

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

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

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**Present:** Christine Chater, Michael Cochrane (Chairman), Matthew Frohn (Vice-Chairman),  
Maggie Rawcliffe  
Cllr Bob Johnston (OxonCC), Cllr Emily Smith (VoWHDC), Geoffrey Ferres (Clerk)

**Other attendees:** John Cotton, Claire Wilson, David Wilson.

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**Time commenced: 7.30pm**

**1. Apologies**

Cllr Debby Hallett (VoWHDC).

**2. Declarations of interest**

The Chairman said all members had an interest in relation to the Sunningwell boundary proposals.

**3. Public questions, comments or representations**

Claire Wilson, David Wilson and John Cotton all attended the meeting in connection with item 14.

**4. Minutes of November 2017 meeting**

The Council resolved to agree the minutes of the November 2017 meeting and the Chairman then signed them.

**5. Matters arising – November 2017 meeting**

**Transparency code for smaller authorities.** The Clerk had submitted the application, the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC) had approved it and forwarded it to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) who had initially accepted it. NALC later returned the application to OALC saying anti-virus software and Cloud storage were ineligible costs. The Clerk resubmitted the application without these items and has been advised it should be approved by the end of this month

**Electrification of the Didcot to Oxford railway.** The Clerk sent a draft letter to BJ who made helpful suggestions for improving it which were included in the final version sent to the Minister, Paul Maynard MP.

**50mph limit on A34. Action carried forward from a previous meeting: Clerk to write to Layla Moran MP enclosing copies of any previous correspondence between the Minister and Nicola Blackwood MP that are held in the Council's records.**

**Accounting Statements 2016-17.** The Clerk had written to the External Auditor regarding its insistence that there is a discrepancy of £1 between two of the figures. The External Auditor pointed out that the Clerk had made a rounding error in the Accounting Statements. The Clerk therefore sent off the Council's payment and arranged for the External Auditor's report to be published on the website.

**Flood barrier.** The Clerk has chased Geodesign for news of the Council's order for spare rods for the Geodesign EUR 101 Steel Barriers.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 11 Jan 18

**Pre-Planning application advice by the Environment Agency for the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme [P17/V1669/CM] and [P17/V1678/CM]. Action carried forward from the last meeting: Clerk to contact the EA and the residents of Chilswell Path.**

**Town and Parish Forum.** MR was unable to attend VoWHDC's Autumn Town and Parish Forum on 8<sup>th</sup> November.

**Resilience Workshop.** The Clerk registered the Vice-Chairman for an OxonCC Resilience Workshop for Communities on 20<sup>th</sup> November, but he had been unable to attend.

**HMRC – Changes to payment methods.** The Clerk has established that it is not possible to have a debit card on the Council's HSBC account, but payments can be made electronically via the Faster Payments Service from a branch if two signatories sign a written authority.

It was understood that Kennington Parish Council uses the Faster Payments Service. The Chairman said he had experience of it. MR said the Village Hall has a Barclays account.

**South Hinksey Echo.** The Clerk submitted an article about the burial ground – including the unsafe headstones, the reinstatement of the hedge and the progress with building the new path – and a brief one regarding the VoWHDC Community Governance Reviews.

**Council records.** The Records Management and Retention Policy has been signed and put on the parish website.

## 6. Finance – payments and receipts

### Payment

Payee	Reason	Amount	Power to act
Safelincs Ltd	Paediatric defibrillator pad	£104.28	s234 PHA 1936

The Clerk explained that after seeking three quotations for the item he had identified one supplier that had not required him to pay for the item immediately with his personal credit card but was willing to send the Council a pro forma invoice, allowing the Council to send a cheque and reclaim the VAT. This made the company's price the cheapest overall. The Council **resolved unanimously** to approve the payment.

### Receipts

Payer	Reason	Amount
Midcounties Co-op	Burial of the late Richard Allott	£670.00

## 7. County Councillor's report

BJ informed the Council that the Government has offered Oxfordshire a £215m devolution deal, this time without conditions such a directly-elected Mayor. The money was £150m for infrastructure, £60m for social housing and £5m for OxonCC to employ additional officers to cope with the extra work.

ES said the aim was to build 100,000 houses and for there to be a Joint Spatial Plan.

The Government has published several possible routes for the Oxfordshire part of the Oxford Cambridge Expressway and has said the decision between them would be for the National Infrastructure Commission: there would not be public consultation. If the A34 were used to the west of Oxford, North Hinksey Primary School and Botley Primary School might both be demolished.

Signed: 

Date: 11 Jan 18

## 8. District Councillors' report

DH and ES had kindly circulated a written report which ES introduced.

## 9. Planning applications

**8 St Lawrence Road: loft conversion and hip to gable extension, dormer window and side/rear extension [P17/V3086/LDP].** Members expressed doubt that the proposed extension was within the limits for permitted development.

