



CROMMARSH PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting
Held at North Stoke Village Hall on Thursday 11th May 2023
starting at 7.30pm**

Present:

Mr John Griffin (Chair)	Mr Stephen Sherbourne
Prof Andrew Johnson	Mrs Fleur Stevenson
Dr Andrew Nesbitt	Ms Julia Streete
Mr David Rowley	

Attending: Dr Yvonne Peet (Finance Officer), Mrs Sue Rance (Clerk). District Cllr Sue Cooper attended part of the meeting. Two members of the public attended the meeting.

Apologies: Received from Mr Julian Park and Mrs Liz Ryall.

Declarations of interest: None.

The meeting was quorate.

NO.		ACTION
5434	ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR 2023-24 It was proposed by Cllr Sherbourne and seconded by Cllr Johnson that Cllr Griffin be elected as Chairman and this was unanimously agreed. It was proposed by Cllr Griffin and seconded by Cllr Streete that Cllr Sherbourne be elected as Vice-Chairman and this was unanimously agreed.	
5435	WELCOME TO NEW COUNCILLOR Dr Andrew Nesbitt was welcomed to the meeting and councillors introduced themselves.	
5436	DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE Councillors completed their declarations of acceptance of office. Register of Interests forms were distributed. These need to be returned within 28 days.	ALL
5437	CO-OPTION OF PARISH COUNCILLOR It was proposed by Cllr Griffin and seconded by Cllr Sherbourne that Mr David Topliss be co-opted as a councillor and this was unanimously agreed.	

5438	<p>ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS</p> <p><u>Environment and Recreation Ground Committee</u></p> <p>Cllr Johnson explained that the committee meets three or four times a year. The main project this year has been the improvements to the pavilion. Committee members include representatives of other interested parties as well as parish councillors. Cllrs Johnson, Rowley, Park, Streete and Nesbitt were unanimously elected as well as Mrs Linda Parker and Chris Strange.</p> <p><u>Traffic and Transport Committee</u></p> <p>This committee meets as required. The current main focus is the problem of speeding motorcycles. Cllrs Sherbourne, Streete and Ryall were unanimously elected as well as Mr Nick McGregor, Mr Nicholas Sumner, Mrs Denise Hall and Mr Duncan Reed.</p>	
5439	<p>MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 6TH APRIL 2023</p> <p>Corrections to previous minutes:</p> <p>It was noted that Cllr Andrea Powell attended the April meeting.</p> <p>Item 5429: It was noted that the reduced single bus fare of £2 will apply to all destinations until the end of October.</p> <p>Subject to these corrections, the Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.</p>	
5440	<p>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES</p> <p><u>Item 5424</u>: Thames Path Closure. Cllr Griffin reported that the Environment Agency's repairs to the bridge across the river at Benson weir will not be completed before 2026. However the minutes of the recent River Users' Group (3) mentioned that a passenger ferry service will be available between the Riverside Café and Benson lock</p> <p><u>Item 5427</u>: District Cllr Andrea Powell is following up the question of parish council representation on the management committee for the Newnham Manor development. This will be discussed at a future meeting.</p> <p><u>Item 5431</u>: Interpretation Boards. This will be discussed at a future meeting when Cllr Park is available. It is hoped to purchase three boards, one each for Crowmarsh, Mongewell and North Stoke.</p>	<p>Clerk (agenda)</p> <p>JP</p>

5441	<p>REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR</p> <p>No report had been received.</p>	
5442	<p>REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS</p> <p>The District Councillors' report had been circulated and this was discussed. Cllr Cooper was congratulated on the re-election of herself and Cllr Powell. She reported that a full District Council meeting will be held on Thursday 18th May.</p> <p>The District Council head of service left in April and their replacement is due to start shortly.</p> <p>No decision has yet been made on the future of the former SODC offices but Cllr Cooper hopes to see a mixture of facilities including some to benefit the community. Parish councillors expressed a wish that when the new head of service is in post, a meeting can be held to discuss this further.</p> <p>The next consultation exercise on the joint local plan is scheduled for the near future.</p>	
5443	<p>PLANNING</p> <p>Decisions by SODC</p> <p>P23/S1121/DIS Avalon Kennels, Icknield Way, OX10 6PP. Discharge of condition 9, surface water drainage works, under application P22/S3789/FUL (Change of existing residential unit to specialised veterinary clinic; construction of replacement dwelling, relocation of parking areas). Details Agreed.</p> <p>P23/S0871/HH Lalique, Mongewell OX10 8BP. Two storey rear extension, thermal upgrade, replacement windows and new entrance canopy. Alterations to existing extension. Minor changes to approved application ref. P22/S0930/HH to alter the Solar PV and position of the ASHP. Planning Permission.</p> <p>P23/S0926/AG Black Barn Farm, Church Road, Ipsden OX10 6AE. Proposed grain tipping bunker. Agricultural development: planning permission not required.</p> <p>P23/S0713/HH 5 Jethro Tull Gardens Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8DS. Single storey rear extension and garden office. Planning Permission.</p>	

