

KIDMORE END PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held at the Church Room, Kidmore End on Wednesday 17 November 2010 at 8.00pm and concluded at 9.55pm.

Present: R S Young (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Mrs S M Biggs, Dr B J Knapp, Dr J D M McNie, Mrs J E O'Sullivan, N J M Topham.

Also present: PCSO T Forrest (Thames Valley Police), Mrs C Y Viney (county councillor).

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs S Hall, A K Martin, R G McQuillan, J A Swift QC,

6.01 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2010 were taken as read, confirmed and signed as a correct record.

6.02 REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Mrs C Y Viney, the county councillor for the Sonning Common division, advised that

- her Council had commenced its budget discussions which would culminate in February 2011;
- the re-provision of the play school building at Sonning Common was underway;
- the concessionary bus fare scheme would become a County Council function in April 2011;
- consultation was being arranged on the provision of primary education in the Henley area;
- in connection with the review of the County Council electoral arrangements, the ruling group on her Council was proposing a reduction of councillors from 74 to 63, with concomitantly larger electoral divisions.

6.03 REPORT OF AREA BEAT OFFICER

PCSO T Forrest of the Thames Valley Police introduced himself, as the PCSO covering, inter alia, the Parish for the past 2 months. As a result of his patrols to date, he noted that there were issues in relation of vehicles parked near the School, about which he intended to undertake some enforcement action. PCSO Forrest explained his role, in response to a question, and provided his contact details.

Members referred to recent attempted break-ins to residential properties in the Parish, and enquired whether there was any pattern. PCSO Forrest was not aware of any pattern.

PCSO Forrest asked that residents be encouraged to report for instance, unusual or odd vehicles seen in the area, using the non-urgent contact number,

Finally, in response to a question, PCSO Forrest referred to an extensive police operation in Mill Lane, Kidmore End, which was linked to similar operation in Emmer Green. Mr N J M Topham suggested that feedback from the Police to affected residents would be appreciated by the residents and be beneficial to Police/public relations.

6.04 OPEN SESSION

During the open session, Mrs A D Thiam of The Hamlet, Gallowstree Common enquired about the provision of salt/grit bins in The Hamlet and observed that the train play equipment at the Gallowstree Common Recreation Ground still awaited repair.

6.05 RECREATION GROUND, GALLOWSTREE COMMON

(i) Pavilion

(cf 5.04/10) The Council noted that, at 15 November 2010, the former pavilion at the Gallowstree Common Recreation Ground had been demolished and the foundations and underground drainage installed for the replacement building. The walls of the replacement structure were up to dpc level and the floor beam materials delivered to the site. Dr B J Knapp undertook to maintain a photographic record of the project.

By letter, a Written Enquiries Officer of HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) indicated that the issues relating to the reclamation of VAT on the project were covered by HMRC's public notice 749, entitled "Local authorities and similar bodies". Mr R James of Richard P James Ltd had forwarded, under cover of a letter, a copy of HMRC notice 708 (Buildings and Construction), in case any of the provisions might apply to the project.

The Clerk advised that he had completed a notification of construction project form, under the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2007, on behalf of the Council.

It was reported that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk had met the Corporate Grants Officer of the District Council and his manager on 3 November 2010. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr M H Leonard, one of the district councillors for Shiplake Ward, had been present. The meeting had been arranged following consideration of the letter from the Corporate Grants Officer at the Council's last meeting.

The meeting opened with confirmation that the District Council had the money for the promised grant towards the project. However, the District Council officers had gone on to indicate what further needed to be provided by the Council, in order to ensure release of that grant.

During a frank discussion, it had become clear that the District Council took a cautious approach to these matters because of past experience. Having established and understood that background, the District Council officers pointed out their concern about the content of the letter from the England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) about the grant of £75,000, observing that its terms had not been as "watertight" as they would like. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman took that point.

Other issues raised by the District Council's officers, largely about confirmation of receipt of funds from other organisations, had been resolved without difficulty.

The Vice-Chairman had subsequently arranged for the issues relating to the ECB grant to be pursued urgently and vigorously by the Chairman of the Kidmore End Cricket Club. Further information had been requested by the ECB both in respect of the Club and the Council: the Clerk had provided the requisite information about the Council. It was expected that a firm response would be received from the ECB by 30 November 2010.

The Clerk reported that the funds held by the Playing Fields Committee had been transferred to the Council, and the Cricket Club had made an initial donation of £40,000 towards the project.

The Council considered a report (10/11 - 6) of the Clerk, to facilitate decisions relating to the loan required to finance the project.

RESOLVED: That application be made to the Public Works Loan Board for a loan of £200,000, at a fixed rate of interest, to be repaid, by the equal instalment of principal basis, over 40 years.

