



CROWMARSH PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the On-line Parish Council Meeting
Held on Wednesday 31st March 2021,
starting at 7.30pm**

Present:

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

Attending: District Cllr Cooper, Dr Yvonne Peet (Finance Officer) and Mrs Sue Rance (Clerk).

Apologies: Received from Mrs Liz Ryall and Mr David Topliss.

Declarations of interest: None.

The meeting was quorate.

NO.	MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4 TH MARCH 2021	ACTION
5151	The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 th March were approved as a true record, proposed by Cllr McCrea, seconded by Cllr Griffin and carried unanimously.	
5152	MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING <u>Item 5140:</u> The tenancy agreement for Botany allotments has been revised and is ready to be sent to tenants with the invoices for the coming year. There are two names on the waiting list. It was noted that there are 35 plots at the Emery Owen allotments and the waiting list is currently six. <u>Item 5143:</u> The Finance Officer has circulated a breakdown of the costs recorded in the accounts as running costs for the village.	
5153	REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS Improving take-up of COVID-19 vaccines Generally, take up has been very high, but there are a range of reasons why people might not have responded to their invitation	

to arrange a vaccination - from difficulties in booking an appointment or arranging transport, to hesitancy or misunderstandings about the vaccine.

So from the beginning of March, some of our council officers have been helping a county-wide project to increase take up of the vaccine; they'll be calling at the addresses of people in the first four priority groups who have not responded to repeated invitations from their GP to book their COVID jab appointment. We're working on this with our partners at the county council, local GPs and the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. Our officers will be providing the people they speak to with help to book an appointment, arrange transport, or simply offering information and advice in a format agreed with our NHS colleagues. As you're aware they have already been visiting residents who are shielding or self-isolating throughout the pandemic and so are highly experienced. They will be dressed in clearly identifiable clothing, carry an ID, and follow all social distancing guidelines.

We hope this outreach programme will be a valuable tool in ensuring that everyone who wants the vaccine can be supported to get it and that nobody gets left behind in the rollout of Oxfordshire's vaccination programme.

A new joint Local Plan

The two Councils, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse, have now agreed to develop a joint Local Plan, which would take the Councils through to about 2040/41 rather than producing new individual plans. There would be significant cost savings from taking this route, in the gathering of evidence, the development of common policies and the inspection process. There is also strong logic in working together on issues such as the development of Didcot, affordable housing and on environmental policies and practices. A joint committee would oversee the process, but the final decision-making would still lie with the individual Councils in order to ensure local accountability. The importance of Neighbourhood Plans is unaffected, and indeed they take on an even greater role as the process of spatial planning moves ever "up-stream" to programmes such as Oxfordshire 2050 and the Ox-Cam Arc.

Ox-Cam Expressway Finally Cancelled

We were greatly relieved to see the announcement from Grant Shapps that the controversial Ox-Cam Expressway project is to

be cancelled; see the statement on the SODC website here:
<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/leaders-statement-on-the-cancellation-of-the-expressway-project/>

Some questions still remain, however; will the region still be expected to build 1 million new homes along the proposed route? Will the East-West rail line be electrified from the outset? Will the “more targeted, localised road improvements to boost transport in the region” simply deliver an Expressway by stealth? Will any such improvements prioritise zero carbon means of travel and better cycle networks? We will keep on asking! It is worth repeating that the current SODC administration reversed the previous Council policy to support the Expressway in July 2019, shortly after being elected.

Local Elections, 6th May 2021

Although there are no normal SODC elections this year, we will still be going to the polls to elect our new County Councillor and the new Police and Crime Commissioner. There are also two by-elections for SODC due to the resignation of two Councillors (one in Didcot, the other in Forest Hill). The deadline for applying for a postal vote is 5pm on Tuesday 20th April. We would strongly encourage people to consider applying for a postal vote if they are concerned about voting in person – see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote>.

SODC is looking for people to work at the elections as polling clerks at polling stations. Anyone interesting in applying for work should contact electionstaff@southandvale.gov.uk; all work is Covid-safe and the daily rate is £165 - £175.

Recycling Success and Litter Picking

You will have seen the good news about South Oxfordshire coming 2nd in the table of “top recyclers” across the country, with 64% of household waste being sent for recycling. Anyone who has tried to visit the household recycling facility at Oakley Wood recently will understand how we have made it to these heady heights! Our next challenge is to focus on reducing the waste we produce in the first place through Repair Cafés and such like. We are also pleased that SODC will be able to support community litter picks from 29th March, so anyone wanting to organise such an event can find out what help is available here:

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/environment-and-neighbourhood-issues/neighbourhood-services/littering-fly-tipping-and-dumping-waste/community-litter-picking-how-we-can-help/>

£162,500 award for air quality website

We have some good news for residents keen to keep an eye on their local air quality issues – along with our partners in the Oxfordshire Air Quality Group, we have been awarded £162,500 government funding to spruce up the Oxfordshire [air-quality monitoring website](#). The city council led the bid for the money, which will be used to give the website a refresh and to make it compatible with mobile devices.

