



# CROMMARSH PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the On-line Parish Council Meeting  
Held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021,  
starting at 7.30pm**

**Present:**

Mr John Griffin	Mr Stephen Sherbourne
Prof Andrew Johnson	Mr Robin Smith
Mr Ken McCrea	Mr Stuart Soames
Mr Julian Park	Mrs Fleur Stevenson
Mr David Rowley	Mr David Topliss

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

**Apologies:** Received from Mrs Liz Ryall.

**Declarations of interest:** None.

The meeting was quorate.

NO.	MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 14 <sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021	ACTION
5127	The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 <sup>th</sup> January were approved as a true record.	
5128	<b>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS</b>  <u>Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December</u>  <u>Item 5113:</u> Cllr Stevenson reported that the overflowing dog waste bin has now been emptied.  <u>Item 5113:</u> The Clerk has emailed to register the Council's support for the '20s plenty' initiative which has now been approved by OCC.  <u>Item 5118:</u> The Clerk has again requested the County Council to replace the orange street lamp in North Stoke with an LED one.  <u>Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January</u>  District Cllr Cooper is following up a number of local sewerage issues. A meeting to discuss the future of the former SODC office site has been scheduled for March.	

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## REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

### **Support for residents and businesses during lockdown**

Support is ramping up across the council, with staff now redeployed to process business grants, to help with the logistics at mass vaccination centres (e.g. Kassam Stadium), to handle calls made to the Community Hub and offer help wherever it's needed. This has had a knock-on impact on normal services, such as the initiation of new s106 projects, but we are trying to keep all essential activities going.

As ever, we would like to promote the Community Hub phone number – 01235 422600 – for individuals, and the SVBS website – [www.svbs.co.uk](http://www.svbs.co.uk) – for small businesses. There has been huge demand for the Winter Support grant, which is designed to help with food and fuel voucher for families in financial difficulties.

### **Garden Waste Collections**

Unfortunately, we're still unable to resume the brown bin garden waste collections, as the number of Biffa staff off sick or self-isolating has doubled in the past fortnight. The situation is being kept under regular review and we hope to get the service back on track as soon as possible. Although this is a paid-for service, the contract with residents is that they will receive 20 collections per year and in a normal year they actually get 26 with extra collections made during the busier times of the year. Once the service starts again we will be ensuring that all contractual collections are made, and hopefully more when they're most needed. Christmas trees will be collected eventually, but in the meantime they can be taken to the County Council's waste disposal sites; some local charities are offering to collect trees in return for a donation.

### **Risk Management and Health & Safety at SODC**

You may be reassured to know that the Council maintains, and regularly reviews, a comprehensive Risk Register, and puts in place mitigation strategies to minimise the impact of any specific risk. At the most recent Joint Audit and Governance Committee, Andrea was able to present the most recent update and explain which areas had increased their risk profile (e.g. Covid-19 impacts on staff and activities, fraud relating to payment of business grants, cyber-security due to home-working) and how these risks are being minimised, if not completely mitigated. The Council is going through significant cultural change where risk registers are seen as enabling frameworks to ensure successful

project delivery, rather than ways to point fingers of blame. Similarly, a new Health & Safety strategy, produced since this function was brought back in-house along with Human Resources, focuses on supporting staff in their roles and providing education and clear guidelines. Both areas fall into Andrea's Cabinet portfolio of Corporate Services.

### **Judicial Review on the Local Plan**

You may have seen in the media that a local Community Interest Company (CIC) called Bioabundance has launched a Judicial Review of the decision to adopt the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. The grounds for challenge are that:

- the worsening effect on climate change of excessive housing numbers is not given adequate attention
- the calculation of housing numbers is not coherent
- at the adoption vote, councillors unlawfully took account of threatened consequences of government intervention, and the vote was dictated by MHCLG

The Council will respond to the claim, and as Members we both respect the right of any member of the public or organisation to launch a legal process of this kind.

### **2021/2022 Budget**

At its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February, Council will consider the proposed revenue budget for 2021/22 in line with our statutory duties to set the Council Tax and to determine the level of deficit that will need to be covered by reserve funds. Given the on-going uncertainties around future income streams (e.g. from our leisure centre or from central government grants), the budget will be kept under review and, if necessary, revised mid-year. We are very pleased that many of the new projects identified in our new Corporate Plan, particularly around the establishment of a housing delivery vehicle to enable the Council to build genuinely affordable homes, are already underway and are therefore included in the budget.

