



# CROMMARSH PARISH COUNCIL

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**Minutes of the On-line Parish Council Meeting  
Held on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020,  
starting at 7.30pm**

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**Present:**

Mr John Griffin (Chairman)	Mr Stephen Sherbourne
Ms Gaynor Hopkins	Mr Stuart Soames
Mr Ken McCrea	Mrs Fleur Stevenson
Mr David Rowley	Mr David Topliss

**Attending:** District Cllr Andrea Powell, Dr Yvonne Peet (Finance Officer) and Mrs Sue Rance (Clerk). District Cllr Sue Cooper attended part of the meeting.

**Apologies:** Received from Prof Andrew Johnson, Mr Julian Park, Mrs Liz Ryall and County Councillor Mark Gray.

**Declarations of interest:** None.  
The meeting was quorate.

NO.		ACTION
4998	<p><b>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2020</b></p> <p>Corrections to previous minutes: <u>Item 4988:</u> First sentence re-worded to read as follows: "It was proposed by Cllr Griffin and seconded by Cllr Sherbourne that we ask SODC to pay the 15% Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) due to the parish council." <u>Item 4992:</u> It was noted that new taps have not yet been fitted in the toilets at the pavilion.</p> <p>Subject to these corrections, the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> March were approved as a true record.</p>	
4999	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING</b></p> <p><u>Item 4985:</u> Cllr Griffin is arranging for a certificate to be printed to recognize Cllr Hannigan's 35 years' service as a parish councillor.</p> <p><u>Item 4985:</u> The Clerk reported that the replacement bench and plaque are now ready for installation when circumstances permit.</p>	<b>JG</b>

	<p><u>Item 4990</u>: Cllr Sherbourne reported that there were plans to improve the surface of Watery Lane and the footpath into North Stoke village from the main road. However, no action can be taken at present.</p> <p><u>Item 4992</u>: The memorial tree for Mr Bellamy has now been planted and Cllr Griffin will obtain a suitable plaque when possible.</p> <p><u>Item 4995</u>: Cllr Hopkins reported that when the present lease expires in June, Crowmarsh Village Stores will be run by the owners of the property, who live on the premises.</p> <p><u>Item 4997</u>: An article will be published in Crowmarsh News about the damage caused to verges and roadside kerbs in The Street by inappropriate parking.</p>	<b>JG</b>
<b>5000</b>	<p><b>REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR</b></p> <p>No report had been received from County Councillor Mark Gray.</p>	
<b>5001</b>	<p><b>REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS</b></p> <p><b>Coronavirus Pandemic – Update from SODC Community Support Team</b></p> <p>We are all aware of the current emergency situation as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. A new team at SODC, Community Support, has been established as part of the county-wide redeployment of staff to ensure that support is provided to the district's most vulnerable residents while also maintaining normal services as much as possible. This new team is collating information about the large number of newly established support groups so that we can ensure there are no gaps in coverage and equally that we don't duplicate effort. The Crowmarsh COVID-19 Facebook group and the arrangements for North Stoke have already been passed on to the team, and hopefully the information provided in Crowmarsh News will ensure that any other groups make contact with one of us to be registered. Each Councillor has been given an advance of £2000 from their annual Councillor Grant allowance to support such COVID-19 support groups. The process for application has been dramatically streamlined, and there is just a simple form which must now be completed to ensure an audit trail. Receipts are also required for any expenditure, but Councillors are able to dispense their funds entirely at their discretion, as long as they are going towards supporting the local community at this time of particular need. Anyone needing funding for out-of-pocket expenditure like printing, buying mobile phones, fuel, production of identity cards, purchase of food containers etc, should email one of us for help.</p>	

**Oxfordshire Help Lines** have been established as a first point of contact for anyone in need of help. There are TWO separate phone lines, one for anyone in the “Shielded” category and one for anyone else currently self-isolating and in need of support but not in the high-risk category.

If you or someone you know has been identified as extremely vulnerable by the NHS and have nobody around to help with day to day tasks, like shopping please call 01865 897820 or email [shield@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:shield@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

Anyone that is in this situation but is not considered high risk can check to see if there are any volunteer groups nearby to help them at [www.oxfordshireallin.org/local-support-groups](http://www.oxfordshireallin.org/local-support-groups) or they can call 01235 422600 or

email [communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk)

These support lines are open 8.30am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm on Saturday and Sundays.

The SODC coronavirus information page is updated daily and remains the best first port of call for information on local services: <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/news-events/coronavirus-covid-19-information>

It was suggested that the parish website could include a link to this information.

### **Council Operations**

All regular meetings have been suspended during the coronavirus emergency and SODC staff have been seconded to the Local Resilience Forum, working directly under the leadership of Yvonne Rees, the Chief Executive of Oxfordshire County Council. Our senior staff act as key resources in her team; our own CEO, Mark Stone, at the “gold” level (strategy and government liaison) and our Head of Corporate Services, Adrianna Partridge, at the “silver” level (operations and planning). Activities are well coordinated across the County and we have been recognised nationally for the excellence of our communications and the speed with which we were able to move staff to home-working and to maintain normal services. Our business continuity plans are being well tested and are proving to be extremely robust.

