

Minutes of the meeting of Sonning Common Parish Council held on Monday 21 May 2012 at 20.00 hrs in the Village Hall

Present: Mr Kedge (Chairman); Mr Stoves; Mrs Diwell; Mr Greenwood; Miss Hunt; Mr Jones; Ms Noble; Mrs Phillips-Tilbury; Mrs Lewis and Mrs MacGowan. Mr P Simms (Henley Standard)

- 13/018 Apologies for absence: Mr Fort, Mr Reynolds and County Councillor Viney.
- 13/019 Declarations of Interests by Members on Agenda Item: None.
- 13/020 Public Question Time: No members of the public present.
- 13/021 The Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 9 May 2012 were presented and ratified.
- 13/022 The Minutes of meetings of the Planning Committee held on 16 April and 1 May 2012 were presented and approved.
- 13/023 County Councillor's Report: The Parish Clerk read this report in which Councillor Viney stated: After a discussion with Cllr. John Stoves I have walked the village with him and subsequently, the Area Steward, looking at the very bad footpaths in Margaret Allwright Way and Fulford Way. I have also seen the state of the road in Ashford Avenue, caused by utility repairs which have decayed. The Area Steward is currently working out how much of this can be undertaken with my locality budget, bearing in mind there are issues which need attention in my other 5 Parishes. I am hopeful that we can do some repairs on each of the footpaths. I am hoping to have the information ready to update you at the June Parish Council meeting.
- Following the major work done by British Gas in the village recently can I ask to be notified of any problems/ breakdown of the road repairs at these sites. We have a policy of ensuring that any repairs are of good standard. If they are not, or the road begins to break down prematurely, Highways at OCC are determined to get the Gas Company's contractors back to redo it and enforce this more rigidly than has been the case in recent years. If the County Council have to go behind them it costs you, the taxpayer.
- 13/024 District Councillor's Report: Councillor Harrison was not present.
- 13/025 Parish Clerk's Report: Noted.
- 13/026 Widmore Pond: It was resolved unanimously to approve the amended constitution of the Widmore Pond Society.
- 13/027 Neighbourhood Plan: Mr Greenwood reminded members of the report he made to the APM on 14 May (attached) and advised of further days planned for 2 June and 7 July. He noted with regret the Ms Noble has had to withdraw from the Working Party due to pressure of work and thanked her for her tremendous efforts in helping to make a success of the Design day.
- 13/028 Audit matters: The council reviewed and unanimously resolved to approve:
- 13/028.1 The 2012 Risk assessment; (The Parish Clerk pointed out that next year this should be extended to cover personnel continuity and succession planning. This was agreed.)
 - 13/028.2 The 2012 Asset Register;
 - 13/028.3 The 2011/2012 Internal Audit Report; (The Chairman asked the meeting to congratulate the Parish Clerk/RFO for the achievement of such a good audit report.)
 - 13/028.4 The 2011/2012 Annual return (External audit) and associated papers.
- 13/029 Rollerpark/Skatepark: Mrs Lewis with support from Mrs MacGowan and Mrs Phillips-Tilbury described the enthusiasm generated by their visit to Chalgrove on 19 May. The establishment of a Youth Forum or equivalent to steer the project with members of the Council is now the priority. Mrs Lewis is to lead in identifying members. Adult members will have to be CRB checked.
- 13/030 Village Gardeners: Mrs Phillips-Tilbury outlined an extensive work programme of planting for the coming year. The lack of interest shown by local traders with the notable exception of Heath & Watkins was noted and deplored. The meeting offered its congratulations on and ongoing support to efforts of the Village Gardeners.
- 13/031 Matters for future consideration: The omission of Mrs Diwell's reappointment as the Council's representative on the Sonning and District Welfare & Education Trust from the business of the AMPC on 14 May was noted and will be rectified at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 20.45. The next Meeting will be on Monday 18 June 2012 at 20.00.

Chairman Dated

Neighbourhood Planning Working Party Report to Annual Parish Meeting on 14 May 2012

The trigger which led to the formation of the Working Party was the unexpected planning request for 50 houses behind Kennylands Road submitted in June 2011. The Parish Council resolved to form a working party to produce a Parish Plan which could structure the housing developments which undoubtedly would be allocated to Sonning Common by South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC).

The 'Working Party' was set up in September. By this time the Government's new policies on Localism and National Planning Framework were being drawn up and it was clear we needed to look at Neighbourhood Planning as the way forward. By late October it was clear that the Parish Council and the Working Party needed specialist help. The Parish Council agreed to fund the appointment of Jeff Bishop and Associates (BDOR) to advise and guide us and the new Neighbourhood Planning Working Party began meeting in early January 2012. The Working Party is made up of 4 councillors, 5 residents and 1 observer from Kidmore End Parish Council and has been meeting approximately every 3 weeks since then. The main focus so far has been to seek the support of our residents, SODC and the surrounding parishes of Rotherfield Peppard and Kidmore End.

In early April we met with planners at SODC to discuss our ideas for the plan and involving our residents in a Design Day. We shall meet them again shortly to brief them on our Design Day and to seek their approval to produce our 'Plan'.

We have had informal talks with councillors from Kidmore End and Rotherfield Peppard and Julia Whitelaw attended Rotherfield Peppard's last Parish Council meeting to give them a brief résumé of our ideas. These meetings have been positive.

We have also talked with the heads of both Sonning Common Primary and Chiltern Edge Schools. Both have been supportive and helpful in their responses.

However, the main focus so far has been organising a Design Day, held in the Village Hall on 28th April, for residents to drop in and to discuss and work on several themes e.g.

- Village character
- Landscape context of Sonning Common
- Sites assessment
- Traffic/parking
- Community

During the day, despite wet weather 171 residents signed in and a lot of useful data and opinions about the village and its character and how to structure housing developments were recorded and collated. Some assessment sheets were trialled by residents and the consultants were able to modify them for future use.

In the afternoon the consultants summarised the residents comments and input to all the themes with questions answered on each. The hall was full for this session. We had a very positive and committed response from all who attended. It was very encouraging and rewarding as a lot of hard work had been put into organising the day by the Working Party, our Parish Clerk Philip Collings and Councillor Phillips-Tilbury and her volunteers who organised refreshments.

The next stage is for all the residents who volunteered to do surveys to be e-mailed and given survey assessment sheets and the opportunity to get some brief instructions before doing their chosen surveys.

Without this research and the assessments that come from it, the Working Party would be without a mandate to produce a viable and evidence based plan.

In conclusion, I will repeat again that without the support and approval of SODC, our residents and neighbouring Parish Councils, it will be difficult for us to produce a viable plan which will stand up to independent scrutiny.

G B Greenwood

Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party