder</u></p> <p>A complaint had been received from a former allotment holder. After discussion, it was agreed to write a letter of apology.</p> <p>j) <u>New Sewage Pump</u></p> <p>The Clerk reported that it had not been possible to obtain three quotes for the new sewage pump due to the specialist nature of the task. After discussion it was agreed to accept the quote received (£5,000).</p>	<p><b>SSh</b></p> <p><b>Clerk</b></p>
<b>5566</b>	<p><b>CHAIRMAN'S REPORT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Griffin attended the licensing of the new Rector of Wallingford, Revd. Sarah Nesbitt, on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March at St. Mary's Church, Wallingford.</li> <li>• Litter picking will take place on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March from 9.00 – 12.00. Volunteers should meet at the yard of Bridge Villa Caravan Park.</li> <li>• Mulch for the newly planted trees at the recreation ground has been ordered. Volunteers will be needed to distribute it. Further information will be issued when the delivery date is known.</li> <li>• Cllr Streete is to attend the opening reception of the 'Wild about Benson' group on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March at Benson Parish Hall.</li> <li>• AONBs are now called National Landscapes. The Chilterns National Landscape boundary review is ongoing but will not affect Crowmarsh Parish.</li> </ul>	
<b>5567</b>	<p><b>REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES</b></p> <p>The update on interpretation boards will be discussed at the April meeting.</p> <p>Road Safety Improvements in Benson Lane: SODC has just launched a new grant scheme called the CIL Grant Fund. Town and parish councils may apply for infrastructure to support existing or planned growth in the district. Grants of between £75,000 and £250,000 will be available. The deadline for expressions of interest is 5<sup>th</sup> April. It was agreed to submit an expression of interest.</p>	<p><b>SSh/JG/ Clerk</b></p>

	<p>Improvements to Watery Lane: Cllr Sherbourne has received a quote of £4,420 from Benson Tree Services to cut back dead trees and clear brambles and other vegetation. The contractors are available from 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Hardcore to improve the surface could be obtained from Grundon.</p> <p>It was agreed that Cllr Sherbourne will seek other quotes but if no others are received to accept that provided by Benson Tree Services. However, concern was expressed about doing this work during the nesting season. It may be necessary to postpone this job until later in the year. Cllrs Johnson and Griffin will check with colleagues at UK CEH.</p> <p>Footpath 2 French Gardens: It was agreed to contact Jon Beale of OCC Highways to arrange for the vegetation encroaching on the footpath to be cleared and for the tarmac to be laid.</p> <p>It was agreed that the April agenda will include 20 minutes early in the meeting for a discussion on strategic priorities.</p>	<p><b>AJ/JG</b></p> <p><b>JG/Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Clerk (agenda)</b></p>
<b>5568</b>	<p><b>REPORTS OF COMMITTEES</b></p> <p><u>Environment and Recreation Ground</u> Cllr Rowley is working on the claim for the remaining £35,000 (approx.) due from the SODC grant and hopes to submit it during the next week. He has requested and is waiting for feedback from users of the new facilities.</p> <p>The management of the nature area will be discussed at a future date.</p> <p><u>Traffic and Transport</u></p> <p>The Clerk has contacted OCC Highways about the adjustment of the North Stoke speed indication device, which was installed by the County Council. They have appointed a contractor to attend to this and have requested some further information. Cllrs Griffin and Sherbourne will respond.</p>	<p><b>JG/SSh</b></p>
<b>5569</b>	<p><b>UPDATE ON WEBSITE</b></p> <p>The website is up to date.</p>	
<b>5570</b>	<p><b>REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES</b></p> <p>No reports had been received.</p>	



5571	<p><b>CORRESPONDENCE</b></p> <p>The following correspondence was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Services Network updates</li> <li>• Rural Funding Digest</li> <li>• Police and Crime Bulletins February and March</li> <li>• Safeguarding News</li> <li>• NALC updates</li> <li>• OALC updates</li> <li>• SODC updates</li> <li>• Chilterns National Landscapes Update</li> <li>• Healthwatch Oxon update</li> <li>• Parish Online Newsletters</li> <li>• Information from Gigaclear Ultrafast Broadband</li> </ul>	
5572	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April at Crowmarsh Village Hall, starting at 7.30pm.</p>	
5573	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naming of five new houses at Crowmarsh Hill. Sally-Anne Worsley of SODC has recommended continuing the existing numbering from 208 to 216 Crowmarsh Hill (even numbers only). After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Griffin and seconded by Cllr Streete that this recommendation be accepted and this was agreed. SODC will be informed of this decision.</li> <li>• Possible re-ordering of the agenda was suggested in order to allow sufficient time for specific items. Councillors were invited to suggest ways to prioritise specific items on the agenda.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Clerk/JG</b></p> <p><b>ALL</b></p>

The meeting closed at 21.30.