

Sonning Common Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Sonning Common Parish Council held on Monday 17 September 2018 in the Village Hall.

Present: Mrs Lewis (Chairman); Mr Fort; Mr Howe; Mr Kedge; Mr Rawlins; Mr Rinta-Suksi; Mr Rust and Mr Stoves. Also: Mr Collings (Parish Clerk), Mrs Varnes (Deputy Parish Clerk) and Mr McLoughlin (Henley Standard) and two residents.

- 19/063 Apologies for absence: Mrs Diwell; Mrs Godfrey; Mr Greenwood and Mr Jones. No declarations.
- 19/064 Public Question Time: Ms Boyle asked if there could be signage to prevent vehicles from driving into Pages Orchard. It was agreed that the cost and acceptability of a No Through Road sign should be explored with OCC.
- 19/065 Police Matters. There was disappointment that no real report had been received from the sector. Beyond that there was serious concern that there has been no local feedback about raids recently effected in Sedgewell Road. Neighbours there reported that nefarious activity in and around the address in question continues unabated. Sgt Anns to be asked for comment.
- 19/066 Minutes of previous meetings:
- 066.01 Finance Committees held on 1 August and 5 September 2018 were presented and approved
 - 066.02 Planning Committees held on 16 July, 6 & 20 August and 3 September 2018 were presented and approved.
 - 066.03 Parish Council meeting held on 16 July 2018 were presented and approved.
- 19/067 County Councillor's Report. In addition to his report (Appx A) circulated by email, Cllr Bartholomew responded to questions about speeding on Kennylands Road and the Third Bridge situation.
- 19/068 District Councillor's Report. In addition to his report (Appx B) circulated by email, Cllr Harrison discussed the strength of the SODC input to the Gladman appeal. It was noted that formal thanks and congratulations should be sent to the SODC team involved.
- 19/069 Parish Clerk's Report – noted.
- 19/070 Memorial Hall Field Working Party (MHFWP) - slow progress with the transfer was noted. WP to meet on 27 September.
- 19/071 Village Centre Working Party (VCWP) – Mr Howe advised of a delay in Ben H-B being available again. In the meantime work will proceed to paint railings in bright colours and to improve the path into the Millennium Green.
- 19/072 Environment Working Party – Mr Rust reported on a proposal to paint some railings in colours with agreement being sought before acting. Tree watering continues and ideas are needed for further planting. Pond works continue as does work in our part of Old Copse.
- 19/073 Report on CAGE appeal – still ongoing.
- 19/074 Village Hall Flat Roof Replacement. After consideration it was resolved to approve the proposal to spend c.£30K for this work.
- 19/075 Matters for future agendas.

Next meeting: Monday 15 October 2018 at 20.00.

Chairman:

Dated:

Appendix A - REPORT TO SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL SEPT 2018 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW
GENERAL OCC REPORT

NEW PARTNERSHIP APPROVED BY OCC AND CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL Councillors at OCC and Cherwell District Council have approved a proposal for a partnership between the two local authorities, including the appointment of a joint chief executive. The partnership arrangement will offer long-term opportunities to join up services for residents, reduce the costs of providing services, and secure investment in Cherwell to enable the continued growth in homes and jobs. The partnership proposal came after the financial problems in Northamptonshire County Council, which has implications for Cherwell's existing partnership with South Northamptonshire Council, created an opportunity to explore closer joint working. The joint arrangement was approved by county councillors on 10 July and Cherwell councillors on 16 July, and will come into effect on 1 October. Partnership arrangements under a single chief executive will make joint working more effective and deepen the partnership arrangements. Spatial and transport planners already work closely together on schemes related to housing and infrastructure, and that will be made day-to-day working simpler as they are working to a single chief executive. Following a formal internal recruitment process, Yvonne Rees, the current chief executive of Cherwell and South Northamptonshire councils has been appointed to the new post of joint chief executive of Oxfordshire and Cherwell councils, with a start date of 1 October. The post of county council chief executive, currently occupied by Peter Clark, will be made redundant.

STUDENTS RECEIVE A-LEVEL RESULTS ACROSS OXFORDSHIRE Thousands of students are preparing to take their crucial next steps after receiving A-Level results at schools and colleges across Oxfordshire last month. Confirmed pass rates for the county as a whole will be confirmed when national figures are published later this year. In the previous two years the key benchmark of two or more A-Levels at the A*-E pass rate was achieved by around 95 per cent of students. For anyone unsure of their next steps after A-Level or GCSE exam results, further help can be found at the Oxme website and through the National Careers Service which has a helpline number - 0800 100 900. Throughout the results period and beyond, county council staff will be available via the web chat service on the Oxme website or over the phone (01865 328460) to talk to young people and parents about the wide range of learning and employment opportunities available in Oxfordshire for 16-19-year-olds, and to help with applications. Details of drop-in sessions can also be found on the council's website.