	<p>Consultations</p> <p>P23/S1387/FUL Land adjacent to the Old Walled Garden (Plot 5), Mongewell Park, Mongewell OX10 8DA. Proposed detached new dwelling. (New dwelling to be known as: The Lake House and temporary stationing of a mobile home known as: Caravan at The Lake House, Mongewell, OX10 8DA). No objection – infill and a house was planned here initially so the principle has been agreed.</p> <p>P23/S1105/HH 10 Carmel Terrace, Mongewell OX10 8BX. Erection of two storey side extension. No objection.</p> <p>P23/S1343/DIS The Thatched Cottage, Old Reading Road, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8BW. Discharge of condition 3 (Schedule of Materials) on application P22/S3672/HH (Proposed refurbishment of existing dwelling. Alterations to external materials). No comment – just for information.</p> <p>P23/S1200/S73 Avalon Kennels, Icknield Way, OX10 6PP Variation of condition 1 (approved plans) on application P22/S3789/FUL - 1) extend end of north-facing two-storey part of house; 2) extend eastern end of single storey part; 3) alterations to fenestration; 4) amendment to roof over garage and 5) metal chimney flue to single storey roof (Change of existing residential unit to specialised veterinary clinic; replacement dwelling, relocation of parking). No comment – just for information.</p> <p>P23/S1519/HH 10 Park View, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8BJ Single storey rear extension and internal alterations. No objection.</p> <p>Major application</p> <p>We are waiting for news of management arrangements for the open space at the Newnham Manor site, particularly parish council representation. Also awaiting a reserved matters application for the proposed ‘school land’ at Newnham Manor.</p>	
5444	<p>FINANCE</p> <p>a) <u>Payments to be approved since last meeting.</u></p> <p>The Finance Officer had circulated a list of payments to be authorized. In addition to salaries, PAYE and expenses for Mr Chris Strange, these were as follows:</p> <p>£159.99 expenses for Dr Yvonne Peet for purchase of a gazebo for the pavilion.</p> <p>£166.39 for dog bin emptying</p> <p>£136.15 for refuse collection</p> <p>£2,160.00 for Tom Cottrell Landscapes for tree and hedge work at the recreation ground.</p> <p>£117.52 for church floodlighting</p> <p>£591.61 to Lister Wilder for service of cricket roller</p> <p>£1,018.62 to Lister Wilder for repairs to ride on cylinder mower</p> <p>£300 to April Skies accounting for internal audit 22-23. The charge was slightly higher due to the council’s increased turnover.</p> <p>£624 to Lawncare Garden Machinery for the electric waterer.</p>	

£12 to Public Internet for domain hosting in May and June
 £20 to Crowmarsh Village Hall for hall hire in March
 £281.10 to Rialtus Business Solutions for renewal of subscriptions for accounting and VAT software
 £1080.00 to Ashburton for grass cutting in April and May
 £945.00 to Scofell for grass cutting at nature area
 £269.89 to Demon Tweeks for hand held speed camera
 £1,165 to Topregal for 16 conference chairs for pavilion
 £41.41 to Southern Electric
 £10.00 for replacement commemorative plaque re. Malcolm Newby, a former clerk to the council.

It was proposed by Cllr Johnson and seconded by Cllr Sherbourne that these payments be approved and this was agreed. It was agreed to invite tenders for grass cutting in a year's time. District Cllr Cooper recommended adopting 'Let it Bee' in certain areas to allow the grass to grow and encourage pollinators and wild flowers. Cllr Johnson reported that the grass had been cut at the nature area on the advice of an ecologist.

b) Requests for Grants and Donations

Grant requests had been received from Clean Slate and from Home-Start. After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Johnson and seconded by Cllr Sherbourne that a Section 137 donation of £200 be made to Clean Slate and this was agreed. It was proposed by Cllr Griffin and seconded by Cllr Streete that a Section 137 donation of £300 be made to Home-Start and this was agreed.

c) Internal Audit Report

The internal audit report had been completed and there were eight recommendations:

1. *There are only 3 authorised bank signatories at present. This is not sufficient and does not provide adequate cover for holiday/log in issues. Recommend: panel of at least 4 councillors and all panel members to authorise payments at least once every 6 months.*

Mr Soames will be removed as a signatory and Cllrs Johnson and Stevenson will be added. The Finance Officer will research the process.

