

Minutes of the 2022 annual meeting of South Hinksey Parish Council held at South Hinksey Village Hall on Monday 9th May 2022

Present: Christine Chater, Michael Cochrane (Chairman), Linda Goodhead, Patricia Jones (Vice-Chair) and Janet Lester
Cllr Bob Johnston (OxonCC), Geoffrey Ferres (Clerk).

Other attendees: Dudley Goodhead, Martin Lester and Richard Peacock.

Time commenced: 7.02pm

Procedural items

22/1. Election of Chairman for 2022-23

The Council **unanimously re-elected** Michael Cochrane. The Chairman then signed a declaration of acceptance of office.

22/2. Election of Vice-Chair for 2022-23

The Council **unanimously re-elected** Patricia Jones. The Vice-Chair then signed a declaration of acceptance of office.

22/3. Apologies

Cllr Debby Hallett (VoWHDC) and Cllr Emily Smith (VoWHDC).

22/4. Declarations of interest

All members declared an interest in relation to the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme, the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway and the A34 Improvement Project.

22/5. Public questions, comments or representations not relating to the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

None.

22/6. Minutes of the last ordinary meeting

The Council **agreed** the minutes of the April 2022 meeting and the Chairman signed the minutes on each page. **Action: Clerk to publish signed minutes on Council's website**

Audit 2021-22 items

22/7. Annual Governance Questionnaire 2021-22

The Council **noted** the responses given by the Chairman to the auditor's Annual Governance Questionnaire 2022-23.

22/8. Annual Governance Statement 2021-22

The Council considered its responses to the assertions in the Annual Governance Statement 2022-23 and **agreed** to answer:

Signed: _____

Date: Monday 13th June 2022

- “Yes” to assertions 1-8
- “Not applicable” to assertion 9.

The Chairman and the Clerk then signed the Annual Governance Statement.

Action: Clerk to publish the signed Annual Governance Statement on the Council’s website

22/9. Accounting Statements for 2021-22

The Council **approved** the unaudited Accounting Statements for 2021-22 prepared by the Clerk in his capacity as Responsible Financial Officer.

The Chairman then signed the unaudited Accounting Statements for 2021-22.

Action: Clerk to publish the signed but unaudited Accounting Statements on the Council’s website

The Council **noted** the full unaudited accounts prepared by the Clerk in his capacity as Responsible Financial Officer.

Urgent business items

22/10. Insurance

The Council **agreed unanimously** to renew the current policy with BHIB Ltd for one further year, the final year of the current long-term agreement, at a cost of £345.02.

The Chairman and LG initialled the supporting paperwork and the cheque stub, and signed a cheque. **Action: Clerk to send cheque to BHIB Ltd**

22/11. Finance – payments and receipts

a) Payments

The Council **approved** the following payments:

Reason	Amount	Payee	Power to act
Hire for flood alleviation scheme planning application consultation meeting	£27.50	South Hinksey Village Hall	s133 LGA 1972
SE Regional Training Seminar	£102.00	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	s111 LGA 1972
Clerk net pay April	£424.05	Geoffrey Ferres	s112 LGA 1972

The Chairman and LG initialled the supporting paperwork and the cheque stubs, and signed the payments. **Action: Clerk to send payment to SLCC Enterprises Ltd**

b) Receipts

The Clerk informed the Council of the following receipts since the last meeting:

Reason	Amount	Payer
First half precept 2022-23	£10,348.00	VoWHDC
VAT refund 2021-22 Q4	£1,137.41	HMRC

22/12. County Councillor’s report

BJ said he is still waiting for final information regarding the Lodge Hill traffic calming measures.

The Vice-Chair complained about problems experienced by people attempting to comment on the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme planning application via OxonCC’s

planning portal. BJ said he was made aware of the problems last week and had raised them at the highest level.

BJ left the meeting before the Council discussed any planning application.

22/13. District Councillors' report

None.

22/14. Public questions, comments or representations relating to the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Chairman said he felt he needed to address four matters of procedure:

- a) The Council **agreed unanimously** to suspend Standing Order 9.1 for the remainder of the meeting.
- b) The Chairman indicated he would exercise his power under Standing Order 9.5 to allow the proposals regarding the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme to be dealt with at the meeting rather than being referred to the Flood Alleviation Committee.
- c) The Council **agreed unanimously** that it would seek no further extension from OxonCC to the consultation deadline
- d) The Council **agreed unanimously** that any business not reached this evening would be deferred to the Council's next meeting.

