

Minutes of the meeting of Sonning Common Parish Council held on Monday 14 December 2015 in the Village Hall

Present: Mr Kedge (Chairman); Mr Fort; Mr Greenwood; Mr Jones; Mrs Phillips-Tilbury; Mr Rawlins; Mr Reynolds; Mr Stoves plus Mr Collings (Parish Clerk); Mrs Varnes (Deputy PC).

Also present for 16/099 Councillor D Bartholomew.

- 16/094 Apologies for absence: Mrs Diwell; Mrs Lewis; Mr Richens and Mr Rust.
No declarations of interests
- 16/095 Public Question Time: Speaking from the floor, Mrs Phillips-Tilbury expressed concerns about the lack of clear marking of disabled parking bays and at the loss of space for composting bins. She was advised that new signage is being ordered for the disabled bays but that new space for the bins cannot be found. The parish office will try to arrange for a brown bin to be provided for Village Gardeners garden waste.
- 16/096 Tree planting proposal: Deferred as Mr Stone was unable to attend.
- 16/097 Police Report previously circulated – taken as read.
- 16/098 Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 2 December 2015 were presented and approved.
Minutes of previous meetings:
098.01 Planning Committees held on 16 November 2015 were presented and approved.
098.02 Parish Council meeting held on 16 November 2015 were presented and approved.
- 16/099 County Councillor's Report: Cllr Bartholomew's report is appended to these minutes.
- 16/100 District Councillor's Report: Cllr Harrison was unable to attend but the meeting expressed thanks for his efforts in support of the 2A Grove Road application.
- 16/101 Parish Clerk's Report - noted.
- 16/102 Skatepark: In Mrs Lewis's absence Mrs Varnes advised that title registration was still progressing slowly and that a grant application for £12.5K for bins etc was in progress.
- 16/103 Neighbourhood Development Plan: Mr Greenwood described all the activities under way leading to the formal submission of the plan. It was resolved that the NDP Working Party be authorised to make the formal submission of the plan without further reference to the parish council.
- 16/104 Precept for 2016-17: Budget proposals from the Finance Committee and RFO were reviewed in detail and it was resolved to set the Precept for 2016/17 at £103,500 and to so advise SODC.
- 16/105 Code of Conduct: A proposed updated Code was discussed and it was resolved that it be adopted with a minor amendment to wording in section 20.
- 16/106 Matters for future agendas: Ideas for traffic management on Grove Road.

Next meeting: Monday 18 January 2016 at 20.00.

Chairman: Dated:

Appendix A

REPORT TO SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL DECEMBER 2015

FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

AUTUMN STATEMENT/COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW – IMPACT ON OCC

Chancellor George Osborne delivered his Autumn Statement on Wednesday 25 November, including details of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The CSR confirmed that core Central Government funding (comprising business rates and revenue support grant) to Local Government will fall by 24% in real terms over the next four years. When taking into account Office of Budget Responsibility forecasts of other income raised locally by councils, the overall position is a 6.7% real terms reduction, which means difficult decisions will have to be taken by OCC when preparing the forthcoming budget after full details of the Local Government Settlement have been received. Key CSR announcements were:

1. Local authorities responsible for adult social care (which includes OCC) would be given the option to increase Council Tax by 2% to fund the increased costs of adult social care associated with the new National Living Wage. This is in addition to the 2% increase councils are permitted without a referendum, meaning OCC can now consider a 4% rise in Council Tax. However, this has to be seen in the context that most OCC residents will not have had a 4% wage rise.
2. An additional £1.5bn of funding for Local Government from the Better Care Fund will be made available by 2019-20. This must be considered against the background of an ageing population and a 94% increase in demand for home care since 2011, with similar increases expected over the coming years.
3. Ring-fencing of the public health grant will continue in 2016/7 and 2017/8.
4. Confirmation of £12bn Local Growth Fund allocations for 2015/16 to 2020/21 made through Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).
5. An extra £250m of funding for pothole repairs for five years to 2020/21. However, it has to be confirmed if this is annual or over the review period. The allocation for Oxfordshire would be around £2.5m.
6. The New Homes Bonus is to be reformed with proposals to include a 'sharpening of the incentive' and reduction in payment period from six years to four.

DEVOLUTION

OCC Leader Ian Hudspeth, along with the District councils, LEP and Health colleagues, will be presenting the Oxfordshire devolution proposal to Secretary of State Greg Clark in early December. This is an opportunity for Oxfordshire to have devolved powers to provide the infrastructure required to deliver the 86,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes by 2030. The proposal also includes the integration of Health and Social care – the aim is to reduce duplication, improve efficiency and provide a better Health care system for all of Oxfordshire's 670,000 residents.

CHILDREN'S CENTRES & EARLY YEARS CONSULTATION

The consultation detailed in last month's report runs for a few more weeks until the end of Sunday 10 January 2016.

COUNCIL LAUNCHES 'FOSTERING-FRIENDLY' CAMPAIGN

OCC is joining forces with local employers and other organisations to make the county the most 'fostering friendly' place and encourage more people to foster children. The aim is to create the best possible environment for foster carers by harnessing wider support and building greater recognition for the special role foster carers play in society. Partner organisations are being invited to pledge support by signing a 'Fostering Friendly Covenant', which sets out their commitment to supporting staff, volunteers or members who foster, and to promoting foster care more widely. Details here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2015/nov/council-launches-'fostering-friendly'-campaign>

PROVISIONAL GCSE DATA

The Department for Education has published provisional GCSE results for 2015. Key Headlines for Oxfordshire schools:

- 59.1% of pupils achieved five or more A*-C grades, including English and Maths
- 73.1% made the expected level of progress in English
- 70.5% made the expected level of progress in Maths

Across the country performance was down slightly on 2014 levels but Oxfordshire remains above average. (NB the data will not be finalised until early 2016 and may change.)

ADDITIONAL BROADBAND FUNDING

An extra £5.58m of funding has been announced. This comes from: Oxfordshire LEP, £2m; South East Midlands LEP and Cherwell District Council, £120,000; Oxford City Council, £168,000; Government's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) programme, £2.2m; BT, £1.1m. This means more than 4,600 additional businesses and homes across Oxfordshire will be able to access superfast fibre broadband. The percentage of county homes and businesses able to get superfast fibre broadband will be increased to more than 95%. More details can be found out at www.betterbroadbandoxfordshire.org.uk.

PREPARATIONS FOR WINTER WEATHER

OCC is fully prepared for winter with a full fleet of 31 gritting vehicles, which have been serviced and tested over the summer. They are ready to run on 28 routes, covering a total distance of 1200 miles. Winter depots have been stocked with 12,500 tonnes of salt, which allows OCC to undertake 50 gritting runs of the entire network (at 240 tonnes per run). Since the last major 'snow event', OCC has increased the starting stock of salt by a third and has also restocked the county's 1300 salt bins. Free bulk bags of salt have been offered to all town and parish councils. The take-up so far this year has been minimal, with only 52 requested, as stocks have been retained from previous years. The daily update on whether roads will be gritted is posted on the winter pages of the OCC's web site <http://winter.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/>

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR SONNING COMMON GROVE ROAD TRAFFIC

I note the suggestions put forward by the PCSO and await further input from the PC after the January meeting.

OAKLEY WOOD HWRC

I am pleased to report that officers are now recommending that a reduction in the number of HWRCs should not happen until extensive further analysis has taken place. Subject to approval of the report by OCC Cabinet this week, this should mean Oakley Wood is safe in the medium term at least.

COUNCIL TAX COMPARISON & ROADS DATA

As requested by Cllr Rawlins, I have supplied relevant information and data on these matters.