### **Local Plan**

As you all know, at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March SODC Council felt it had no alternative but to vote to leave the eLP2034 in inspection and to ensure its adoption by the end of this year, following a further direction from the Secretary of State. This was as a result of being left with no viable alternative, and the vote was passed with a heavy heart. Given the current circumstances, we now wait to hear if this timetable will be enforced, since there can be no Examination in Public by the Inspector. The Local Government Association is also lobbying for the suspension of the 5 Yr Housing Land Supply rules, given that so many building sites

	<p>have been mothballed and given its inherent problems in the first place.</p> <p><b>New Crowmarsh</b></p> <p>The exhibition on 14<sup>th</sup> March, carried out before the new rules on public gatherings, was very well attended by local Crowmarsh residents and we received lots of very positive feedback. We hope that the team at Ridge can continue to make progress on preparing the planning application during the lockdown, so that we will be ready to resume this project once things get back to normal. Unfortunately, several SODC staff who would have been working on this project have been redeployed to other areas. In the meantime, the Ridge team has been commissioned to investigate what we need to do to achieve BREEAM Excellent status for the building, as we recognise that this external validation will be worth some additional investment and effort. A name has been chosen for the new building but our plans to announce this have been somewhat derailed and deprioritised; this will be announced in time.</p> <p><b>Planning activities during the Coronavirus crisis</b></p> <p>There have been changes made to the way the planning process is functioning, and Parish Councils have been advised of these. We encourage you to keep an eye on the SODC Planning website pages for the most up-to-date information. We understand that any decision which would normally go to the Planning Committee has been postponed, but if the Planning Committee is able to resume its activities remotely this may be reconsidered.</p> <p><b>Recycling centres closing temporarily</b></p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council has now closed the recycling centres during the coronavirus emergency.</p> <p><b>Food and Safety Standards</b></p> <p>Our Food and Safety team, whose roles include food premises hygiene inspections, is responsible for enforcing business closures across the districts. They're using their Twitter account <a href="https://twitter.com/eatsafeworksafe">https://twitter.com/eatsafeworksafe</a> to spread the word so businesses aren't tempted to open up against the government's Stay at Home rules.</p>	
5002	<p><b>FINANCE</b></p> <p>a) <u>Payments made in March</u></p> <p>A schedule of payments made since the last meeting was presented. This included reimbursement of £234.52 to Cllr Rowley for signage at the pavilion, £320 to Brooker and Breeze for a long-service award to Mr Hannigan and £1,319.57 to Carlion Limited for locks for the pavilion.</p>	

	<p>A list of payments for authorisation was presented. These were mainly regular payments but also included £715.00 due to Albry Printing for 100 copies of the neighbourhood plan. This will come out of the SODC grant money. Total payments since the last meeting amounted to £2,528.40.</p> <p>On-line payments are now in place with Cllrs Griffin, Sherbourne and Soames able to authorise expenditure. Two out of these three are required to authorise each transaction.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr McCrea and seconded by Cllr Sherbourne that these payments be authorised and this was approved.</p> <p>b) <u>Internal Audit</u></p> <p>The Finance Officer reported that the internal audit is now in hand but in the current situation there may need to be some modifications to the way in which information is sent to the auditor.</p> <p>c) <u>Allotment Invoices</u></p> <p>Allotment invoices will be sent out in the near future, by email where possible, or by post if necessary.</p> <p>d) <u>Closure of Unity Bank Account</u></p> <p>The Finance Officer reported that now that internet banking with Lloyds Bank is up and running, there is no need to retain the Unity Trust bank account which was set up originally to fulfil the need to make VAT payments on-line. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Griffin and seconded by Cllr McCrea that the account is closed and this was agreed.</p>	<b>RFO</b>
5003	<p><b>CHAIRMAN'S REPORT</b></p> <p><u>Update on Future Council Meetings and Annual Parish Meeting</u></p> <p>It was agreed to hold on-line meetings until further notice, on the dates previously agreed for parish council meetings. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p>It will not be possible to hold the Annual Parish Meeting in the current lockdown situation. Further guidance is expected to be issued in the near future.</p>	