The Chairman said he had today received two letters from parishioners who were unable to attend the meeting: Dr Victoria Nash and Adrian Porter. He summarised each in turn. He said he felt Dr Nash had raised a new point regarding the Electric Road which was not covered in any of the proposals before the meeting.

Village councillors asked that the letter also be summarised which Dr Frances Gardner had sent to the Clerk on the day of the consultation meeting. The Chairman did so.

Richard Peacock addressed the Council. He thanked the Village councillors for arranging the meeting on 26th April. He believed it was an excellent exercise in democracy. He said a scheme is needed but not the scheme put forward by the Environment Agency (EA) because of two elements: destruction of the meadow; movement of spoil by road.

Martin Lester echoed Richard Peacock's comments about the value of the consultation meeting. He said the community needs to understand that the councillors are representatives, not delegates.

22/15. Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

BJ said he had succeeded in gaining changes to the tree planting, eliminating plans to plant ash (vulnerable to ash dieback) and sycamore (not a native species). He will attend the Committee and is happy to press the Council's comments.

Chairman outlined the procedure the meeting would follow.

The Vice-Chair read a statement on behalf of the Village councillors moving their proposals which she asked to be placed on record. Her statement was as follows:

"We have spoken to a number of residents in various fora about the scheme and it is fair to say that views cover a very wide range from don't want a scheme at all to unconditional support for it, through redesign, rethink, concern about effects and ambivalence. The PC has not conducted a Parish Poll or a statistically-balanced

survey that would clarify opinion so the best view we have is what we have heard. As ward parish councillors, we have reflected on this and agreed that this range of opinion, except where that would seem irrational such as no scheme at all or unconditional acceptance, should be reflected in the response. We can see no reason not to do this and believe our motion does this. There are three motions in front of us that serve to amend.

Linda's motion at para 24 in our paper has been accepted.

Linda's motion to change our paper at para 5 has not been accepted because it would require change to two significant sections in the response. Clearly, we want our response to be taken seriously so it needs to be rational. We cannot therefore say we support this scheme and then:

- Call for a step back to rethink on design to be certain, or
- Say that the plans for the movement of spoil will not work and are dangerous and should not be considered because of course this renders the scheme in front of us undeliverable

Removing these two sections would be a poor reflection of the issues for us and residents and we therefore cannot support it.

We have changed the statement at para 5 in response to comments and what we have written does not rule out the scheme in front of us but does allow for "doubt" to be raised and discussed in the response. Our statement on this issue is significantly more firm in favour of a scheme and possibly this scheme than our previous response when we were silent on the matter of support or otherwise. We are of course much better informed now than we were almost three years ago when we came late to the discussion. The statement is clear that it commits to a scheme and this scheme should it be the only game in town. This is balanced, reflective and allows all views to be accommodated in a rational way.

Michael's motion B includes a statement on the meadows asking to adjust the scheme without too much disturbance to the plans in an effort to save some of the meadows. This is not capable of delivery in our opinion and therefore we cannot accept it. The planning application and discussions with senior officers at the EA have made it clear that the efficacy of the channel is affected by its route. The EA have made some minor changes in an effort to protect some of the MG4 grassland but this is at the limit of what they can do within this proposal. Councillors will have seen in the planning application (appendix Q to the Environmental Statement) that to change the design in the meadows would need a redesigned scheme.

We had not of course three years ago heard of any possible alternatives. Since then, we have seen a presentation on a pumping scheme, which some members have said they favour, and a presentation of the smoothed floodplain scheme. The second of these was on 26 April. This meeting was discussed at the parish council meeting on 4 April to gain support and offer an invitation to all parish councillors and other elected representatives. Of course, parish councillors would also have been invited as parishioners as well. Cllr Emily Smith did attend and we would like to place on record our thanks to her for taking the time. In addition, councillors will have seen in the planning application's Environmental Statement three alternative schemes which are robustly argued by professionals on both sides.

We draw our conclusions from this in paras 9-12 which are self-explanatory and we believe reasonable.