(ii) Play Area

Ian Kendrick Ltd submitted a quotation for cutting the hedge in the play area at the Recreation Ground, and removal of clippings, in the sum of £95 + VAT.

RESOLVED: That the quotation of Ian Kendrick Ltd for cutting the hedge in the play area at the Recreation Ground, Gallowstree Common be accepted.

6.06 HEALTH NEWS

(cf 5.05/10) Mrs J E O'Sullivan regretted that she was unable to report on 2 editions of "Health News". The Council noted, however, from a letter from NHS Oxfordshire, that that organisation had decided no longer to publish "Health News", but was instead developing a news section on its website.

6.07 REVIEW OF SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES

(cf 5.07/10) The Council considered a draft letter to the County Council, largely as compiled by Mr J A Swift and circulated with the agenda for the meeting, urging the County Council to continue to subsidise the Motts Travel service M1, which linked Gallowstree Common, Kidmore End and Chalkhouse Green with Reading. The draft letter set out in some detail the reasons why the subsidy should be retained, not the least because the service represented the only public transport available in Kidmore End and Chalkhouse Green. There was a very reluctant recognition that the frequency of the service might be reduced, from one journey each way from Monday to Saturday inclusive.

RESOLVED: That the County Council be advised to maintain the subsidy for Motts Travel service M1 because the Parish needs, and benefits, from the continuation of the only bus service to Reading that is capable of being used by a majority of residents and that the use of public subsidy is fully justified by the benefits to the community.

6.08 KIDMORE END POND

(cf 5.09/10) It was noted that the willow trees at Kidmore End pond had been trimmed and cut back.

Mr S France of Acorn Services submitted a quotation for removing 6 rotten oak posts around the pond and replacing them with matching new posts, and refitting the chains on the posts, in the sum of £260.

RESOLVED: That, notwithstanding Financial Regulation 11.1(h), the quotation of Acorn Services Ltd for replacing some posts and rehanging the chains at Kidmore End pond be accepted.

6.09 ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, KIDMORE END – CHURCHYARD

(cf 4.16/10) The Secretary of the Parochial Church Council thanked the Council for its contribution towards the cost of maintaining the churchyard at St John the Baptist, Kidmore End, but expressed disappointment that the grant was less than the previous year. The Clerk advised that he had written to the Secretary of the Church Council, explaining that it was the Council's custom to pay a grant of 50% of the cost of the works, and that the Church Council had quoted the cost as £1,322 for 2008 and £1,179 in 2009.

6.10 OXFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

(cf 4.12/10) The Fundraiser and Communications Officer of the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind, by letter, thanked the Council for its grant.

6.11 MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL

(cf 5.13/10) The Clerk advised that he had received no expressions of interest from persons wishing to serve as a councillor. He reminded the Council that, as there were less than 6 months until the ordinary day of election, in May 2011, the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mrs M S Rowland did not have to be filled.

RESOLVED: That consideration of co-opting a qualified person to fill the vacancy for parish councillor caused by the resignation of Mrs M S Rowland be deferred to the next meeting.

6.12 ALLOTMENTS MANAGER

(cf 5.13/10) In presenting her apologies for absence, Mrs S Hall had offered to take up the appointment of Allotments Manager

RESOLVED: That Mrs S Hall be appointed as Allotments Manager for the period to the Annual Meeting in 2011.

6.13 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

(cf 5.14/10) It was reported that Eye and Dunsden Parish Council was considering a suggestion that the southern South Oxfordshire parish councils submit a joint response to the Local Transport Plan 3, focussing on road safety, quiet lanes and securing the amenities of the area. The Transport Sub-Committee expected to report further at the next meeting.

6.14 FINANCE

(i) Balances

The Clerk reported that balances at the bank totalled £88,907.47.

(ii) Accounts for payment

RESOLVED: That the following accounts, listed in the schedule under Financial Regulation 5.2, be approved for payment:

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – Water for allotments	£103.47
South Oxfordshire District Council – Pavilion project: building control inspection	£1374.24
Acorn services – Cutting back trees at Kidmore End pond	£300.00
Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association – Subscription	£35.00
Ian Kendrick Ltd – Mowing, 2010	£1509.88
Milnes Associates – Pavilion project: structural engineers' fees	£1057.50
Hale Building Contractors Ltd – Pavilion project (stage payments)	£60017.27
South Oxfordshire District Council – Emptying dog hygiene bin	£34.26
Richard P James Ltd – Pavilion project: architect's fees	£4124.98

(iii) Precept, 2011/12

In a letter, the District Council's Head of Finance, requested, by 7 January 2011, information as to the Council's precept for the financial year 2011/12.

RESOLVED: That the Responsible Financial Officer submit draft estimates for the financial year 2011/12 to the next meeting.