### **2022 Elections**

At the time of writing, we still anticipate local elections will take place in early May, and officers are working on the logistics planning needed to accommodate both voting and vote-counting. Counting would be more risky if done under current arrangements where all votes are counted overnight in a single session with an

	<p>army of specially recruited tellers. Sue is advocating that counting should not be done centrally for these elections. Social distancing is much easier for small scale events. It is also quicker to count smaller numbers of votes! But our polling stations could have different numbers of elections. We all have the Police &amp; Crime Commissioner and a County Councillor to vote for. But some could have by-elections or a Neighbourhood Plan referendum. As with a lot of things at the moment there is much uncertainty! We would strongly encourage people to consider applying for a postal vote if they are concerned about voting in person – see <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote</a></p>	
5130	<p><b>PLANNING</b></p> <p><b>Decisions by SODC</b>  P20/S4518/FUL 'The Sycamores', Land east of 206 Crowmarsh Hill, Crowmarsh Gifford Erection of five dwellings and associated works as phased development. PLANNING PERMISSION</p> <p>P20/S4163/HH 53 Newnham Green, Crowmarsh Gifford. To demolish existing garage to west and erect a two-storey extension. PLANNING PERMISSION</p> <p><u>P20/S4695/HH</u>  55B The Street Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8EA  Insertion of a new window to match existing. PLANNING PERMISSION</p> <p><b>Consultations</b>  <u>None</u></p> <p><b>Major developments</b>  The Newnham Manor site is expected to come to planning committee in March after a further round of consultation. There is only detail on drainage strategy and arboricultural assessment conditions to be discharged (which the Parish Council is not consulted on).</p> <p><b>Neighbourhood plan</b>  The neighbourhood plan is now open for Regulation 16 consultation until 9 March. Cllrs Sherbourne and Griffin have copies of the documents, which are also on the SODC and parish websites. Posters have been displayed.</p>	

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**FINANCE**

**a) Payments made in February**

A schedule of payments made since the last meeting was presented. As well as salaries, refuse collection and the regular biomisting with Zoono, expenditure included £1,440.00 paid for the preliminary design for the pedestrian crossing near The Bell. A report has gone to OCC Highways and their response is awaited. In addition £216.00 was paid to Tom Cottrell Landscapes Ltd for hedge trimming at Home Farm.

It was proposed by Cllr McCrea and seconded by Cllr Johnson that these payments be approved and this was agreed.

**b) Requests for Grants**

S137 donation requests have been received from Sue Ryder Palliative Care Hub and Citizens' Advice South Oxfordshire. It was noted that Sue Ryder is now offering palliative care at home since their Nettlebed premises have closed. The previous donations made by the Parish Council were £200 to Sue Ryder in July 2020 and £500 to Citizens' Advice in March 2020. After consideration, it was proposed by Cllr McCrea and seconded by Cllr Johnson that donations of £200 be made to Sue Ryder and £500 to Citizens' Advice and this was agreed.

A suggestion was made that an annual amount could be agreed for a number of charities but after discussion it was agreed that each application should be considered on its merits.

**c) Consider accounts for year to date**

A summary of the Council's accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> January was presented. Income to date was £156,228.63 and expenditure to date was £66,945.68. Income included £86,111.27 received in CIL money as well as £6,477 received in grants due to Covid.

It was noted that CIL money is paid every six months. As the Council's neighbourhood plan is not yet made, CIL money is paid at the rate of 15%, with a cap of £100 per dwelling. This will increase to 25% with no cap when the neighbourhood plan is made. In the next financial year CIL money will be received in respect of the Bloor development and The Sycamores. It may be that this is paid at the 15% because the developments were approved before the neighbourhood plan was finalized.

5132	<p><b>CHAIRMAN'S REPORT</b></p> <p>Following problems with the foul drainage at Newnham Farm, requiring frequent pumping out into tankers, a temporary diesel sewage pump has been installed and Thames Water has said that a new pumping station should be installed sometime this year as a permanent solution to the problem. The recent heavy rainfall has led to flooding and sewer overflow in Retreat Gardens and at Bridge Villa Campsite. District Cllr Sue Cooper is chasing this and will meet with Thames Water in the near future.</p> <p>Cllr Sherbourne reported that the spring in The Street is flowing again near to the bus stop opposite the entrance to Newnham Manor. Flood water is also high in North Stoke.</p>	
5133	<p><b>REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES</b></p> <p>It is hoped the pedestrian crossing at The Bell could be directly funded by CIL money.</p> <p>Traffic management in North Stoke is also high priority and a North Stoke resident has recently raised the issue of speeding through the village again. Cllr Soames suggested action should be taken to slow traffic entering the village from the South Stoke side. Cllr Sherbourne suggested requesting OCC Highways officer, Lee Townsend, to consider the options. He recently made a site visit in relation to the proposed crossing at The Bell and was very helpful. It was agreed that OCC should be involved in this project and Cllrs Sherbourne and Soames will work together to take this forward. A site meeting will be arranged.</p>	Ssh/SS
5134	<p><b>REPORTS OF COMMITTEES</b></p> <p><b>Environment and Recreation Ground</b></p> <p>The committee met on 18<sup>th</sup> January and the minutes had been circulated. The following points were noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local resident Linda Parker was welcomed to the committee.</li> <li>• Planning permission has been granted for improvements to the pavilion and building regulations approval will now be applied for.</li> <li>• Procedures for Covid management, including signage, have been reviewed and spraying with Zoono is booked until June. Any extension to this will be reviewed in April.</li> <li>• The memorial train is currently out of action and repairs are planned for March.</li> <li>• Following a recent accident when a child fell from the climbing frame and hurt themselves and sometime ago when a child broke an arm, it had been suggested that consideration should be given to the installation of a net to</li> </ul>	

