

Sonning Common Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Sonning Common Parish Council held on Monday 19 November 2018 in the Village Hall.

Present: Mrs Lewis (Chairman); Mrs Diwell; Mr Fort; Mr Howe; Mr Kedge; Mr Rawlins; Mr Rinta-Suksi and Mr Stoves. Also: Mr Collings (Parish Clerk). It was announced that Mrs Diwell will join the Planning Committee in place of Mr Rust and that the co-option process for new members will begin at once.

- 19/089 Apologies for absence and declarations of interests: Mrs Godfrey; Mr Greenwood. No declarations.
- 19/090 Public Question Time – none present.
- 19/091 Police Matters – no report received.
- 19/092 Minutes of previous meetings:
- 092.01 Finance Committee on 7 November 2018 - presented and approved.
 - 092.02 Planning Committees on 17 September, 1 and 15 October 2018 - presented and approved.
 - 092.03 Parish Council meeting on 15 October - presented and approved.
- 19/093 County Councillor's Report. In addition to his report (Annex A) circulated by email, Cllr Bartholomew advised that 52K tonnes of inert material are to be deposited in Caversham Quarry and that many lorries may use the B481. He also explained the views of various groups about the proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway and to whom to make representations.
- 19/094 District Councillor's Report. In addition to his report (Annex B) circulated by email, Cllr Harrison advised that grants may be applied for for activities not directly managed by the PC.
- 19/095 Parish Clerk's Report – Noted. Brownjohn plaque to be unveiled in January.
- 19/096 Memorial Hall Field Working Party (MHFWP) update – transfer may now be imminent.
- 19/097 Village Centre Working Party (VCWP) – Mr Howe reported on the recent meeting and co-option of new members and on a visit to Stonehouse. Also, professional advice is being sought on plans for the village centre and that trial painting of railings will go ahead.
- 19/098 Environment Working Party – Mr Stoves reported that an order for trees has been prepared by Mr Rust and will be placed forthwith. Woodland has been inspected and report awaited. Widmore Pond Willow is to be cut back.
- 19/099 CAGE appeal – the meeting asked that thanks be passed to SODC for their excellent work in getting this appeal dismissed. Mr Fort then briefed on progress with the NP update where the team is working towards a public meeting in January.
- 19/100 Budget inputs and matters for future agendas. Members asked to suggest items for consideration.
- 19/101 Mr Kedge opened a discussion of a suggestion that the parish council should purchase and install a public access defibrillator in the village centre. To be followed up next month.
- 19/102 Storage space. The Parish Clerk explained why it is thought that SCPC should try to acquire lock-up storage capacity in the village and likely costs thereof. Agreed that a proposal should be made next month if available.

Next meeting: Monday 17 December 2018 at 20.00.

Chairman: Dated:

Annex A - REPORT TO SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL NOV 2018 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

IN ALL TYPES OF WEATHER OCC CREWS ARE OUT REPAIRING THE ROADS

Earlier this year OCC put an extra £10m into fixing the roads – effectively doubling the amount of money invested in repairs – and crews are out and about every day in all types of weather doing the job. Their work has already resulted in £1.6m worth of surface dressing with around 33km of roads being surfaced. Work is also under way on a £700,000 programme of surfacing sealing projects around the county. As well as the extra cash which is going into some larger projects, the county council has also increased the amount of relatively small-scale work it does to put right local roads that are suffering from potholes, cracks and worn out tarmac. The number of completed defect repairs between January and September this year is 35,127.

SALTING, GRITTING AND SNOW CLEARANCE

OCC is committed to keeping the network of major roads free from ice to minimise the risk of accidents and ensure the smooth flow of traffic. Precautionary salting (sometimes called 'gritting') helps achieve this aim. OCC usually salts between 2 November and 5 April. Live updates can be found here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/street-maintenance-z/salting-and-snow-clearance> Details about how community groups can request salt bins can be found here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/street-maintenance-z/salt-and-grit-bins>

COUNCIL TO INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE & REDUCE RUNNING COSTS

Plans to completely overhaul the county council were given the go-ahead by the county council's Cabinet on 16 October. They agreed a major investment in digital technology to improve customer service and reduce council running costs. The redesigned council will enable residents to report faults or book appointments online, freeing up staff time to help to service users who cannot go online or have complex care needs. Staff will be given the tools they need to do a better job and spend more time on delivering services to residents. Outdated ICT systems make it hard to join up services and will be replaced, with admin tasks automated to save money and make the council run more smoothly. The changes will support the county council's long-term vision of 'thriving communities for everyone in Oxfordshire'. The redesign is also needed to secure the council's long-term financial stability as demand for services continues to rise – particularly for children and adult social care.