The Clerk said it appeared from the VoWHDC website that only the Council had been contacted about the proposals, not the neighbours. The Vice-Chairman said he believed the neighbours might be unaware of the application and offered to contact them.

ES said she would contact the VoWHDC officer and inform the Council of their response. **Action: Vice-Chairman to contact the neighbours.**

## 10. Correspondence

None.

## 11. Financial Report

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had met with the Clerk on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. They had reviewed the risk assessment and a monitoring report on the Council's 2017-18 income and expenditure. They recommended that burial ground fees remain unchanged as it was too soon to judge the impact of the changes made earlier this year. They recommended that the 2018-19 budget be drawn up on the basis of rebuilding the Council's reserves over several years after carrying out the three projects currently envisaged and with sufficient provision for staff costs to enable the Council to continue to employ the Clerk for 35 hours per month if it chose.

They advised the Council that the Council would have needed to increase the precept for 2018-19 just to cover normal expenditure but to carry out all three projects currently envisaged, a much larger increase would be needed. They recommended a precept for 2018-19 of £14,000, which would mean an increase in the Council's element of Council Tax from £42.99 per year to £71.10 per year for a Band D property, an increase of just over 65%.

The Chairman pointed out this increase was less than 50 pence per week for a Band D property and would enable the Council to get OxonCC to construct a dividing island to protect the village from HGVs and to meet the cost of OxonCC reducing the speed limit on Hinksey Hill from 40mph to 30mph. The Vice-Chairman felt the Council should not be apologetic about the increase.

The Chairman proposed, and it was **agreed**, that there should be a separate item in the 2018-19 budget for the Wildflower meadow, comprising the expenditure on the wildflower meadow currently included in the Grass-cutting and maintenance item.

The Council **approved** the recommendation not to change burial ground fees.

The Council **approved** the revised risk assessment.

The Council **unanimously agreed** to amend the item in the 2017-18 budget for Office and supplies from £180 to £800 to cover the purchase of a laptop, scanner and software.

The Council **unanimously approved** the amended 2018-19 budget and a precept for 2018-19 of £14,000.

## 12. Community Governance Review

The Chairman had written to VoWHDC's Acting Chief Executive Mark Stone on 7<sup>th</sup> November, as agreed. Following that letter, VoWHDC's Steven Corrigan had emailed a draft of a letter to be sent to the 14 properties Sunningwell had asked to have transferred from South Hinksey and to other residents who had submitted comments on the proposals. CC had undertaken the negotiations over the text of the letter on the Council's behalf.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ 

Date: 11 Jun 18

The Chairman, CC and MR had attended the meeting of VoWHDC's Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> November, but they had not spoken because the Clerk had neglected to request permission for them to do so by the deadline.

At the meeting it was decided that South Hinksey would be divided into two wards separated by the A34, each entitled to elect three councillors in 2019. It was also decided not to approve any of Sunningwell's proposals to change its boundaries, a decision accepted by that council's Chairman James Greenman who attended the meeting and spoke.

But still nothing had been heard from Mark Stone about the letter he had promised to send to the Council in response to the complaint submitted by the Chairman. CC said Mark Stone should do what he had said he would do. ES offered to chase that tomorrow.

**Actions: Clerk to monitor Sunningwell's website.**

### 13. Vacancy

Liz Le Fevre resigned from the Council with effect from 30<sup>th</sup> November. The Clerk has put up the required Notice of Vacancy on the Council's noticeboard in the village and will ask Linda Slater to publish it via Shinfo. The Clerk has already informed the relevant departments at VoWHDC.

### 14. School transport

David Wilson said their two children did not currently have places on the OxonCC minibus. Mr Wilson felt it was unfair that the waiting-list changed at least annually so a child could be on top of the waiting-list but still be passed over when a place next became available.

John Cotton said his son did not have a place at the start of the school year but he was advised that his son's chances would be increased if they nagged OxonCC so that was what he had done, and his son now had a place on the bus.

It was understood that although there were children who were not allocated a place on the minibus, it often ran with empty seats which those children were not allowed to use.

BJ explained that OxonCC uses its own vehicle to take children between the village and North Hinksey Primary School and that the vehicle it currently uses is the largest it has.

Under OxonCC's policy, once a child had a place on the bus they kept it, but MF explained that only children from the village in Year 3 and above could be confident they would continue to have transport for the rest of their time at North Hinksey Primary School because when OxonCC changed its policy in line with Government policy the children already receiving transport had their position protected.

As to the issue of which parents in the village had to pay for their children's transport, MF explained that OxonCC only had a statutory duty to provide free transport to North Hinksey Primary School for children if they had applied to the nearest school, New Hinksey Primary School, and been refused. In practice, parents in the village did not apply for places at New Hinksey Primary School because the village was not in its catchment area – an anomaly which BJ said went back to the time when Oxford City Council was an education authority and South Hinksey was in Berkshire.

MF proposed that the Council should aim to see that the minibus should, as far as possible, not run with empty seats. He wanted to see the parents permitted to see that the minibus ran full and that no child was left at the stop.

