

Minutes of the meeting of Sonning Common Parish Council held on Monday 20 February 2017 in the Village Hall

Present: Mr Kedge (Chairman); Mrs Diwell; Mr Fort; Mr Greenwood; Mr Howe; Mr Jones; Mrs Lewis; Mrs Phillips-Tilbury; Mr Rawlins; Mr Rust and Mr Stoves. Also, Mr Collings (Parish Clerk) and Mrs Varnes (Deputy Parish Clerk). Also present: Cllr D Bartholomew, Cllr P Harrison and Mr C McLoughlin Henley Standard and eleven members of the public.

- 17/131 Apologies for absence and declarations of interests: No apologies but the Clerk reported that Mr I'Anson has advised that he is to resign his seat. No declarations of interests.
- 17/132 Public Question Time under Section 30 of Standing Orders. Problems caused to the First Responder by inconsiderate parking around Elm Court were raised. It was suggested that the Council approach OCC to see if an Ambulance bay could be marked out there. A request was made for a new litter bin on the corner of Reade's Lane and Ashford Avenue. To be pursued.
- 17/133 Police Report and motion. Mr Kedge proposed that 'The Parish Council much regrets the need for Thames Valley Police (TVP) to close the police office in Sonning Common as a result of cuts in police funding. It agrees to allow TVP to keep two bicycles in one of the village hall storage facilities, to be arranged by the Parish Office, for use by officers patrolling the village and local area. This arrangement will help to preserve an element of police presence in the area.' The motion was approved.
- 17/134 Minutes of previous meetings:
134.01 Finance Committee held on 8 February 2017 were presented and approved.
134.02 Planning Committees held on 8 Dec 2016, 9 & 16 January and 6 February 2017 were presented and approved.
134.03 Parish Council meeting held on 16 January 2017 were presented and approved.
- 17/135 County Councillor's Report – in addition to his previously circulated report Councillor Bartholomew commented on the possible effects of the sudden presentation of an agreed proposal for a new Unitary Authority. Mrs Phillips-Tilbury complained about the poor results from pothole patching and there was discussion about the use of Fix-My-Street.
- 17/136 District Councillor's Report – Councillor Harrison's report is Appendix A to these minutes and in commenting on the Unitary proposal he pointed out the likely upward effect on Council Tax.
- 17/137 Parish Clerk's Report - Noted.
- 17/138 Social media update. The Parish Clerk advised that discussions are underway to look at both Facebook and an updated website as a single project.
- 17/139 Memorial Hall Field Working Party (MHFWP). The Parish Clerk advised that there has been no change as the next meeting is on 22 February.
- 17/140 Village Centre Working Party (VCWP). Mr Howe reported that the team had decided to ask Ben Hamilton-Baillie to present an updated version of his proposal for a study of the village as a whole.
- 17/141 Skatepark land transfer update: The Parish Clerk advised that an amicable arrangement for the transfer of the land has been agreed with RUFC.
- 17/142 SON 6 campaign planning – members were briefed on how this is being progressed.
- 17/143 Matters for future agendas. No specific matters.

Meeting closed at 21.20. Next meeting: Monday 20 March 2017 at 20.00.

Chairman: Dated:

Appendix A District Councillors report for February 2017

Unitary Council

SODC, the Vale and the County Council have issued a press release stressing their desire to create a unitary council based on the county council. This is being pushed by Sajid Jarvid MP the secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. When David Cameron was prime minister the District and city councils were preferred, however, now with Teresa May county councils are the preferred choice.

We have been asked to agree this by the 13th March so an emergency Full Council meeting will be needed before that date. Hence there will be a special scrutiny meeting on Thursday 2nd March followed by Cabinet on Friday 10th March followed by Full Council the same day.

At present the leaders of Oxfordshire County Council, the Vale District Council and SODC are in favour of this unitary bid however, West Oxfordshire and Cherwell District Councils are opposed as is Oxford City Council, Also a number of the Oxfordshire MPs are opposed.

