

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of Sonning Common Parish Council held in the Village Hall at 20.00 on 16 May 2011

Present: Mr Rooke Chairman; Mrs Diwell; Mr Fort; Miss Hunt; Mr Jones; Mr Kedge; Mrs Lewis; Ms Noble; Mrs Phillips-Tilbury; Mr Stoves. Also present: one member of the Press and seven members of the public.

12/18 Apologies for absence – received from Mr Greenwood and Mr Reynolds

12/19 Declarations of Interests by Members on Agenda Items – none.

12/20 Public Question Time under Section 30 of Standing Orders

Mrs Holmes asked what was being done about the shabby state of hedgerows in the village. It was explained that there had been a delay in the start of the grass cutting programme but that it is now under way. Regarding hedges Mr Kedge reminded that these are almost always the responsibility of the owner and that the Parish Clerk is always prepared to write to owners whose hedges obtrude on footpaths etc.

Mrs Frayling-Cork asked if trees at the entrance to Red House Drive can be pollarded again as used to happen. Clerk to investigate and advise.

12/21 Minutes of previous meetings:

21.01 Planning Committee held on 18 April 2011 – approved.

21.02 Parish Council held on 18 April 2011 – approved.

21.03 Finance Committee held on 4 May 2011 - ratified.

21.04 Annual Parish Meeting of electors held on 18 April 2011 - approved.

12/22 Matters arising from those minutes - none

12/23 County Councillor's Report – Mrs Viney's report is attached as Appendix A.

12/24 District Councillor's Report – Mr Harrison's report is attached as Appendix B.

12/24a PCSO's Report – PCSO Forrest's report is attached as Appendix C.

12/25 Village Hall and Car Park

25.01 Public Toilets progress update

25.02 Car Park signage costs update

These items were used to introduce the new Parish Clerk's Report which is intended to inform Members of:

- A. Progress with tasks specifically assigned to him;
- B. Progress with tasks being overseen by Members;
- C. Matters affecting the day-to-day running of the Council's business;
- D. Regulatory and legislative changes anticipated;
- E. Issues relevant to the Council that he believes may arise.

The report was welcomed as an effective way to improve the use of Member's time and will be produced for each meeting. Mrs Lewis raised the matter of the Clerk's office backlog workload and suggested the possibility of his being able to use a work experience student to help with. Questions were raised about the advisability in the context of actually adding to the workload. The Clerk expressed his willingness to use such assistance as a way of helping a young person to get office experience. Mrs Lewis to explore with the Henley College.

12/26 Footpaths, Green, Flower beds, Play areas and Open Spaces

26.01 Play Area Inspection Reports – The Clerk reported that these are being received regularly.

26.02 Allotments – water charges dispute – The Clerk reported that this matter has been resolved satisfactorily.

26.03 Path from Abbeycrest Nursing Home to Millenium Field.
The Council endorsed the Planning Committee's request to support tarmac-ing the path from the home to the Millennium Field to ease the effort of wheeling residents to sit in the field. The Clerk Council was instruct to write the necessary letter.

26.04 Flower Beds. Mrs Phillips-Tilbury outlined progress made by the Village Gardeners and advised that there is a backlog of work for which help is always needed.

12/27 Village Hall Solar Gain reduction.

27.01 The Clerk presented the three quotations received. The award of the work to Absolute Window Films to the value of £605.00 plus VAT was approved. Clerk to action.

12/28 New Working Parties as requested by the Finance Committee meeting of 4 April 2011.

28.01 Council discussed the Finance Committee's proposal to set up three new Working Parties (Advisory Committees as defined by Standing Order 19) to come up with outline costed proposals for specific improvements in each of:

1. Play area security.
2. Footpaths
3. Notice-boards

It was agreed that the Advisory Committees will adhere to the generic remit* circulated at the meeting and they will report back to the 18 July Council meeting. Members were nominated and approved to them as follows:

1. Play areas – Mrs Lewis and Mr Kedge
2. Footpath improvements – Mr Stoves and Ms Noble
3. Notice-boards – Mrs Phillips-Tilbury and Mr Greenwood with Mrs Diwell and Mr Fort to advise on proposals for Widmore Pond.

* The Clerk is to finalise and circulate the remit in light of suggestions made and assist any of the Advisory Committees in completing theirs if required.

12/29 Quality Parish Council. A motion to begin the accreditation process for Quality Parish Council status and to authorise the Clerk to register for and undertake CiCLA studies in addition to his normal duties was proposed by Mr Kedge and passed unanimously.

12/30 Matters for future consideration

Mr Jones suggested that the Council should find out if it can have an increased membership in light of the growing workload.

It was confirmed that the next Meeting will be on 20 June 2011 at 20.00 hrs.

The meeting closed at 21.06.

Chairman..... Date.....

Appendix A – County Councillor’s report - Mrs C Viney.

The County Council meets at 10.00 am tomorrow for it's AGM. My first meeting is 9.00am. We will be electing the Chairman and Deputy Chairmen of the Council, the Scrutiny Chairmen and members of other committees for the coming year.

I attended the Safer & Stronger Community Scrutiny Committee last Monday. We received a report from the Chief Officer for Oxford Fire and Rescue who reported on the help they had given to overcome the woodland fires in Bracknell.

Although the County Council did not have elections this year, following the District and Unitary Council elections across the Thames Valley, I have, as the Chairman of the Local Authority Appointments Committee to the Thames Valley Police Authority, have to collate the results of the elections in The six Berkshire Unitary Authorities and Milton Keynes, to see if the proportionality of the elected members to the Thames Valley Police Authority needs to be adjusted. We undertake the same exercise when, in 2 years time, both Oxfordshire County Council and Buckinghamshire County Council have elections. However, if the legislation currently going through Parliament at the moment for directly elected Police Commissioners is passed, this may alter.

Library Update.

The consultation process has now started (just) and I will keep you posted as soon as I have any information. We are not expecting a decision until September. However, I am hopeful that a core service will be maintained and can be topped up with some volunteers. I have and will continue to argue for fairness across the board.

Youth Club

The Chiltern Edge Management Committee is making good progress towards keeping the youth club functioning when OCC withdraw the funding in September.

We are looking to see what grants and funds can be applied for under the County Council Big Society Fund. Colin Reynolds, the SCPC representative on the CEMC has made a very welcome contribution to our committee. He has experience with young people and is clearly becoming a very valuable member of the committee. We are hoping to encourage others who, while they may not have the time to attend regular meetings, may have some particular expertise we could benefit from.

Appendix B – District Councillor’s Report – Mr P Harrison

Mr Harrison reported on the election results pointing out that he and Mr Rooke had topped the poll. There is an enquiry taking place into the problems with the count. He congratulated Sonning Common for an excellent turnout. Regarding the application for development on Kennylands Road he stated his opposition especially as it is in the AONB. He advised that the SODC Core Strategy is now with Government and that SODC is maintaining a five year land bank to help manage development. He strongly supported the proposal for the Parish Council to seek Quality Parish Council status.

Appendix C – Police Report - PCSO T Forrest.

His team is back up to full strength (3).

They are clamping down on school parking problems

They await information on the painting of double yellow lines (Mrs Viney to advise)

They are patrolling play areas to prevent teenagers from frightening smaller children and, in response to a question from Mr Stoves, they are trying to prevent motorbikes from using footpaths.