OCC TRADING STANDARDS & POLICE CONDUCT OPERATION ROGUE TRADER

Rogue traders and aggressive doorstep sellers were targeted during October by OCC Trading Standards as part of ongoing work to protect residents and business people. Working in collaboration with Thames Valley Police, Operation Rogue Trader aims to stop rogue business practices and raise awareness of the dangers linked to hiring cold-callers. Fourteen Trading Standards staff and around 30 police travelled around the county when 67 traders were approached and checked; ten warning letters were issued; five waste offenders were fined by district councils; and an overloaded vehicle was investigated along with seven doorstep crime offences and two police offences. In Henley four traders were checked; three warning letters were issued to traders for not providing 'cancellation rights' to residents; and there were three offences for carrying waste without a licence. In Witney 11 traders were checked; and two warning letters issued to traders for not providing 'cancellation rights' to residents. Those who suspect someone of being a rogue trader, or find themselves accosted by uninvited doorstep sellers should contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 03454 040506.

BOOST FOR A 'FULL FIBRE' FUTURE IN OXFORDSHIRE

Hundreds of businesses and homes across Oxfordshire are set to benefit from faster internet connections, following the launch of the UK Government's nationwide Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS). The £67m investment is in addition to the £200m allocated to the Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) programme and will provide future-proof full fibre connections for businesses and the residential communities around them. It follows a successful pilot scheme launched in four areas around the country late last year, which has already seen nearly 1,000 vouchers used up to date. ThinkBroadband statistics show that 8% of homes and businesses in Oxfordshire already have a full fibre internet connection. Superfast broadband reaches almost 97% of premises, and even-quicker ultrafast broadband covers 51.3% of the county. The vouchers, worth up to £3,000 for a SME and £500 for a resident, provide a one-off contribution to subsidise the installation cost of gigabit-capable infrastructure. In addition to providing a boost to the 95% of the UK that can already get superfast speeds (24Mbps or faster), the vouchers could also help those not yet able to do so, helping to narrow the diminishing digital divide even further. The scheme launched at the end of March 2018 and will run until March 2021 or until all available funding has been allocated. For more information visit <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>.

CARERS CAN SHOW BADGE FOR A FREE JAB

Flu season is coming and the army of front line carers across Oxfordshire are being urged to make having a free jab a key priority. More than 8,500 staff employed in residential care, nursing homes or with registered domiciliary care providers, who are directly involved in the care of vulnerable people, are entitled to a free flu jab. Keeping this valuable workforce fit and well is essential to easing winter pressures across the county's health and social care system. Being immunised not only reduces the chances of carers themselves and their families becoming unwell, it also means that the health of the most vulnerable people in Oxfordshire's communities is not compromised. The flu is not the same as getting a cold. It can seriously affect an individual's health and the risks of developing complications are greater for people within the 'at-risk' groups – for example the over 65s and those with medical conditions like heart, lung and kidney diseases, diabetes, asthma and multiple sclerosis. Healthy individuals usually recover within two to seven days, but for some influenza can lead to a stay in hospital, permanent disability or even death. All workers across the

NHS will get flu jabs – meaning the immunisation of the whole health and social care workforce will make the system more resilient. As well as workers in social care settings, anyone who receives a carers allowance, or is the main carer for an elderly or disabled person, is eligible for a free vaccination; all they have to do is present their ID badge to a pharmacist or GP surgery.

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR SONNING COMMON

CAVERSHAM QUARRY

The liaison group met on Thursday 18th October. Key points from the meeting are:

- 52,000 tonnes of sand/gravel have been extracted to date
- The internal road for backfill leading from the A4155 to the weighbridge has been constructed, as has the weighbridge itself
- Construction of the junction on the A4155 to the internal road has now commenced and will take around eight weeks
- Backfilling will commence in January
- Test drilling for a potential new site adjacent to Shiplake College is currently taking place.

PARKING PROBLEMS IN ELM COURT

I have exchanged a series of emails with a resident and OCC officers in relation to the matter, which has also arisen in the past. Unfortunately, the council is unable to assist because in the area where the land is public highway, anybody has a right to park there, and in the areas that are not public highway, disputes need to be resolved with the landowner. Where an obstruction occurs on the public highway, the police should be contacted.

SONNING COMMON ROAD/BLOUNTS COURT ROAD

As previously reported, I remain concerned about the poor condition of this road which provides important connectivity between the A4155 and the B481. I am arranged for interim repairs on a particularly bad stretch, but more importantly am continuing to press Highways to include it in the Highway Maintenance Forward Programme.