2. *Records should be kept showing who authorised payments on the Council's bank account. This information is not kept by the bank. Recommend: YP to take screen shot after Councillors have authorized payments. This will be implemented.*

3. *Insurance for Pavilion to be reviewed due to refurbishment.*

The Pavilion is currently insured for £1.14 million. The Finance Officer will contact the insurance company.

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	<p>4. <i>Money cover is set at £250K and is currently not sufficient. Council to discuss with insurer.</i></p> <p>5. <i>All computer data is backed up locally. Recommend that Council consider using RBS Cloud.</i></p> <p>The Finance Officer will research the cost of this.</p> <p>6. <i>General reserves are currently 176% of precept and significantly in excess of levels recommended in the JPAG practitioners' guide. Recommend that Council carries out a review of reserves in next 6 months and sets up ear marked reserves for future project and contingencies.</i></p> <p>The Finance Officer will take steps to identify projects within the account, such as the pedestrian crossing(s).</p> <p>7. <i>The asset register is a simple document. Recommend using the RBS asset register to verify locations, values and disposals.</i></p> <p>The Finance Officer will obtain a quote for this.</p> <p>8. <i>Internal auditor noted that the Clerk and RFO have not been awarded the NALC pay award November 2022. Recommend that this should be applied at next payroll and backdated to 1.4.22.</i></p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Johnson and seconded by Cllr Sherbourne that this pay increase be awarded and this was agreed. The Clerk will draw up a review schedule to include salaries and policies.</p> <p>A vote of thanks was made to the Finance Officer for her hard work on the audit and congratulations on the positive outcome.</p> <p>d) <u>Section 1: Annual Governance Statement 22/23</u></p> <p>The annual governance statement was reviewed and completed. It was approved by the council and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.</p> <p>e) <u>Section 2: Year-end accounts & accounting statements 22/23</u></p> <p>The accounting statements for the annual return (certified by the RFO) were considered. The balance to carry forward at the year-end was £246,150.02. This figure was higher than the previous year due to CIL receipts and grant money received for the pavilion project. It was proposed by Cllr Griffin and seconded by Cllr Sherbourne that these be approved and this was agreed.</p> <p>f) <u>Proposal for new dog bins and resiting of existing</u></p> <p>The Finance Officer reported that a dog bin has been requested at North Stoke Churchyard. After discussion it</p>	<p>RFO</p> <p>RFO</p> <p>RFO</p> <p>RFO</p> <p>RFO</p> <p>RFO</p> <p>Clerk</p>
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	<p>was agreed that the churchyard is not a suitable location but a bin could be located outside the churchyard, subject to agreement by SODC, or whoever is the landowner, and Shield Maintenance who has the contract for emptying the bins. There is a bin in North Stoke, near to The Springs, which is due to be replaced as it is damaged. There is also a bin situated along the track in Crowmarsh Recreation Ground behind the old SODC office site. This could be re-sited to the northeast exit of the recreation ground. A new dog bin is needed at the edge of the French Gardens development, where their path meets the footpath that links into Benson Lane.</p> <p>g) <u>Quotes for The Bell Pedestrian Crossing</u></p> <p>Two quotes had been received, £110,094 and £105,563.72. A third contractor had been unable to quote at present. Cllr Sherbourne proposed accepting the lower of the two quotes but suggested asking OCC Highways to make a contribution to improving the poor state of the road. The Finance Officer will contact the Highways department.</p> <p>h) <u>Allotments</u></p> <p>Allotment invoices have been sent to tenants and there is only one vacant plot. The Clerk will send tenancy agreements for signing by new tenants.</p>	<p>RFO</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>5445</p>	<p>CHAIRMAN'S REPORT</p> <p><u>Plans for Annual Parish Meeting</u></p> <p>The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Thursday 18th May at Crowmarsh Pavilion, starting at 7pm. The Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) have been invited to attend or send a report and the Clerk will check whether the County Councillor, Felix Bloomfield will be attending and/or sending a report.</p> <p><u>Gov.uk email addresses for councillors</u></p> <p>The Clerk has contacted Public Internet to obtain gov.uk email addresses for all councillors. At present there are three generic addresses for Chair, Finance and Clerk.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>5446</p>	<p>REPORTS OF COMMITTEES</p> <p><u>Environment and Recreation Ground</u></p> <p>Cllr Johnson reported that regular meetings have been held with the builder and progress is being made. Preparation of the balustrade handrails is now needed to meet the deadline for the</p>	