	<p>break any falls or additional ropes or chains to have more to grab onto. The play area is inspected each year and meets current ROSPA safety standards. Cllr Rowley reported that as the drop from the climbing equipment is less than 2 metres, the rubber landing surface is said by Eibe the installer to be adequate. To put nets around all walkways would cost approximately £8,000 if installed by Eibe. However, nets may encourage children to use them as part of their play experience which could be dangerous in itself. The equipment was installed by a reputable company. It was agreed that, as the equipment meets the required safety standards it should not be modified as this could introduce a new risk with the result that the Parish Council could be liable. It was agreed to monitor the situation and review again if there are increased accidents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two quotes have been received for a 2-metre high barrier to stop caravans and other high-sided vehicles from entering the car park. It is hoped to obtain a third quote. Quotes are also being obtained for a new CCTV system. The original system was discontinued some years ago; it was not of sufficient quality to be of use to the police and modern technology would enable a wi-fi linked camera to be linked to mobile phones. This would need the agreement of the full parish council as the Environment and Recreation Ground committee can only authorise expenditure up to £500. This project will be reviewed again when costs are known.</li> <li>• There will be no increases in hire charges in 2021.</li> <li>• It is hoped to hang thirteen framed photos inside the pavilion to include the playground opening ceremony. The estimated cost of prints and framing is approximately £500.</li> <li>• The play area needs to dry out following the recent heavy rain. Rather than closing the playground completely, Chris Strange intends to fence off a series of small areas in turn and sow grass seed to enable the surface to recover.</li> <li>• Cllr Rowley reported that some parents have suggested the play area should be closed due to Covid. However, the parish council has taken considerably more precautions than other local councils to make the area safe to use.</li> <li>• Cllr Rowley has recently given information on the play area and gym to Dorchester Parish Council, who are hoping to improve their play facilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Traffic and Transport</b></p> <p>Cllr Sherbourne reported that there may be cuts in bus services due to lack of support during the pandemic. The Chairman will put this forward for discussion at the forthcoming Parish Transport Reps meeting.</p>	<p><b>JG</b></p>
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5135	<p><b>UPDATE ON WEBSITE</b></p> <p>The neighbourhood plan has been posted on the website with a reference to the consultation on the SODC website. Crowmarsh News is also on the parish website. A vote of thanks was made to Cllr Stevenson and her husband for their work in keeping the site up to date.</p>	
5136	<p><b>REPORTS OF REPS ON OUTSIDE BODIES</b></p> <p><b>Emery Owen Trust</b></p> <p>Cllr Johnson reported that the Trust met in January and agreed to increase the rent of the larger allotment plots to £20 per annum. The rent for the smaller plots will remain at £15. The Parish Council needs to agree a new tenancy agreement for the Botany Allotments. This will be based on the one used by the Emery Owen Trust and that drawn up by Ms Clemas in 2008. Cllrs Griffin and Sherbourne will take this forward.</p>	JG/SSh
5137	<p><b>CORRESPONDENCE</b></p> <p>The following correspondence was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email from a resident about speeding traffic in North Stoke</li> <li>• Enquiry about allotment availability</li> <li>• Enquiry about hand sanitisers from a local council</li> <li>• Enquiry about speed indicator devices from a local council</li> <li>• Report of rat poison on footpath (reported to Police)</li> <li>• Information on Solar Streets Project in Wallingford</li> <li>• Government guidance on Covid-19</li> <li>• Neighbourhood policing update</li> <li>• Police and Crime Bulletin</li> <li>• Update from Rural Services Network</li> <li>• Update from SODC.</li> </ul>	
5138	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held online on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021, starting at 7.30pm.</p>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 21.05.</p>	