Recent Council Motions

The Council meeting of 25th March had a packed agenda and lasted a full four hours! Amongst other matters, there were 8 motions on the table, all of which related directly to two of the themes within our Corporate Plan (Theme One: protect and restore our natural environment and Theme Four: improve economic and community well-being.)

We passed all 8 motions, including ones to take action to reduce light pollution and the undergrounding of high voltage power lines, one to work closely with Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure adequate provision of health facilities in our growing communities, one to support a pilot project for a Universal Basic Income in South Oxfordshire, one to establish the principle of community wealth-building in major new developments like Berinsfield and Didcot, one to ensure that developers provide adequate leisure facilities, one to extend the existing policies on diversity and inclusion to cover neurodiversity and finally one to provide as much support as possible for rural pubs as community assets. Many of the motions were opposed by the Conservative Group “en bloc” as they felt that they were irrelevant for the District.

Wallingford Medical Centre has advised that they are not interested in moving to the former SODC office site.

It was noted that the election campaign for the County Council has now started so a state of purdah exists.

5154	<p>PLANNING</p> <p>Decision by SODC P20/S3849/HH 84 The Street Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8ER. First floor extension on top of ground floor utility room to increase size of bathroom (as amended to provide a pitched roof to the extension). Planning Permission granted.</p> <p>Consultations P21/S1073/FUL The Gates, Carmel College, The Ridgeway, A4074. Retention of northern set of gate posts and walls as constructed. It was agreed to endorse the conservation officer's view on the brickwork and otherwise to return a response of no strong views.</p> <p>P21/S1045/HH Watersview House Mongewell Park Mongewell OX10 8DA. Outdoor Swimming Pool. Recommend approval.</p> <p>Amendment to P20/S4746/HH Outbuilding at Mere Cottage, Mongewell Park. As amplified by Tree Survey Report received 26 March 2021.</p> <p>Discharge of conditions P21/S1005/DIS The Springs Golf Club Wallingford Road North Stoke OX10 6BE Discharge of conditions 9, 15, 16, 17, 19 & 25 on P20/S1589/FUL. Condition 17 relates to the highway works to connect to the footway along Wallingford Road and does not include a crossing, merely dropped kerbs. As one of the benefits we expected from this development was a pedestrian crossing, it was agreed to lodge a strong objection and copy it to Oxfordshire Highways, who are also a consultee as well as Highways Officer, Lee Turner and County Councillor Mark Gray. Our District Councillor will make enquiries about a crossing and about the travel plan.</p> <p>Neighbourhood plan The neighbourhood plan is now under examination by Andrew Ashcroft, who also examined Wallingford and Benson plans. He has visited the parish and raised a number of questions, most of which have been answered by making modifications to the text. The one outstanding question relates to Historic England's concern about the impact of the employment land allocation on the listed buildings at Howbery Park. This will be addressed by commissioning an expert on listed buildings to write a report: the cost will come out of the remaining grant money we hold from SODC. This was agreed, proposed by Cllr Sherbourne and seconded by Cllr Griffin.</p>	

5155	<p>FINANCE</p> <p>a) Payments made in March</p> <p>The Finance Officer reported on payments made since the last meeting on 4th March. As well as regular salary payments, these included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £684 paid to Cottrell for grass cutting at Newnham Murren churchyard • £120 paid for Zoono treatment of the playground; this is the new price as they are now VAT registered • £1020 paid to the structural engineer for structural design relating to the proposed improvements to the pavilion • £26.40 paid to Arrow Fencing for repairs to a dog waste bin • £349.83 paid to Castle Water for six months water at the pavilion • £235.20 paid for replacement basin taps at the pavilion • £148.80 paid for the software licence finance package. <p>A request had been received from North Stoke PCC for £660 towards grass cutting at North Stoke Church. This sum is less than that usually requested because the PCC currently has a surplus of £485. The rate is the same as last year.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr McCrea and seconded by Cllr Sherbourne that the above payments and grant request be approved and this was agreed.</p> <p>b) Allotment Invoices</p> <p>The Finance Officer will send the invoices out to tenants in the next few days with a copy of the tenancy agreement. It was agreed that the chairman will sign each agreement first and then deliver them to the Finance Officer. Tenants will be requested to sign their agreement and return it with their payment. A copy of the tenancy agreement will be uploaded to the parish website so that tenants may refer to it.</p>	Clerk/FS
5156	<p>CHAIRMAN'S REPORT</p> <p><u>Annual Parish Meeting</u></p> <p>After discussion it was agreed to hold the Annual Parish Meeting online via Zoom on Wednesday 21st April, starting at 7.30pm. The meeting will be publicized with posters on noticeboards as well as online on the website and on social media.</p>	Clerk/FS/ JG

