

# Minutes of the South Hinksey Parish Council at South Hinksey Village Hall

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2010

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**Present:** Sarah Balaam, Sheridan Edward (Clerk), Elizabeth Halcro, Liz LeFevre, Maggie Rawcliffe (Vice-Chair)

Arash Fatemian (Cllr, OxonCC),

**Parishioners:** Matthew Carlos, Tom Barron

## 1. Apologies

Clive Briffett (Chair), Gareth Jennings (Cllr, VOWHDC)

## 2. Declarations of Interest

EH and MS – Village Hall

## 3. Parishioners' Comments

**Community Land.** MC had spoken to several parishioners and it was generally felt that work on the former car park should be carried out by parishioners if possible and only if this was not possible to look to outside contractors. SE noted that there was a budget for work on the community land and asked whether a contractor was needed to clear the land. LLF also suggested that the probationers be brought in to assist. The Council agreed that the project should be led by the community and MC was happy to lead on this with SB as a representative from the Council. **Action: MC and SB to arrange a site visit and meeting of interested parishioners.**

## 4. Minutes of January 2010 meeting

Item 4. 'AK' should read "AF".

Read and agreed.

## 5. Matters Arising

**Flooding.** SB reported that the village was currently on flood watch. MR reported that OFA was meeting soon with the EA to discuss medium-term strategy following the suspension of the flood prevention scheme.

**Church Close Barrier.** EH had received no update about this. **Action: SE to write letter to Engineers Dept.**

**Church Close Car Park.** There was no update. **Action: SE to chase Ed Green.**

**Air pollution.** EH stated that the monitor had not yet been installed and was going to contact Tim Williams. TB also reported that the car-stripping was still taking place and that the smell was particularly noticeable in his garden. It was confirmed that although unpleasant, the chemicals used were not toxic. **Action: EH to speak to workers.**

**Communication Strategy.** There was not much movement on this. However, SE was looking into ways of making the reporting of meetings more accessible for parishioners and as well as producing a slightly more detailed agenda, recommended that following meetings, as well as the minutes which would be available on the website, a one-page summary of updates be written for circulation to parishioners. Council agreed with this. AF also recommended that SE look at what other parishes produce.

**Grit Bins.** LLF had received favourable responses to the suggestion of installing grit bins and would continue to get feedback with a view to installing bins for next winter. The Church Close grit bin had not yet been installed and EH would chase for a progress report.

**Potholes.** The potholes in the parish had still not been addressed. AF confirmed that he had already submitted the list of holes, but would be meeting the relevant authority that Thursday and would hand the list to them personally.

**Maintenance of the Devil's Backbone and Railway Bridge in snow.** SE had written to Jenny Beardmore at OxonCC who confirmed that they would be unable to take it on. Andrew Burchett from OCC also wrote to confirm that they too could not take it on, but were happy to install a grit bin and keep it filled. SB queried whether there was enough space to install a bin on the path and also whether OCC would require road access to fill it. MC also felt that gritting was of secondary importance the clearly with shovels. SE suggested that as the work would be needed infrequently but was of some importance, that the Council look to funding a contractor to clear the path in bad weather. Council agreed for measures to be considered before next winter. TB queried whether it was possible to establish a right of way north from the Devil's Backbone and by the sports grounds in order to use the bridge over the railway at Grandpont. It was felt that establishing a right of way and a path would cause more difficulty than campaigning for the current bridge. **Action: MC and TB to investigate feasibility.**

## 6. Finance – Payments and Receipts

### Payments

Sheridan Edward	Clerk wages Jan – Mar	£478.71
HMRC	Tax and NICs Oct – Mar	£478.20

### Receipts

Patrick Heenan	2 x rights of burial	£300.00
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## 7. Planning Applications

None.

## 8. Correspondence

**St John's Ambulance.** A request for a donation. The Council agreed that the general policy was to reserve grants and donations for organizations with a particularly local focus.