	<p><u>Delegation of Powers</u></p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, it is possible for a parish council to delegate power to make urgent decisions to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk/Finance Officer. However, it was agreed that it would be preferable to make any decisions at an on-line parish council meeting where possible, or at least email all councillors before a decision is made so this was left in abeyance.</p>	
5004	<p><b>REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES</b></p> <p>It is hoped to be able to get a pedestrian crossing in Benson Lane as part of the project to build the new SODC offices there and SODC are aware of this. Cllr Sherbourne recommended commissioning a design for a pedestrian crossing of The Street near The Bell pub so that this can be progressed as soon as possible.</p>	
5005	<p><b>PLANNING</b></p> <p><b>Decisions</b>  P20/S0004/FUL Barracks Farm, Wallingford Road, North Stoke OX10 6AZ, Change of use of farm workshop for a mixed B8/B2 use – PLANNING PERMISSION  P19/S4548/LB The Mill House, The Street, North Stoke OX10 6BL. Internal works to Grade II Listed Building – LISTED BUILDING CONSENT  P19/S3063/HH Summerlea, Pocock Lane, North Stoke OX10 6ET. Alterations to roof; Conversion of garage and carport to annexe including extension – PLANNING PERMISSION  P19/S4434/HH Maple Croft, access track to Sheepcote Farm, Mongewell OX10 8BP Proposed garden building: variation of condition 2 of application P16/S2964/HH for changes to the internal arrangement, external window and door arrangement and materials – PLANNING PERMISSION</p> <p><b>Amended application</b>  P19/S4673/FUL Garage site adjacent to plot 5, Mongewell OX10 8DA New lodge house (amended on 28 February and 30 March to reduce the size of the dwelling and amended the parking on the site) – AGREED TO MAINTAIN OBJECTION.</p> <p><b>New applications</b>  There were no new applications. Following a meeting with the applicants’ agent, we expect a new application to be submitted to redevelop the Springs Hotel, North Stoke.</p> <p><b>Neighbourhood Plan</b>  A progress report was published in the April Crowmarsh News. No exhibitions or referendum can be held during the current restrictions. Locality grant funding had to be spent by 31 March. The draft plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment are on the parish website.</p>	

5006	<p><b>REPORTS OF COMMITTEES</b></p> <p><u>Environment and Recreation Ground</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The playground, outdoor gym, pavilion and car park are all closed due to the coronavirus. It was noted that councilors had voted to close the playground via an email poll and this had been confirmed the following day by the government's directive. The usual safety checks on the playground will not be needed at present. Cllr Rowley is in touch with Eibe about snagging issues. The parish council will retain approximately £6,000 until the outstanding work has been completed.</li> <li>• Green and Tidy have done mulching work to the planting beds in the playground. They have been asked for recommendations re. ongoing maintenance.</li> <li>• The Smart Lock has been fitted to the front door of the pavilion.</li> <li>• The new taps have yet to be fitted. Cllr Rowley would like to consider sensor taps for the inside toilets and Mr Strange is seeking quotes. Cllr Soames asked to be kept informed of any recommendations so he can consider similar taps for North Stoke Village Hall.</li> <li>• Mr Strange has asked whether his salary will continue to be paid in the current lockdown. He is continuing to carry out various tasks including painting and cutting grass and re-seeding in the playground area. It was agreed to continue to pay him and all our staff as normal.</li> <li>• Cllr Soames asked to be informed of the access code for the Smart Lock. Mr Strange has previously circulated the code to the recreation ground management committee. Cllr Rowley will check when this was done and inform.</li> </ul> <p><u>Traffic and Transport</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 134 minibus has stopped running.</li> <li>• Thames Travel buses continue with a reduced service but night buses are no longer running.</li> <li>• Police speed checks are currently not being carried out at Portway but traffic is very light.</li> </ul>	
5007	<p><b>UPDATE ON WEBSITE</b></p> <p>Cllr Stevenson reported that the website has been very busy in the last month. A new coronavirus page has been opened and the Facebook page has also been very busy. Cllr Stevenson can give administrator status for Facebook to any councillor who already has an account.</p>	

	<p>The draft neighbourhood plan is now on the website and some comments have already been posted.</p> <p>Crowmarsh News is also posted on the website. It may be difficult to continue producing printed copies for the foreseeable future.</p>	
<b>5008</b>	<p><b>REPORT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES</b></p> <p><u>North Stoke Village Hall</u></p> <p>Cllr Soames reported that North Stoke Village Hall is now closed until further notice.</p> <p><u>North Stoke Village Green Charity</u></p> <p>It was agreed that as this recreation ground is an open space it will be left open so that people may take their daily walk there if they wish.</p>	
<b>5009</b>	<p><b>CORRESPONDENCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information from Citizens' Advice about their new arrangements to continue their service by telephone.</li> <li>An enquiry has been received from Jackie Smith, County Council Public Rights of Way Officer. It has been reported to her that Crowmarsh Footpath 2 has been closed. She has now confirmed that the report related to the OCC order, effective 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020, relating to the Bloor development. Footpaths may be used in the current situation, for example to take exercise but need to be used carefully, observing social distancing. Guidance on this has been sent by the County Council and it was agreed to put this on the parish website. The Ridgeway has been busy with walkers and cyclists but people seem to be observing social distancing.</li> </ul>	<b>JG</b>
<b>5010</b>	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>The next meeting will take place on-line on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May starting at 7.30pm.</p>	
<b>5011</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is currently a vacancy for a parish councillor as Mr Jon Grove has stood down. There is a procedure to follow in this situation but in the current lockdown it is impractical to initiate this so it was agreed to defer it for the time being.</li> </ul>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.</p>	