

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

Monday 5th March 2018

Present: Christine Chater, Michael Cochrane (Chairman), Matthew Frohn (Vice-Chairman), Linda Goodhead, Maggie Rawcliffe
Cllr Bob Johnston (OxonCC), Geoffrey Ferres (Clerk)

Other attendees: Janet Cochrane, Nick Frearson, Duncan Goodhead, Bob Marsden, Rachael Marsden, Graeme Taylor.

Time commenced: 7.30pm

The Chairman welcomed Linda Goodhead to her first meeting as a member of the Council.

1. Apologies

Cllr Emily Smith (VoWHDC).

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Public questions, comments or representations

Graeme Taylor attended the meeting to ask the Council about slow broadband speeds he experiences in the village and to ask if the Council had a view as to the benefits of involving Gigaclear. The Chairman offered him feedback based on Hinksey Hill residents' experiences of the company, of which he is not himself a customer. The broadband speeds the Chairman said he experiences were far in excess of those that Graeme Taylor reported he experiences and the Chairman suggested this might be due to the difference in their distances from the nearest cabinet.

4. Minutes of February 2018 meeting

The Council **resolved** to agree the minutes of the February 2018 meeting and the Chairman signed them.

5. Matters arising – February 2018 meeting

Transparency code for smaller authorities. The Clerk said he was still waiting for confirmation that the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils has paid the grant of £542.57 towards the purchase of a laptop, scanner and software into the Council's account. He reminded the Council that the bank refuses to answer any questions from him about the account because he is not a signatory.

50mph limit on A34. The Clerk said he had discovered the Council's Inbox contained almost 800 conversations or individual items mentioning the A34, so a search would prove very time-consuming. **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.**

Flood barrier. The Clerk contacted Adrian Porter and Peter Rawcliffe about keeping half of the bolts each. He had drafted a receipt, asked them if they would be willing to sign it and brought the bolts and copies of the receipt

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to this meeting in case they had been able to attend. The Council **agreed** that MR could take the bolts and get signed receipts for them.

Community Governance Reviews. The Clerk had sent a letter to Mark Stone, VoWHDC's Chief Executive. Subsequently he was contacted by VoWHDC to request the Chairman's email address and was told that Mark Stone had indeed written to the Chairman on 29th November 2017, a letter that he had obviously never received. The letter denied that VoWHDC's mishandling of the letter from Sunningwell Parish Council amounted to "maladministration of the process".

Mark Stone closed by saying: "I appreciate the concerns that this review has caused South Hinksey Parish Council and apologise for this. As stated in Steven Corrigan's letter to residents, this was not the intention."

Vacancy. The Clerk notified VoWHDC of the co-option of LG and sent her a copy of the Council's Code of Conduct. LG signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the Clerk's presence before the opening of the meeting.

Oxford Airport and RAF Brize Norton consultations. The Chairman had received a response to the two questions he sent: how many flights in the last year have crossed within two miles of Hinksey Hill and at what height; and, following the proposed changes to the airspace, how many flights are envisaged to cross within two miles of Hinksey Hill and at what height – asking in each case whether the height was above ground level or above Sea Level.

6. Finance – payments and receipts

Payments

Payee	Reason	Amount	Power to act
Connor Fintan Slamon	Bramble cutting	£90.00	s10 OSA 1906
Oxfordshire County Council	Traffic island	£3,000.00	s274A HA 1980
Oxford City Council	Grass cutting	£3,855.00	s96 HA 1980
Oxford City Council	Memorial inspection, reinstatement of hedge	£950.00	s214 LGA 1972
Geoffrey Ferres	Clerk pay and expenses	£741.47	s112 LGA 1972
HMRC	PAYE Income Tax & NICs deducted	£565.86	s112 LGA 1972

Receipts

None.

7. County Councillor's report

BJ reported that OxonCC has approved a budget for 2018-19 and that three of the six Oxfordshire councils have signed off the growth deal. He said there would be a vote in July 2018 on the Joint Spatial Study.

He said he has received a briefing on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway from the Highways Agency. The corridor, he was informed, would be chosen this summer and there would now be a non-statutory consultation. It has been decided that the route will not impinge on the City of Oxford. Work on the road should start in 2025 and the road should open in 2030.

8. District Councillors' report


DH and ES had kindly circulated a written report.

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9. Planning applications

8 St Lawrence Road: loft conversion and hip to gable extension, dormer window and side/rear extension [P17/V3086/LDP]. The Clerk had written to VoWHDC who confirmed the Vice-Chairman was correct in saying the application wrongly stated that the property is not within the Green Belt.