	<p>FCC grant. Some items have been added for the parish council to fund. Items in hand are ventilation for the changing rooms, replacement gutters and downpipes. Replacement of roof tiles has now been completed.</p> <p>The outdoor pavilion clock is not working. A quote of £1,600 has been received from a company who would use a cherry picker to access the clock. Further research into this will be carried out. The opening ceremony will take place at 10.30am on Saturday 17th June. The church will be in charge of refreshments but the cubs are unable to run a barbecue. A vote of thanks was made to Cllrs Johnson, Rowley and Streete and their committee, as well as Chris Strange, for all their hard work on this project.</p> <p>Future grass cutting of the nature area will be considered when the pavilion project has been completed. At Howbery Farm, the area round the walnut tree has been cut once but will be left uncut during May and monitored.</p> <p><u>Traffic and Transport Committee</u></p> <p>A Community Speedwatch scheme is being set up and may be in place by the June meeting. Training will be arranged.</p> <p>It is hoped to arrange a meeting with Thames Valley Police during week commencing 12th June. The Clerk will contact the police to arrange this and will research the availability of the village hall and the pavilion. When a date is agreed, the neighbouring parishes will be invited and sent copies of the correspondence between the parish council and the police.</p> <p><u>20mph proposals for Crowmarsh and North Stoke</u></p> <p>The County Council has indicated their proposals but these do not cover all the required areas. In particular, Constitution Hill should be included as well as the Bloor Estate. Although not the responsibility of the parish council, it was agreed that Wallingford Bridge should also be included. Some additional traffic calming measures will be needed in the 20mph areas and the SIDs will need adjusting. It is hoped to achieve this during the current financial year. Cllr Griffin will respond to the County Council.</p> <p><u>Pedestrian Access to Bloor Estate</u></p> <p>Jackie Smith, OCC footpaths officer, and other members of the countryside access department have met on site and agreed that the footpath from the Bloor Estate to Benson Lane is in need of resurfacing with tarmac and linking up with the Bloor Estate path. This would be the responsibility of OCC Highways and it is hoped to discuss this with them. It was noted that garden waste has</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>JG</p>
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	<p>been left on the footpath and there is some obstruction from overgrown conifers. It was also noted that a resident has extended their garden and it is encroaching across the path.</p> <p>The location of the pedestrian crossing at Benson Lane also needs establishing.</p>	
5447	<p>UPDATE ON WEBSITE</p> <p>The website is up to date.</p>	
5448	<p>REPORTS OF REPS ON OUTSIDE BODIES</p> <p><u>Emery Owen Trust</u> Trustees appointed by the Parish Council are Cllr Johnson and Dr Helen Aplin. It was agreed to continue this arrangement. The charity is able to support requests from individuals.</p> <p><u>Wallingford Bridge Charity</u> The charity has funds but is unable to support requests from individuals. It was noted that the steps from the bridge to the riverside park should be repaired in July.</p> <p><u>Parish Transport Rep (PTR)</u> The parish transport rep is Mrs Amanda Griffin who will report on public transport issues from time to time.</p>	
5449	<p>CORRESPONDENCE</p> <p>The following correspondence was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to Didcot Town Council's mayor making on 15th May 2023. Cllr Griffin will attend. • Chilterns AONB Update • SODC updates • NALC newsletter • OALC notice of training events • Rural Services Network bulletins • Healthwatch Update • Safeguarding News • Notice of Grundon's Ewelme & Benson Liaison Group meeting on 15th May • Notice of waste facility tours 	JG
5450	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Thursday 8th June 2023 at Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall, starting at 7.30pm.</p>	

5451	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Griffin recommended to councillors the training provided on a range of subjects by Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC). • Cllr Sherbourne has a yew tree currently in a pot which could be planted in a suitable location in the parish. • Cllr Nesbitt expressed interest in organizing regular litter picks. The Wallingford 1155 charity have a supply of hi-viz jackets and equipment which can be made available on loan. It was noted that Clifton Hampden sea scouts are planning a litter pick along the river frontage in the next two months. 	
	<p>The meeting closed at 21.54.</p>	