OCC TOWN & PARISH LIAISON EVENT

At the last meeting I confirmed details as follows: Sonning Common Village Hall, Thursday 17th January 2019, 2pm – 5pm. It is important the PC sends at least two councillors. The event will start with a short presentation followed by round table discussions. Please register for the event at townparishevents@oxfordshire.gov.uk

OXFORD TO CAMBRIDGE EXPRESSWAY: OCC MOTION 12 DEC 2017

With reference to the PC motion tonight, please note that Oxfordshire County Council last year debated a motion calling for a Public Enquiry into the need for the road and the selection of a route. Following debate, the Motion was put to the vote and was carried by 49 votes to 5, with 1 abstention. The Motion was disregarded by Highways England, the National Infrastructure Commission and DCLG. It was claimed the public consultation would be adequate.

BROADBAND DELAY

The planned delivery of Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) for 76 premises has been delayed from December until March, the root cause being a lack of skilled resource, both telecoms and civils contractors. One possible upside to the delay is the potential to extend the footprint of full fibre connectivity in the village. As detailed in my general report above, there is a central government scheme called the Gigabit Voucher Scheme for supporting the installation costs of full fibre broadband. This is applicable irrespective of premises already having access superfast broadband delivered over the copper network. Details here: <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/> but in summary, businesses can apply for a £3000 contribution to the cost of installing full fibre, and residences can apply for £500. If someone is willing to coordinate a joint application, it would be quite possible for most, if not all the costs to be covered should there be a wide enough joint application.

COUNCILLOR PRIORITY FUND

As previously advised, I have £5k available for Sonning Common to match-fund Highways projects. This means if the parish council identifies Highways works costing a total of £10k, I will meet half the cost from my fund. If the works are costed via OCC Highways and undertaken by them, all that is needed is my agreement to proceed; if works are costed and undertaken by third-parties an approval form on the OCC website will need to be completed. I understand funding relating to the reinstatement of granite setts is no longer required and look forward to hearing of an alternative use ASAP.

Renewable energy workshop for neighbourhood plans

District councillors and neighbourhood planning groups are invited to attend our Renewable Energy Workshop on Wednesday 21 November.

The event, run in association with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), will be a fantastic opportunity to discover how neighbourhood plans could take advantage of renewable energy and address the issues of climate change. It will focus on:

- identifying potential renewable energy resources in the neighbourhood
- expressing support for specific forms of renewable energy
- identifying suitable sites
- promoting a more sustainable future

The workshop is being held in our offices at 135 Eastern Avenue between 1pm and 4.30pm.

We expect this event to be popular, so are working on a first come, first served basis. Anyone wishing to attend should register online before 5pm on Wednesday 14 November.

Housing Land Supply briefing note

The Secretary of State has confirmed that we only need to show a three-year supply of land for housing, rather than five, until the completion of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan.

Business Awards launch

Our Economic Development Team would like to invite you to attend the launch of the first-ever South and Vale Business Awards on 31 October at Cornerstone. The launch and networking event takes place 9am-11am and will explain how you can nominate successful businesses in our region for one or more of the seven award categories.

You can register to attend and find out more information on the awards on the SO Business websites

Nominations will continue to be accepted into the new year and the awards ceremony is set to take place at Williams F1 on 15 March. For more information on the work the team do to help businesses in our districts email Economic Development or call 01235 422213.

Gigabit scheme

Let your local businesses and residents know that they can apply for the government's gigabit scheme that supports communities to achieve a better broadband connection.

The scheme is designed for small and medium businesses to access up to £3,000 worth of vouchers to upgrade their internet connection.

Groups of residents can also apply for a voucher of up to £500 for each domestic connection - as long as a local business is involved in the scheme and is the main beneficiary.

Businesses and residents can check their eligibility via gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/

Councillor Community Grants

Like last year each councillor can give grants up to a maximum of £5,000. This need to be submitted before 17th December. Grants from a minimum of £250 up to the maximum of £5,000 can be requested.

Because we have two councillors we have a total of £10,000 to be spent between the 5 parishes which make up this ward. So far this year we haven't had any requests for our ward. We have simplified the process of application and unlike last year grants can be shared between councillors if both agree. Last year we lost out on £5,000 in grants as we could not transfer grants from one councillor to another.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The breakdown is follows: Initial Spending

Towns or Parishes with a neighbourhood plan	25%
Towns or Parishes without a neighbourhood plan	15%
Admin and Support	5%

Remainder

Oxfordshire County Council (transport & education)	50%
Oxfordshire Clinical Commission Group	20%
SODC Sports & Leisure	20%
Infrastructure & Biodiversity	5%
Public Art/Public Realm	5%

CIL funding can only be given to the Town or Parish where the development takes place.

CIL does not replace S106 agreements. S106 agreements will be used for most strategic sites but CIL will be used for all the other developments.

We will review the allocation after 1 year and depending on the feedback we can adjust the scheme then.

Free parking in the run up to Christmas

As with previous years the SODC run carparks in Henley will be free on Tuesday on the run up to Christmas starting on the 4th December.