

Minutes of the South Hinksey Annual Parish Meeting
Thursday 30th May 2019

Present:

Hilary Briffett, Chris Chater (Parish Councillor), Janet Cochrane, Michael Cochrane (Chairman, Parish Council), Dudley Goodhead, Linda Goodhead (Parish Councillor), Pat Jones (Vice-Chair, Parish Council), Libby Jukes, Janet Lester, Martin Lester, Christine Madsen, David Minns, Maggie Rawcliffe, Paul Simmons, Paula Simmons, Pieter Jo Slater, Linda Slater, Matt Wells and Geoffrey Ferres (Parish Clerk)

1. Apologies

Andrew Beggin, Leila Beggin and Linda Bloch.

2. Minutes of the 2018 Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes were taken as read and agreed.

3. Minutes of the Parish Meeting on the Flood Alleviation Scheme held on January 2019

The minutes were taken as read and agreed.

4. Report of the Parish Council

Michael Cochrane delivered a report on behalf of the Parish Council.

He outlined what had happened or not happened in the past year about the Council's major projects: the traffic island at the entrance to the village, the reduction in the speed limit on Hinksey Hill to 30mph and the path across the churchyard and the burial ground from St Lawrence Road to Parker Road.

He went on to outline the Council's finances. He reminded the meeting that the precept had been increased one year ago so it not only covered the Council's core expenditure of about £11,000 per year but enabled the Council to undertake projects while maintaining adequate reserves.

He said that in the new financial year the Council had put aside £5,000 towards the £21,000 total cost of the 30mph limit on Hinksey Hill and money to help the Council deal with the impact on the parish of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme.

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He outlined the close relationship between the parish council and the local district and county councillors.

He thanked Matthew Frohn, who had now stood down from the Council, for all his work and he thanked all the current councillors and the Clerk.

5. Report of the Village Hall Management Committee

Maggie Rawcliffe read a report on behalf of the Village Hall Management Committee which the Clerk said would be made available on the parish website.

6. Report of the Parochial Church Council

No report had been received. The Chairman reported that in the past year Father James Wilkinson, the vicar, had left and not yet been replaced. Father Ben Drury would also be leaving shortly.

In answer to a question, the Clerk said that there was no longer a church warden from St Laurence's now that Pearl Livett had stood down.

7. Report on the reduction in the speed limit on Hinksey Hill to 30mph

Christine Chater gave a report on behalf of the Parish Council. She explained that there had not been a single objection to the proposal during the County Council's public consultation.

She said she was constantly chasing the County Council about the Traffic Regulation Order and the works. She understood the County Council had decided the sum it was lending the Parish Council was so small it only merited a memorandum rather than a full loan agreement.

8. Report on the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Pat Jones gave a report on behalf of the Parish Council. She advised the meeting that the planning application would probably not be considered before the autumn due to issues with the compulsory purchase orders the Environment Agency was seeking. She said this therefore meant the work would probably not start until 2020.

She then advised the meeting of the four concerns the Council had raised about the implementation of the scheme.

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- a) The Council had pressed the Environment Agency to give a commitment that the diversion of the Devil's Backbone would meet the same standards of accessibility as the current path which, as far as the Council was concerned, meant it would have to be of similar surface, of similar width and raised above the level of the fields.

She reported that on this at least the Council had eventually secured a success and the Environment Agency had now given this commitment.

- b) The Council had told the Environment Agency that throughout the period of the works there should be channels of communication at appropriately senior levels between the Council, the Environment Agency and the contractor including frequent, regular meetings.

She reported that the Environment Agency has now offered a significant level of communication with the Council.

- c) One of the Council's biggest concerns had been the Environment Agency's proposals to move almost all the spoil from the works onto the A34 at South Hinksey using a fleet of huge lorries.

The Council was concerned about the noise and air pollution, and about the impact the lorries would have on the A34 and villagers' ability to get in and out of the village.

The Council had pressed the Environment Agency to consider movement of spoil by rail, to change the spot where the spoil would join the A34 and to limit the hours at which the lorries would come and go.

She felt the Environment Agency had so far shown little regard for parishioners' concerns about this.

- d) Finally, she spoke about how the Council had asked the Environment Agency to keep the works well away from homes and gardens, suggesting a 100 metre "buffer".

She reported that the Agency has now agreed not to site the toilets against people's gardens and to keep the temporary buildings a bit farther from people's homes but the lorries would still pass right by some villagers' gardens every three minutes of the day for nine months per year for four years which was intolerable.

A parishioner asked how the workforce was expected to travel to and from the site each day. Pat Jones said it was claimed the

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workforce would park at the Redbridge Park and Ride and be transferred between there and the site by shuttle bus. The Council wanted to see a detailed travel plan.

Paul Simmons referred to the objections raised by the Oxford Preservation Trust. Pat Jones said it was important to appreciate the main purpose of the scheme is not to protect the village but to protect the commercial access to the City, which is from the west and the south – the Botley Road and the Abingdon Road – which were both vulnerable to flooding.

The Council emphasised the importance of parishioners attending next Monday's meeting in the Village Hall where the Environment Agency would seek to persuade parishioners to drop their objections to the way the scheme would be implemented.

Pat Jones said she had invited the local MP Layla Moran to come to the meeting and show support for parishioners' concerns.

Pieter Joe Slater suggested the Council seek the support of Baroness Blackwood because she had been very supportive of villagers during the flooding while she was the local MP.

Pat Jones said that up to now no support had been forthcoming from the Vale of White Horse District Council but she hoped this might change now our district councillors are the new Leader and Deputy Leader of that council.

Paul Simmons commented that the current proposals are for the scheme to be managed for only ten years.

The meeting thanked Pat Jones for her efforts on the parish's behalf.

9. Report on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

Linda Goodhead gave a report on behalf of the Parish Council. She set out the approach the Council had adopted, which was not to take issue with the idea of improved road links between Oxford and Cambridge but to focus on the impact there would be on the village if the A34 through the parish became part of the route and the possible benefits to the parish and the people of Oxford if the existing A34 reverted to its original function of being a part of the Oxford ring road.

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10. Questions from parishioners

David Minns asked whether the Council's contractors were properly cutting the verge on the western side of Parker Road. The Clerk said he would look into it.

Matt Wells said he felt the Council was probably focussing on the right things.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.26pm.

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