

Minutes of the meeting of Sonning Common Parish Council held on Monday 18 February 2013 at 20.00 hrs in the Village Hall

Present: Mr Kedge (Chairman); Mrs Diwell; Mr Fort; Miss Hunt; Mr Jones; Mrs Lewis; Ms Noble and Mr Rawlins. Mr D Robinson, Henley Standard and three members of the public.

- 13/140 Apologies for absence: Mr Greenwood; Mrs Phillips-Tilbury; Mr Reynolds and Mr Stoves. Also District Councillor Viney.
- 13/141 Declarations of Interests: None.
- 13/142 Public Question Time: Mr David Bartholomew who will be the Conservative candidate in the May elections for the County Council introduced himself saying that he is attending meetings of all Parish Councils in the District so that in the event of his being elected he will have some awareness of current issues.
Mr A Horne and Mr P Smith, residents of Ashford Avenue, described in detail with photographs the highly unsatisfactory state of and lack of repair to the SE section of their road. Having received no satisfactory response from OCC Highways they asked if the Parish Council would intercede on their behalf. Members confirmed that despite regular complaints over years nothing had been done. It was agreed that the Parish Clerk should make contact with OCC Highways to ask for a full exploration of all options open including better traffic management. Mr Bartholomew was advised that if he is elected he will also be asked to pursue the matter.
- 13/143 Police Report: PCSO Boyes was unable to attend and had not sent an email. The Parish Clerk told the meeting that he had spoken with PCSO Boyes a couple of days earlier and been advised that there were no serious issues to report.
- 13/144 Minutes of the Finance Committee meetings held on 9 January and 6 February 2013 were presented and ratified.
- 13/145 Minutes of previous meetings:
145.01 Planning Committees held on 7 and 21 January 2013 were presented and approved.
145.02 Parish Council meeting held on 21 January 2013 were presented and approved. Mr Kedge asked that the minutes should record the Council's thanks to the Parish Clerk for 'the excellent work done in preparing the Budget and Precept last month'.
- 13/146 County Councillor's Report: Councillor Viney had sent an email advising that OCC would be setting their budget and precept on 19 February and that she expected the increase to be 1.99%.
- 13/147 District Councillor's Report: Councillor Harrison advised that the Government is about to revoke the regional spatial strategy that covers both South and Vale (the South East Plan); that SODC is entered for the MJ Best Achieving Council Award for 2013; that the 2013/14 Budget is to be set on 21 February and that the joint South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse business breakfast will take place on Tuesday 5 March 2013.
- 13/148 Parish Clerk's Report: In respect of the Winter Works item, Mr Jones confirmed that to date the team had been out on five occasions.
- 13/149 Banking: The Finance Committee recommendation, Minute F13/097, that accounts be transferred to Unity Trust Bank with online access and authorisation plus the use of a ALTO prepaid payment card was discussed. It was resolved to approve the change and the Parish Clerk was authorised to make the necessary arrangements and present the resulting amendments to Financial Regulations to the next meeting prior to the new accounts being activated.
- 13/150 Annual Risk assessment: The document was explained, discussed and approved unanimously.
- 13/151 Triathlon 2013 Route: A note from Mr Stoves was distributed for information.
- 13/152 Rollerpark progress: Mrs Lewis described the progress made by which the three shortlisted bidders will have their proposals evaluated in public on the evening of 25 February to select a preferred contractor. That decision made will trigger the move into serious fundraising mode once ratified by the Council.
- 13/153 Post Office: Mrs Lewis described widely held concerns that the changes to facilities have resulted in deterioration in service to the public. This was endorsed by other members and it was agreed that the appropriate regional manager of the Post Office should be invited to speak at the Annual Parish Meeting on 13 May.

- 13/154 Boundary Commission review: The forthcoming opportunity to review Parish Boundaries was discussed by members with Councillor Harrison participating. Views were expressed that the present SCPC Boundary is quite illogical and needs to change. It was recognised that this might cause friction with RPPC and their residents if not handled sensitively. It was agreed that when the review process begins SCPC will respond actively.
- 13/155 Car parking in the village: Mr Rawlins described how the lack of adequate parking has become a significant constraint on the viability of the village centre that can only worsen. He contrasted the lack of parking in Sonning Common with the generous space provided and maintained by SODC in other large villages with smaller populations than ours. Mr Rawlins presented ideas for making use of land in the village centre that is under threat of residential development which, if approved, could make the problem permanently insoluble. After some discussion it was agreed that a formal motion requesting that SODC engage with the problem as a matter of urgency and deploy their resources to improve the supply of parking space will be put to the next meeting on 18 March.
- 13/156 Neighbourhood Development Plan: Mr Kedge described how the two public presentations on 7 and 9 February had been made to a packed out hall; how two groups of volunteers had carried out detailed verification reviews of the work led by the NDP Working Party; how all this work had received high praise from external experts and how it demonstrated the tremendous community spirit that exists in Sonning Common. He pointed out that the welcome withdrawal of the third application to build on Lea Meadow had come about because the owner's agents had realised that it would be better for them to work with the NDP than against it.
- 13/157 Matters for future consideration: None.

The next Meeting will be on Monday 18 March 2013 at 20.00.

Chairman Dated