OCC COUNTS THE COST OF THE CARILLION COLLAPSE OCC is carrying out a detailed review of the costs and liabilities related to its properties following the Carillion collapse so that a robust financial plan can be considered by councillors in the autumn and included in the council's budget. Carillion provided services on behalf of OCC including maintenance of council buildings; property services, and building work such as school extensions. OCC made a net payment of £10.6m at the end of December 2017 to Carillion to cover work already completed as part of the final settlement to end the contract with the company, limiting any future financial liability. However, the costs of dealing with ongoing construction and property maintenance problems following the Carillion collapse have not yet been calculated but are expected to be "very significant". Surveys to assess defects in buildings including schools are continuing across the county council's properties. Compliance with health and safety requirements is also being considered, with any safety issues that emerge being dealt with quickly.

CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IN DELAYED TRANSFER OF CARE NUMBERS The latest published figures on people who are unnecessarily in hospital while they await confirmation of care arrangements have been published. The figures for June 2018 show that on average 90 Oxfordshire residents had their hospital discharge delayed. This is 9% fewer than in May and less than half the number of people delayed than the same time last year. Oxfordshire's delays figure trajectory continues to be better than national improvement with a 0.3% improvement in the last month and a drop of a quarter in the last year.

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY TRAVEL ENCOURAGED BY OCC Commuters returning to work after the holiday period are being encouraged to walk or cycle, for all or part of their journey, by OCC. The council is championing healthy alternatives to the car, which will also help to reduce congestion and pollution on the county's roads. Exercise is widely recognised as one of the best ways to improve physical and mental health. Daily physical activity lowers the risk of depression and dementia by around 30 per cent according to the Department of Health. Exercise also reduces the likelihood of cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease and strokes. The council has appointed an active and healthy travel officer, using central government funding, to assess existing walking and cycling routes. Priority will be given to improvements and maintenance schemes designed to encourage active travel and reduce pollution. Over 85,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes are planned in Oxfordshire by 2031. The council is committed to ensuring that as the population grows, infrastructure is in place to encourage healthy travel options. Streets and spaces will be developed to put first the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. OCC's Cycling Champion, Councillor Suzanne Bartington, said: "*Active travel is win, win, win - for health, the environment and local economy. I encourage Oxfordshire residents to try foot or bike even for only part of their journey and feel the positive benefits for themselves.*" For further information about the benefits of active travel, visit the website: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/whycycle

£80K BOOST FOR KIDS' CYCLING SAFETY Almost every primary school child in the county will now be able to get free cycle safety training after the award of an £84,500 Bikeability grant which will pay for an additional 2000 places. The bulk of cycling training in the county is carried out by a 700-strong army of volunteer instructors under the Oxfordshire Cycle Training Scheme, which has been running for more than 40 years. Training is offered to children from nine-years-old and up and is a mixture of learning about the Highways Code and practical 'on the road' tuition. Parents and carers who want their children to take part in training should contact their school's head teacher.

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR SONNING COMMON ASBESTOS AT CHILTERN EDGE SC YOUTH CLUB ROOMS

I investigated this matter on behalf of the PC and was advised that the responsibility for managing asbestos became the school's responsibility when the school became a foundation school in 2012. The County Council's interest in the site as land owner also ceased earlier this year. As the PC is aware, the school has very recently become an Academy. The County Council no longer holds responsibilities regarding property matters.

SPEEDING ON KENNYLANDS ROAD I have been contacted by a resident requesting speed reduction measures on Kennylands Road. I advised that enforcement was a matter for the police and that she would need to gain support of the PC before I could discuss any physical constraints such as speed cushions etc.

OCC TOWN & PARISH LIAISON EVENT The PC is aware that I have remonstrated with OCC officers that Didcot is not considered a 'local' venue for the liaison event. I am pleased to say that banging the drum for the 'Deep South' has resulted in agreement for an additional meeting to be held in Henley, probably in January. Further details will be available in due course.

THIRD READING BRIDGE The enthusiasm of Berkshire councils for this project is undimmed and, independent of Oxfordshire councils, they have now commissioned further work to support the 'business case'. I met with OCC officers for an update last week and instructed them that I am to be kept fully apprised on the progress of this new study. Note that Reading Borough Council has asked that the 'landing' site for the bridge is safeguarded in the SODC Local Plan, but NOT a relief road.

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 have been copied on emails relating to the reinstatement of granite setts and wish to check the PC has received the information it needs.

Gladman's Appeal The second part of Gladman's appeal against the District Council's rejection of their proposal for 245 houses on the edge of Emmer Green was held for 3 days from the 29th August. The attendance of members of public was very good. We as a district now have over 5.4 years land supply so we will have to wait on the result from the inspector.

Member of the pressure group CAGE represented themselves well, against what was a very high cost legal team provided by Gladman's.