BJ said he would arrange a private meeting with the relevant OxonCC officer to discuss how the present arrangements might be improved

### 15. Heavy Goods Vehicles in South Hinksey village

BJ and ES offered to look at the Council's draft application to OxonCC's Communities Fund.

**Action: Clerk to submit the application by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017.**

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

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## 16. Hinksey Hill speed limit

LLF had not heard from OxonCC's Lee Turner regarding his meeting with Anthony Kirkwood on 9<sup>th</sup> October.  
**Action carried forward from the last meeting: Clerk to invite Lee Turner to attend a future Council Meeting.**

## 17. General Elliott

The Clerk reported that VoWHDC has notified the Council that the owners of the General Elliott have given notice that they intend to dispose of it. He has asked David Rawcliffe to update the website to take account of this.

## 18. Neighbourhood Action Group

The Clerk reported he had been contacted by PCSO Earl Zack about a Neighbourhood Action Group to be established, bringing together the four parishes of Kennington, Radley, South Hinksey and Sunningwell. The Clerk said Colin Charlett, Chairman of Kennington Parish Council, has since sent a proposed date, time and venue: 7.30pm on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February at Kennington Village Hall. Colin Charlett has also informed the Clerk that Sunningwell sees itself as linked with Wootton rather than Kennington, Radley and South Hinksey so will not be taking part. The Council **agreed** to take part in the Neighbourhood Action Group and **agreed** that MR should be its representative.

## 19. European Union's General Data Protection Regulation

The Council **approved** a draft Privacy Notice, circulated by the Clerk and based on the model circulated by the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils.

The Council **approved** a half-day training course for the Clerk on the General Data Protection Regulation on 7<sup>th</sup> March in Didcot offered by the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils at a cost of £40 plus VAT.

The Clerk asked the Vice-Chairman and MR if they would be content for their new Council email addresses to take the same form as those of the Chairman and CC, namely [firstname@southhinksey.org](mailto:firstname@southhinksey.org). **Actions: Clerk to ask David Rawcliffe to create Council email addresses for MF and MR.**

## 20. Burial ground

**Headstone inspection.** Following the article in the Echo, the Clerk was put in touch with a man responsible for two of the seven headstones that the Council has been advised to lay flat. The Clerk has also been in contact with the family responsible for another of these seven headstones.

**Rose bushes.** The Clerk reported that MR has informed him of a third rose bush in grave in the burial ground. The Clerk had contacted Oxford City Council's Cemeteries Team about how it handles such situations but had not yet received a reply.

The Clerk advised the Council he had become concerned about enforcing regulations of which, it could be argued, people visiting the burial ground might have been unaware since the Council does not display its rules there – unlike St Laurence's Church which does display its rules.

It was **agreed** that the Clerk should circulate the church's rules. The Vice-Chairman offered to extract from the regulations a single page of the rules relevant to maintaining graves which could then be displayed for three months before any action was taken to enforce them. **Actions: Clerk to circulate the rules for St Laurence's churchyard; Vice-Chairman to draw up a notice for display at the burial ground.**

**Design of memorials.** The Clerk had been asked to give an opinion as to whether the Council's rules permitted memorials such as figures. The Vice-Chairman felt that memorials should only be approved that were in keeping with those already installed. The Chairman felt the Council should not approve memorials that would stand out from those already installed.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

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**Hedge of native species.** The Clerk had asked the contractor last week for an update and the manager had informed him "The hedging will be delivered this week, so I hope to have the hedge planted within the next couple of weeks."

**Business rates.** The Clerk reported that at the training event he attended on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, clerks were told that cemeteries are liable for rates but that it was common for burial grounds created on former agricultural land not to be assessed at the correct time for National Non-Domestic Rates and he had realised the Council has never paid rates on its burial ground. He had therefore contacted the Valuation Office Agency who had informed him that the rateable value of the burial ground has never been assessed, but a valuation will now be undertaken.

## **21. Community Woodland**

CC and MR have arranged to meet Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust's Andy Gunn on 5<sup>th</sup> January.

## **22. Housing development north of Abingdon**

Nothing to report.

## **23. Campaigns**

**Footbridge over the railway.** Nothing to report.

## **24. Traffic issues**

None.

## **25. Maintenance Issues**

The Clerk asked if the stile for the footpath going from Pin Farm to the Devil's Backbone path was still in need of repair and MR said she would have a look and let him know.

## **26. Dates of meetings for 2018**

CC had contacted The Westwood Hotel and been quoted a price of at least £75 for the hire of an appropriate room. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held there on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January.

## **27. Any other business**

None.


## **28. Feedback from members of the public**

None.

**Time concluded: 10.08pm**

**MINUTES SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT NEXT COUNCIL MEETING**

Date of the next Parish Council meeting: Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at 7.30pm  
at The Westwood Hotel

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ 

Date: 11 Jan 18