**Oxford Brookes Alumni Office** requesting that an item be placed in local newsletters asking for alumni to re-connect with the University. **Action: SE to forward to Linda Slater.**

**ORCC** wrote to inform the Council they were compiling a county book focusing on rural communities and asking for contributions. The information was passed to EH to consider.

## 9. Review of risk assessment and internal audit

**Risk Assessment.** SE had reviewed the risk assessment and circulated to the Council. The Council agreed that the grass-cutting and maintenance contract go out to competitive tender biennially, rather than annually, or when if there was significant variation in charges or quality of work. The risk assessment also highlighted that health and safety assessments were outstanding on the burial ground, community land and community woodland. **Action: SE to draft template and guidance and councilors to complete assessments before May.**

**Internal Audit.** The Council reviewed the current internal auditing process. It was felt that the auditors were competent, comprehensive and independent and the Council agreed to continue with their services.

## 10. County Councillor's Report

AF reported that Council tax would rise by 2.75% for 2010/11 – the equivalent of £1161.71 for a Band D property. The 5-year strategy budgeted tax rises of 2.5% for the two years thereafter. AF also reported that the expected cuts in children's services would not be taking place, but that £375,000 would be saved through back-office staff cuts.

## 11. District Councillor's Report

None.

## 12. Finance report – End of year 2009/10

SE circulated the draft management accounts for the year-end to the Council and reported that total expenditure was £11,230, £2,170 overbudget. This was mainly due to increased expenditure on project such as noticeboards, £500 additional grant for the Church outstanding from 2008/9 and unbudgeted expenditure on community land and woodland. However, overheads were underbudget, in particular office supplies, travel and expenses with an £850 underspend. Also, total income was £17,770, >£9k more than budgeted, due to grants for the Community Woodland, VAT refund, and burial ground fees. There was a total surplus for the year of £6,550.

## 13. Lighting on Church Close

EH had spoken to VOWH who would be visiting to assess the path to look at the feasibility of installing safety lighting. MR had received estimates of £4k from Oxon CC for the installation of either a street lamp or low-level bollard lights. **Action: EH to update residents and meet with VOWH.**

## 14. Village Hall grant

EH circulated the accounts for the Village Hall for the past three years and asked the Council to consider making a donation to support the running of the village hall. She reported that they had approx. £1000 in the bank, which was enough to cover six months overheads. EH also reported that an inspection of the building was due shortly which may recommend several repairs. EH stated that current lettings covered running costs but that they did not feel able to accurately predict future maintenance and repair costs. SE recommended that projected figures for the next three years be produced and the Council then consider longer-term funding options. **Action: SE to assist EH to present projections and funding request at next Council meeting.**

## 15. Parish councillor vacancy

MR and EH reported that there had been several expressions of interest in the councillor post. In response to SB's request, SE confirmed that the cost for an election, should it be called, would be £700. SE recommended that as well as the standard notices, more information should be circulated to parishioners to inform them of the election process and encourage candidates.

It was also clarified that if an election was not called then the Council would then need to co-opt from the candidates, and that although feedback could be gained from parishioners, the decision would be the Council's.

The vacancy would need to be advertised immediately after CB's formal resignation after the April meeting.

**Action: SE to draft notices.**

## 16. Community Land

Discussed under parishioners' comments.

## 17. Dates for Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

The date for both the APM and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council was set for Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May.

## 18. AOB

**Sewer flooding.** SB reported that automatic pumps were being installed at the pumping station in Littlemore and that de-silting would then take place. The work was currently underway and could take up to 3 months. Information about compensation for flooding was circulated on SHInfo.

**Litter picking.** LLF was organizing a litter pick on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March for Hinksey Hill. CB was also organizing a litter pick for the village.

**Pollarding on the Devil's Backbone.** The Council was very grateful for the work that Nick Frearson had done pollarding the willows and clearing the culverts. There was now debris on the path, which SB would organize to be cleared. **Action: SE to write to Nick Frearson expressing Council's formal thanks.**

**Speed limit between Kennington and Abingdon.** AF reported that the speed limit had now been reduced from 60mph to 50mph.

**Date of next meeting: Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2010**