The Budget

The budget goes to Full Council on Thursday 16th February The key points are that the council tax will be kept static, which was an election manifesto pledge by the Conservative group. However, it must be remembered that the government has cut the revenue support grant by £650,000 so now it's set at £572,386 and by 2019/2020 this goes altogether.

Therefore some tough decisions have had to be made, the most noticeable is the dropping of the grant to Thames Valley Police for PCSO's, this saves us £99,190. We are also going to drop the "young Achievers awards" as the majority of these are for sporting excellence and GLL our leisure provider have their own scheme.

There are two extra items added to the budget, one is £22,000 to introduce a new local lottery scheme and there will be an individual councillor's grant scheme which will give councillors a similar scheme to that which the county council used to have. This will cost £189,000.

I would like to remind councillors that we collect £43,750,000 in business rates however, the government take 60% of this and leave us with £17,500,000. They then take £15,000,000 to give to other councillors (I'll let you decide if Surrey is one of these) leaving us with £2,500,000.

New waste vehicles to improve collections

We are planning to introduce a new fleet of waste collection vehicles in June which will further improve our collection service.

Residents will only see a minor change to their collections, recycling or waste will be collected by one vehicle and food collected by a separate vehicle rather than the current vehicles collecting both.

Collections will continue to take place on the same day but not necessarily at the same time. Changing to a two pass system will give more operational flexibility when Biffa experience breakdowns or delays but will also provide more resilience when it comes to managing the increase in property numbers as a result of new developments.

Also by changing to a two pass system each vehicle will have increased capacity, this will reduce the number of visits in a day to the disposal points.

We are working with the Communication Team to inform residents of the change.

For more information contact Ian Matten by [email](mailto:ian.matten@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or call 01235 422113.

5 Councils update

Here's a quick update on the changes and improvements to systems and services:

IT

IT works by Capita are currently underway which might be disrupting the ability to view planning applications from time to time on our websites outside of normal working hours. Where necessary, to avoid any problems, we're extending planning application consultation deadlines.

In the coming weeks Capita will move all the files saved on our network drives onto their servers. This will be over a weekend to avoid operational disruption. We will let you know when it's happening.

HR and payroll

The HR and Payroll service has had a number of problems and, in response, a 'Rectification Plan' has been produced which sets out how the service will be improved. Capita's 'Rectification Plan' can be obtained by contacting the Communications Team by **email**.

The payroll go live date is now scheduled for May 2017.

VINCI, indigo and arcadis Staff emails

The old @southandvale.gov.uk email addresses for members of the old Facilities, Car Parks and Property teams no longer work – if you need to contact any of those services, please use the **helpdesk**.

Please check the intranet for a **full update** on all of the services that are part of the five council's partnership.

Design Guide shortlisted for award. South and Vale urban design officers together with collaboration from other specialist officers have had the **South Oxfordshire Design Guide** shortlisted for the Public Sector entry in the Francis Tibbalds Urban Design Awards 2017.

Being shortlisted for the award is a good step towards raising the profile of the Council and the need to secure high quality design in South Oxfordshire. Awarded by the Urban Design Group, the awards give more recognition to urban design work, particularly at project stage. Voting is now underway and the results will be announced in March 2017.

New Resident's News Letter

A new email newspaper is available called "South News" is available to keep residents informed on the work of SODC.

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/news-and-events/keep-me-informed/south-news>

They will receive updates every two months.

Gallagher's Planning Application for Kennyland's Road

At present officers at SODC are in favour of this application even though it goes against the wishes of our neighbourhood plan. It will go to the Planning Committee on the 1st March. This will be held at the Didcot Community Centre.

Gladman's application in Eye and Dunsden Parish Council

There have been a number of updates to this application but I expect it to go to Planning Committee sometime in March. Issues relate particularly to transportation which has been highlighted by Reading Borough Council but if it goes ahead it will impact our residents going into Reading and will increase the traffic through Kennyland's Road and Reade's Lane.