9 Manor Road: proposed single-storey side extension, demolition of existing garage, erection of new annex [P18/V0040/HH]. The Clerk had informed VoWHDC that the Council had no objection to the application which has now been amended. *Original* 

Looking at the amended application, the Council **agreed** that the Clerk should write to VoWHDC reinforcing the neighbours' objection on the grounds of loss of privacy.

10. Correspondence

Badger Lane. The Clerk said he had received a message from the Chair of the Badger Lane Management Committee asking questions about obtaining a grit/gravel bin for Badger Lane. He had replied referring her to the information on OxonCC's website and suggesting the Management Committee consider applying to the Council for a grant towards the cost of a bin.

The Council felt such an application would be acceptable in principle, but the Badger Lane Management Committee would have to be responsible for keeping the bin full.

VoWHDC Summer Town and Parish Forum. The Clerk said VoWHDC has announced that its Summer Town and Parish Forum will be held on Thursday 5th July in Wantage between 6pm and 9pm. MR said she thought she might be able to attend.

11. Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Penny Burt and Richard Harding from the Environment Agency addressed the Council and answered questions. Richard Harding said a planning application would soon be submitted to OxonCC. The work would be tendered using the Environment Agency's Framework Agreement. The EA would apply for Compulsory Purchase Orders. The application would be in the form of a Minerals Application although there was no intention to extract minerals. He said the two most important results of the scheme for the parish would be that the village would be at reduced risk from flooding and the groundwater level would be lowered. He said that the final decision would be taken shortly but it was likely the idea of permanently leaving some of the spoil on the land beyond the community woodland would be dropped.

He said about 800,000 tons of material would be removed, the majority via the junction at South Hinksey, and a lorry would join the A34 approximately every five minutes. Work would be permitted from 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday but piling only between 8am and 6pm. Saturday morning working would be allowed but was not generally attractive to contractors. The works compound would be close to the village, but lorries would not, of course, use the roads within the village.

The EA now intended to construct not two bridges but one east of the village with the one bridge able to be used by National Grid vehicles. During the work the path from the village to Old Abingdon Road would be blocked or diverted and the Devil's Backbone would be diverted or shut temporarily. The Old Abingdon Road would be shut for about 6 months.

Penny Burt said there would be a net gain in biodiversity from the project. She acknowledged the scheme would affect some extremely rare MG4a grassland. She said translocation would be attempted, although she acknowledged it had never before been successfully achieved. Throughout the work the contractor would be required to have an Environmental Clerk of Works and a Landscape Clerk of Works.

During the question and answer session, subjects that were particularly discussed were the impact of the lorries on the A34 and traffic around Oxford, and the possible closure of the Devil's Backbone.

Richard Harding assured the meeting that the Highways Agency had not raised any specific concerns about using the A34. He made clear lorries would be likely to head both north and south.

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It was pointed out that diversion of the Devil's Backbone effectively meant closure as the EA envisaged that the diversion would be via the A34 and the Old Abingdon Road. Parishioners expressed the view that closure of the Devil's Backbone would have a massive impact on the village, Graeme Taylor pointed to statistics on use of the Devil's Backbone that had been collected in connection with discussions over the bridge across the railway. The Chairman made clear at the end of the item that closure of the Devil's Backbone would not be acceptable to the parish and that he expected the EA to ensure effective liaison arrangements were in place with suitably senior staff.

12. School transport

The Clerk has sent the draft Memorandum of Understanding to OxonCC's Roy Leach and the Council is now waiting for his response.

13. Grass cutting agreement

OxonCC has written to the Clerk again asking the Council to sign a new grass cutting agreement. The Clerk wrote back disclosing the fact the Council has actually been cutting all the grass verges monthly, not merely those for which OxonCC had delegated responsibility to it. OxonCC invited the Council to sign an agreement to take responsibility for all the verges and sent the Clerk a new map which he checked.

The Clerk asked OxonCC to clarify a couple of points, to have the verges measured so the payment could be calculated and to have a new agreement drafted.

14. Maintenance contract 2018

The Clerk had received two quotations for the 2018 contract: one from the existing contractor, Oxford City Council, for a much-increased price of £4,300 and one from a private company for £4,338.65. After discussion, the Council **unanimously agreed** to award the contract to Oxford City Council.

15. Parish liaison group

The Clerk had received a message from Cllr Paul Wooldridge of Sunningwell Parish Council proposing that the first of the liaison meetings be held on Tuesday 27th or Wednesday 28th March. The Clerk informed him that the Council needs to elect a new representative as the one it had originally chosen is no longer a councillor.