Our view is therefore that the motion we have made represents the broad views of South Hinksey as we have heard, states a commitment to a scheme and further commits to the scheme before us should it be the only game in town. In addition, it

states clearly our overriding aim as the delivery of a scheme. The motion makes clear requests to the planning authority that are capable of delivery should they choose to agree and is not contradictory. We commend it to you.”

CC said she was minded to support the EA scheme.

LG proposed her amendment to paragraph 5 of the Village councillors’ proposal. She said she had changed her mind on the pumped scheme put forward by the Hinksey and Osney Environment Group.

She wanted to make it clear that she now supported the OFAS scheme as it was the only scheme on the table and there seemed to be a risk that if this were not accepted at this stage, albeit with the many logistical problems that need to be addressed both ahead of the implementation and during the construction stage, then there was a real possibility that we should end up with no scheme at all. This would be the worst possible scenario.

Councillors discussed whether it was appropriate for the meeting now to consider an alternative to the EA’s scheme, the smoothed flood plain scheme, which had never been presented to it.

The Vice-Chair responded. The Council voted 2-2 with the Chairman not exercising a deliberative vote. He then exercised his casting vote in favour of LG’s amendment.

LG withdrew her other amendment on the basis it had been included in the Village councillors’ final proposals.

The Chairman explained why he had put forward two alternative responses to the application. The Vice-Chair said she wished the Council to make comments on the grassland. The Chairman then withdrew his version A and proposed his version B.

The Vice-Chair said the EA is clear that the destruction of the meadow cannot be further reduced or their scheme will not work. The Council then **unanimously approved** the Chairman’s version B.

The Council then discussed the issue of the Electric Road raised by Dr Nash. The Council acknowledged the Electric Road is not a right of way but it is shown on maps as a cycle route. The Council **agreed unanimously** to add a new paragraph 21 and amend the existing paragraph 21.

- The new paragraph 21 to read as follows: “The Council is concerned that the path known locally as the Electric Road is subject to temporary closure without diversion. This is an important path for both access and recreation and noting the EA’s Frequently Asked Questions state that the Electric Road will not be closed during the construction works. The maintaining of the open Electric Road should be a condition in the planning application.”
- The addition to the existing paragraph 21 to read as follows: “Similarly, the maintaining of the Electric Road being open should be a condition of the planning application.”

JL proposed that the Village councillors’ paragraph 11 be inserted into the Chairman’s version B as the penultimate paragraph. The proposal was defeated by 2 votes to 3.

LG wanted her thanks to the Vice-Chair to be recorded for all the work she has done in relation to the Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Annual business items

22/16. Asset Register end year 2021-22

The Council **noted** an updated Register of Assets presented by the Clerk in his capacity as Responsible Financial Officer.

22/17. Financial Regulations

Deferred to the next meeting.

22/18. Code of Conduct

The Council **unanimously re-adopted** the existing Oxfordshire model Code of Conduct without amendment.

22/19. Complaints Procedure

The Council **unanimously re-adopted** its existing Complaints Procedure without amendment.

22/20. Burial Ground Rules and Regulations

The Clerk reported that Oxford City Council has not increased its fees for 2022-23. The Council **re-adopted** its existing Burial Ground Rules and Regulations.

22/21. Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy

The Council **unanimously re-adopted** its existing Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy without amendment.

22/22. Records Management and Retention Policy

The Council **unanimously re-adopted** its existing Records Management and Retention Policy without amendment.

22/23. Guide to Information and Schedule of Fees

The Council **unanimously re-adopted** its existing Guide to Information and Schedule of Fees without amendment.

22/24. Election of representatives

The Council **re-elected** LG as its representative on the Community Action Group and the Botley Traffic Advisory Committee.

The Council did not elect a Planning Champion or a Parish Transport Representative.

22/25. Election of committees

The Council **agreed** to re-appoint the Woodland Committee and to appoint CC and JL to be members of the Woodland Committee.

22/26. Annual subscriptions

Deferred to the next meeting.

Minute book gf page 231

22/27. Bank mandate

Deferred to the next meeting.

22/28. Direct Debits and Standing Orders

Deferred to the next meeting.

Other urgent business items

22/29. Planning applications

Deferred to the next meeting.

22/30. Feedback from members of the public

Deferred to the next meeting.

Time concluded: 9.30pm

MINUTES SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Date of the next Parish Council meeting: Monday 13th June 2022

Signed: _____

Date: Monday 13th June 2022