

# Minutes of the South Hinksey Annual Parish Meeting

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014

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**Present:** Sarah Balaam, Christine Chater, Carol Colclough, Libby Jukes, Sheridan Edward, Pauline Hartman, Ray Hartman, Bob Johnston, Richard King, Liz LeFevre, Adrian Porter, Maggie Rawcliffe, Peter Rawcliffe

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## 1. Apologies

Matthew Frohn.

## 2. Minutes of the 2013 APM

Read and agreed.

## 3. Report of the Parish Council

MR delivered the following report on behalf of the Parish Council:

### **Traffic and road safety**

To help reduce speeding, the Council has installed a vehicle-activated sign on Foxcombe Road, at the top of Hinksey Hill. The sign was partially funded by Cllr Bob Johnston's Big Society Fund, and the Council would like to thank Bob for his valuable contribution. Following reports of HGVs attempting to drive through the village, the Council arranged for the County Council to install a 'Unsuitable for HGVs' sign at the entrance of the village.

### **Footpaths**

With the help of the City Council and Nick Frearson, the Council has installed signs on the Devil's Backbone asking cyclists to give way to pedestrians. Hopefully this will reduce the incidents of inconsiderate cycling. Mark Sumner, Footpaths Officer for the County Council is also arranging for kissing gates to be fitted along the footpath from Redbridge to South Hinksey. Mark is currently awaiting the outcome of a funding bid from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment.

### **Finance**

Due to the vehicle-activated sign, the Council has had significantly higher than anticipated expenditure during the last financial year, as well as lower than expected income from burials. However, due to savings made elsewhere, the deficit for the year is just £780. The Council currently holds a healthy £13,200 in reserves. For 2014/15, the Council has increased the precept slightly from £7045 to £7250, which is still lower than the average for the past ten years.

### **Clerk training**

The Council is pleased to report that the clerk, Sheridan Edward, has successfully completed the Certificate in Local Council Administration.

### **Redbridge Hollow**

The Council is working with Kennington Parish Council, the County, District and City Councils to reduce fly-tipping at Redbridge Hollow. A new fence is to be erected to stop the dumping of rubbish, CCTV will be installed to deter offenders, and the District Council is arranging for the site to be cleared.

### **Burial ground meadow**

Best year yet, with more cowslips and meadow saxifrage, flowering now, than ever before. Other flowers are doing well, spreading clumps of bird's foot trefoil just starting to flower and cuckoo flowers have popped up 'from nowhere' right across the meadow. The yellow (hay) rattle sown in the autumn has germinated well - a few of the yellow flowers have already opened, hundreds more to come. Common vetch, an annual, is a problem (it tends to overpower other things): we are removing flowers to reduce the numbers of new seeds forming. Its seeds persist in the soil so it may be a long time till there are fewer new plants each year. Wild rose cuttings have taken well and may be big enough to plant out on the edge of the meadow in the autumn. We saw a slow-worm in the meadow this week.

### **Footbridge over the railway**

Both Oxford City Council and MP Andrew Smith have, separately, referred the matter to the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The Commission is taking the issue up with the Planning Inspectorate and maybe also with Network Rail (still to be decided). The thesis is that the Inspectorate may not have given sufficient consideration to the public sector equality duty in reaching its decision in this and other cases. Hinksey bridge will be one of the examples used in the discussions. Peter has sent links to the online petition (and its text as a pdf) and our YouTube video to the Commission as background material and they have thanked us for this. He also wrote on 22 April on behalf of the Council to Nicola Blackwood asking her to consider making representations to the Commission and taking the matter up with the Minister responsible for Equality. A reply is awaited.

### **Parish Emergency Plan**

The Council and Adrian Porter have worked to produce a parish emergency plan, which includes action plans for flooding and heavy snow. The plan was used during the last flooding incident and proved very useful. The plan will continue to grow and evolve to help ensure that the village is as well-prepared as possible.

## **4. Report of the Village Hall Management Committee**

Peter Rawcliffe reported that it had been a very busy year with the committee meeting 11 times since November 2013. The finances remained sound, with an income of c.£700 per month. They had replaced the main window at a cost of £9,000, with funding from Bob Johnston's Big Society Fund, and the District Council. An energy audit had been carried out, and as a result work was to take place to change to low energy lights, and to reduce their height so they could be changed with a ladder. The work had been led by Phil Saugman. They were in the process of changing the charity into an incorporated charity, and a new constitution was being prepared.

An event to mark the centenary of the hall was to take place on 13<sup>th</sup> June, and all were invited to attend.

## **5. Report of the Parochial Church Council**

No report.

## **6. Report on flooding**

There was flooding in the village in January and February. Towards the end of this period an emergency concrete and sandbag flood barrier was put around the village, instigated by Barry Russell of the Environment Agency (EA) and Gold Command. It was erected, starting on 14<sup>th</sup> February, by Galliford Try, helped by the Royal Logistics Corps, and supervised by the EA. Removal of barrier started on 26<sup>th</sup> April and finished last week. Richard Dale (EA) and I are to do a snag walk round. The EA are to replace the gate to the field at the side of Pin Farm Cottage, and later this season to reseed grass where necessary. We hope that, having seen the barrier work, it will be considered again in the future.

Barry Russell will be attending the PC meeting following this meeting. More details from him about the Western Conveyance and the possibility of flood barriers around the village in future.

Our MP Nicola Blackwood is very supportive and active in helping us with flooding and sewage issues. She always visits to see for herself, and offers the practical assistance of her case workers. She arranged a "surgery" with Thames Water to address sewage problems. Adrian Porter and I attended this. We understand that monitoring will continue, and there are plans to upgrade Littlemore pumping station. In the event of sewage overflow in South Hinksey the provision of tankers to South Hinksey will be a priority. Communication with the village would be improved. Details available.

On 28<sup>th</sup> February Nicola Blackwood gave a tea party in the Village Hall to thank all involved with erecting the barrier and dealing with the floods. This was attended by the Prime Minister, David Cameron, and the Secretary of State for Defence, Philip Hammond, and by representatives from VoWHDC, the emergency services, the Red Cross, the Royal Logistics Corps and many parishioners.

Nicola Blackwood nominated Peter, Adrian and myself to be invited by the Prime Minister to a reception at No.10, Downing St. Adrian and I attended and met Nicola Blackwood and the Prime Minister. We talked at some length to Owen Paterson, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, about possible funding for the Western Conveyance.

## **7. Questions from parishioners**

None.

**Date of 2014 APM: to be confirmed**