The Clerk is aware that Wootton Parish Council is due to choose a representative tomorrow evening and that it has asked that St Helen Without Parish Council be invited to take part.

LG said she would be willing to attend if the meeting were held on 28th March but was concerned she was new to the Council. CC offered to accompany her. MF said he could attend if the meeting were held on 27th March.

Action: Clerk to contact Cllr Paul Wooldridge.

16. Heavy Goods Vehicles in South Hinksey village

OxonCC's Lee Turner had a site meeting with the Vice-Chairman and MR on 7th February. The Vice-Chairman wrote an article for Echo to inform the parish that the Council had succeeded in getting OxonCC to construct the dividing island its own officers had recommended by agreeing to pay half the £6,000 cost and getting the other half met by a grant from OxonCC's Communities Fund.

OxonCC's Lee Turner informed the Council that the new dividing island is to be constructed this week and the work had indeed started today. MR arranged for the parish to be warned of the works via Shinfo.

17. Hinksey Hill speed limit

Nothing to report.

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18. General Elliott

Nothing to report.

19. European Union's General Data Protection Regulation

Nothing to report.

20. Burial ground

Noticeboard. The Clerk said the Council needed to give him guidance as to the size of the noticeboard required. He said noticeboards were typically priced according to the number of A4 sheets they were intended to display. The Clerk believed a noticeboard that could only hold one or two sheets of A4 would not be adequate.

Action: Clerk to obtain quotes for a hardwood noticeboard capable of displaying three or four sheets of A4 to be installed at the burial ground.

Business rates. The Clerk said he had been contacted by Father James Wilkinson to say a number of items about business rates had been delivered to St Laurence's Church. The Clerk had contacted VoWHDC's contractors Capita who had promised to address bills for 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 to the Council, but no bills had yet been received.

21. Community Woodland

The Clerk had tabled a report and had circulated reports later sent to him by the Rural Payments Agency and the Forestry Commission. The Council has now been assured it will receive its 2017-18 payment.

The RPA report contained an unsupported statement on page 2 that the Council had "obstructed or refused entry to" the agency. The Clerk felt that the Forestry Commission report bore no relation to the feedback the same officer had given the Council when he conducted a previous inspection with MR and the Clerk. The latest inspection had been conducted without informing the Council.

The Council **agreed** to invite the Forestry Commission's Sam Riley to its June meeting or, if that were not convenient for him, its April or July meeting. **Action: Clerk to contact Sam Riley.**

The Council also **agreed** to take up with the RPA the claim that the Council had tried to obstruct or refuse entry to the agency. **Action: Clerk to write to the RPA.**

Brambles. The contractor carried out six hours' work clearing brambles on 6th February. The Clerk consulted MR about the urgency of further work clearing brambles and the Clerk had asked the contractor to do another six hours' work as the cost would be less than £100 and sufficient money remained for this item in the budget.

BBOWT. MR asked why the Clerk had not sent Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust's Andy Gunn all relevant information about the management of the woodland, including the plan and the grant conditions imposed by the Forestry Commission and the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment. The Clerk said he had delayed doing so due to the seriousness of the situation regarding the Council's grant.


After discussion, it was **agreed** the Council would also share the RPA and Forestry Commission reports with BBOWT's Andy Gunn. **Action: Clerk to send all relevant information to BBOWT's Andy Gunn.**

22. Housing development north of Abingdon

Nothing to report.

23. Campaigns

Footbridge over the railway. Nothing to report.

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24. Traffic issues

None.

25. Maintenance issues

The Clerk reported that OxonCC has yet to repair the 30mph sign at the junction of Manor Road and Parker Road which a resident first reported as damaged in September 2017.

The Clerk has still received no response from the farmer regarding the stile for the footpath going from Pin Farm to the Devil's Backbone. It was **agreed** the Council would continue to seek the farmer's co-operation in this matter.

The Vice-Chairman said he has written to two people about the need to replace the light on the roundabout at the entrance to the village after asking the advice of OxonCC's Lee Turner.

The Clerk said no one has yet reported the condition of the path at Church Close and the need for attention to the empty salt bins via FixMyStreet.

26. Any other business

None.

27. Feedback from members of the public

None.

Time concluded: 10.05pm

MINUTES SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Date of the next Parish Council meeting: Monday 9th April 2018 at 7.30pm
at South Hinksey Village Hall

Signed: _____ 

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