Reading Golf Course Reading Borough Council have objected to the recent application for 39 houses on the current Reading Golf Course. All their reasons specified apply to the other applications around the northern edge of Reading.

Oxfordshire to Cambridge Expressway There were 3 corridor's which were being considered for the Oxford to Cambridge expressway. Corridor "A" had the greatest impact on South Oxfordshire whilst Corridor "B" used the A34 to Bicester and Corridor "C" went further north to Northampton. SODC's preferred route was Corridor "C" however, Highways England have opted for Corridor "B" which makes sense as it connects the A34 to a ring road around Bicester and then through to join the A421 south of Bedford. Not only does this follow the route of the Oxford to Cambridge railway but it connects the A34 to the M1 which will reduce the number of vehicles which currently use the M40 to travel from the A34 to the Northampton junction.

Although this takes the expressway to the north of Oxford the concern for us in the south is the width of the Corridor which includes part of South Oxfordshire.

Councillor Grants Scheme Opens Each individual councillor will be able to grant £5,000 to good causes in their community. As I have 5 councils I will be looking to roughly grant £1,000 to worthy causes in each parish. Unfortunately, we cannot transfer grants between different councillors so as Will Hall also has £5,000 we need to co-ordinate which projects we approve. Last year I exceeded the £5,000 whilst Will received no requests, so we lost out on £5,000's of grants

Local Plan update We're continuing our dialogue with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the progress of the Local Plan. We've updated our partner authorities who are part of the Oxfordshire Growth Board and continue to work to the approach agreed by Council to ensure we are in the best possible position to produce a 'sound' and robust Local Plan. The timetable states that councillors will make a decision in December on which of the 15 available major housing sites will be included in the plan, following completion of necessary assessment and filtering work. The final plan, outlining how the district should develop until 2033, will then be published and residents will have a chance to comment on its technical 'soundness' early next year. It will then be submitted for public examination by an independent planning inspector later in 2019. For more please see our Local Plan page.

CIL update We've just published the 2017/18 financial statement for our Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The total CIL receipts amounted to £2,190,161 of which £205,890 has been transferred to town and parish councils. The proposed CIL spending plan is currently out for consultation, but the breakdown is as follows: -

For those parishes without a neighbourhood plan they only get 15% so 80% will be split between OCC, CCG and SODC.

NPPF. The final version of the NPPF was published 24 July. We are waiting for the guidance notes to be published. The revised NPPF increases the focus on high-quality design but maintains the importance of housing delivery.

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It's a yellow letter day in South and Vale as residents are urged to confirm their details

Residents in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse are urged to respond to a yellow letter which will arrive through their letter boxes in the coming days.

Fire-damaged council headquarters up-date

Demolition work has started at the former headquarters of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council.

Opening the doors to volunteering

Help is now available in South Oxfordshire for voluntary groups who have difficulties recruiting volunteers for financial reasons. Community groups have told South Oxfordshire District Council that one of the biggest obstacles they face when trying to attract volunteers is finding money to meet training and transport and insurance costs. In answer to this, the council has launched a pilot volunteering grant scheme with a total of £25,000 to give away to help voluntary and community groups find the volunteers they need. Small voluntary groups in South Oxfordshire can apply for a new volunteering grant of between £250 to £750 to help cover costs, for example the costs of training as a sports coach or the costs of additional insurance needed to be a volunteer driver.

The scheme will be run as a pilot in 2018/19 and depending on its success in improving the voluntary sector, councillors will decide whether to continue with it in the future. The district council made a commitment in its Corporate Plan to provide additional support to voluntary and community groups to help them find the volunteers they need. The volunteering grant is the first of a range of exciting new projects underway to do that, and to help get communities working together to make life better in the district.

New service to help victims and witnesses to report hate crime Victims and witnesses of hate crime who are not comfortable talking to the police now have an alternative place to go to report incidents in confidence. To find out where your nearest reporting centre is visit southoxon.gov.uk/hatecrime.

National Parks and AONB government review Cllr Felix Bloomfield, Cabinet Member for Planning, has written to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs expressing our wish to respond to, and feed into, a government review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which will assess whether AONBs can become National Park Authorities.

The letter can be read here. https://ebtk.co.uk/resources/stats/click.php?c=2636&e=55&o=9492&url=http%3A%2F%2Febtk.co.uk%2Ffilestore%2Ftinymce_images%2Fuser9492%2Freview_into_national_parks_and_areas_of_outstanding_natural_beauty.pdf&a=0

Residents' Surveys

The results of the 2018 Residents' Surveys, carried out among 1,100 residents in both districts at the start of the year, were discussed at Scrutiny meetings at the end of July. These have now been published and press releases have been issued and shared with town and parish councils - you can view these on the South website at: <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/news/2018/2018-08/residents-satisfied-council-s-work-room-improvement>