	<p><u>End of permission to hold virtual meetings</u></p> <p>Permission to hold council meetings online will end at midnight on Thursday 6th May. Central government has refused to extend this despite requests from NALC and other bodies.</p> <p>In response to the Covid-19 situation and after discussion, it was agreed that it is not yet safe to hold a physical council meeting and the council resolved to allow the Clerk, Chairman and Vice-Chairman delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the council where such decision cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. All councillors will be consulted by email. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council in legislation or in its standing orders or financial regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation will be recorded in writing and published in accordance with the relevant regulations. The delegated authority will end at the first face-to face meeting of the parish council after 7th May.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr McCrea and seconded by Cllr Sherbourne that the delegated authority be approved and this was agreed.</p> <p>It was agreed that if possible any major decisions or items of expenditure will be approved at the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 29th April.</p> <p><u>Chilterns Conservation Board</u></p> <p>There is a vacancy for a parish council representative to be elected to the Chilterns Conservation Board. Each parish council has one vote and there are three candidates. After discussion it was agreed to vote for Sue Rowland. The Clerk will return the ballot paper.</p>	Clerk
5157	<p>REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further information has been received about the future of The Bell. • Cllr Sherbourne will ask Highways Officer, Mr Lee Turner to visit to consider the crossings in The Street, Benson Lane and in North Stoke. Mr Turner will also be consulted about parking restrictions at Stephens Field. • Cllr Park queried the progress on surface improvements in Watery Lane. The Chairman has contacted Sarah Wright, the Ridgeway Officer about this and Jackie Smith, the 	SSh

	<p>OCC Rights of Way Officer. Their advice is awaited. Watery Lane is a link to the Ridgeway Path which should give it a level of priority. It was noted that paving slabs have been taken up between the underpass and Mongewell and some mature trees have been felled north of the underpass.</p>	
5158	<p>REPORTS OF COMMITTEES</p> <p>Environment and Recreation Ground</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Johnson reported that the government has started easing lockdown restrictions so outdoor sport is permitted and the outdoor gym has opened. • The play area remains very popular. It has been agreed to continue with the same contractor for the cutting of the grass in the nature area to increase biodiversity. • The specification for the pavilion improvements is being developed. Three sets of builders have expressed an interest in quoting and another has declined. • Discussions on the CCTV are ongoing with Chris Strange but there is no firm information yet. <p>Traffic and Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OCC consultation on the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan has now been responded to by Parish Transport Rep Amanda Griffin, who included the comment that public transport needs to be safe, convenient and the plan should do more to encourage cycling and walking. The Chairman will circulate a copy of the notes made. • The Clerk will order a supply of stickers from the '20s plenty for Oxfordshire' website. 	Clerk
5159	<p>UPDATE ON WEBSITE</p> <p>The website is up to date and the new Covid guidance has been posted on social media.</p>	
5160	<p>REPORTS OF REPS ON OUTSIDE BODIES</p> <p>River Users' Group (RUG3)</p> <p>RUG3 plans to meet in person at Benson Parish Hall in July.</p>	
5161	<p>CORRESPONDENCE</p> <p>The following correspondence was noted:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request on behalf of Dixons Carphone Race to the Stones along the Ridgeway National Trail to take place on 10th and 11th July to have a pitstop at Mongewell with space for gazebos and portaloos. Cllr Soames reported that North Stoke Village Hall might be available. Cllr Griffin will forward the information to him. Update from John Howell, MP Updates from OALC and NALC Police and Crime Bulletin March 2021 Police and Crime Commissioner's update March 2021 Rural Services Network Update Chilterns Conservation Board Newsletter Updates from SODC. 	JG/SS
5162	DATE OF NEXT MEETING The next meeting will be held online on Thursday 29 th April 2021, starting at 7.30pm. As the Annual Parish Council Meeting has to be held in May, there will be a brief online meeting to elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman on a date to be advised.	
5163	ANY OTHER BUSINESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Johnson expressed concern that speeding motorcycles will become a problem again during the summer months and recommended asking roads policing to attend to monitor the situation on Portway. The Clerk will ask Bix and Assendon Parish Council for an update on their request to OCC Highways for traffic calming measures to be introduced. Cllr Soames reported that training for communities on speed cameras is to be introduced. Cllr Sherbourne expressed interest in this. Cllr Soames will forward the details to Cllr Sherbourne and the Clerk. Cllr Rowley mentioned the parish council could highlight and recommend the free Covid testing available for parents of school children, which could be particularly helpful during the school holidays, to help reduce risks when they return to school. He said the link is not easy to find on the government website. He suggested the link could be put on the parish website and will forward the information. The Landscape Group has started grass cutting and a resident has reported on an area which has been missed. The Finance Officer will investigate. 	Clerk SS DR/FS RFO
	The meeting closed at 21.00.	