6.15 CONSULTATION ON PLANNING MATTERS

(i) Decisions

The Council noted that the application for erection of new oak framed garage with games room above, demolition of existing stable buildings and erection of new stables at the Old Orchard, Wood Lane, Kidmore End had been permitted conditionally.

(ii) Action of Plans Sub-Committee

RESOLVED: That the action of the Plans Sub-Committee in respect of the following applications, as set out in the register of action, be approved:

proposed swimming pool building to rear of existing house over existing swimming pool at Tanners Farm, Tanners Lane, Chalkhouse Green.

6.16 HIGH SPEED BROADBAND

In a letter, the Head of Corporate Strategy of the District Council referred to the "Race to infinity" organised by British Telecom, by which communities were encouraged to vote for the installation of fibre optic cables, thus enabling the delivery of high speed broadband. The cables would be installed in the 5 areas (largely based on telephone exchanges) with the highest number of votes by 31 December 2010. The District Council also encouraged residents to measure current broadband speeds, in order that help might be found for areas with the slowest connections.

RESOLVED: That voting for high speed broadband be supported by publicity in the next edition of the Parish Newsletter.

6.17 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES

The District Council's Head of Electoral Services advised, by letter, that his Council was undertaking a review of polling districts and places, the purpose being to ensure that all electors had such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable. From the material enclosed with the letter, it seemed that officers of the District Council did not intend to propose any alterations to the present arrangements for the Parish, viz one polling district, the polling place being at the Parish Room.

Members expressed satisfaction with the present arrangements.

6.18 WATER SUPPLY

Optimise, contractors to Thames Water, had advised, by e-mail, that there would be interruptions to water supply overnight on 26 October and 4 November 2010, in connection with the Kingwood Common reservoir replacement main scheme. News of the interruptions had been given on the Council's website.

Members commented that the interruptions had not been quite as planned.

6.19 ELECTION RECHARGES

With a letter, the District Council's Head of Electoral Services set out indicative recharges for the parish council elections in 2011 - £115 for an uncontested election in Kidmore End, and c£700 for a contested election.

6.20 CONCESSIONARY FARES SCHEME

The County Council's Deputy Director of Environment & Economy, with a letter, gave details of

the his Council's proposals for concessionary fares schemes, when it took over the function from district councils in April 2011. The Deputy Director indicated that this was the local application of the national scheme by which persons aged over 60, and eligible disabled people, travelled free of charge on off-peak buses. His Council proposed to support use of the passes after 9am on weekdays, continue to offer companion passes for qualified disabled residents, but not to offer alternatives to the concessionary bus passes (eg tokens) nor allow use of the passes on dial-a-ride and door-to-door community transport services. His Council wished to receive comments on the proposals by 14 December 2010.

Members supported the County Council's proposals in all respects, bar one, namely that concessionary bus passes would not be valid on a dial-a-ride and community transport services. Members pointed out that, in some instances, community schemes were the only form of public transport which was available. While there were limited bus services available to residents of the Parish, they were not really accessible to those persons whose mobility was impaired, and dial-a-ride or community transport schemes, like the FISH scheme from Sonning Common, were the only means of transport to vital services, other than private cars, for many of those persons.

RESOLVED: That the County Council be urged to allow use of the concessionary bus passes on local dial-a-ride and door-to-door community transport services,

6.21 HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES

The Council noted an e-mail from the Waste Management Team at the County Council, giving details of the opening hours of the household waste recycling centres over the Christmas and New Year holidays. The information had been posted on the Council's website.

6.22 OXFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

The Council noted an update for members published by the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils in October 2010.

6.23 FLY TIPPING

The Head of Health and Housing of the District Council reported, in a letter, about increased levels of fly-tipping enforcement in the District and enclosed copies of posters about the enforcement regime.

6.24 SOUTH & VALE CARERS CENTRE

By letter, the Manager of the South & Vale Carers Centre requested financial assistance from the Council. The Manager reported that 1 carer from the Parish had been supported in the past year. Members observed that the budget for 2010/11 contained provision for a grant of £40 to the Centre.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £40 be made to the South & Vale Carers Centre in the financial year 2010/11.

6.25 PLAYING FIELDS COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Playing Fields Committee advised that the Committee had met on 10 November 2010, when the main topic of discussion had been the project to replace the Pavilion at the Gallowstree Common Recreation Ground, and, more particularly, securing categorically the promised grant from the England & Wales Cricket Board.

There had been remarkably high apparent water usage during the 2009/10 football season, but the Committee had agreed to adjust the account for the Football Club.

The Chairman observed that the swing seat at the Kidmore End play area needed repair or replacement, and Mrs S Biggs reported on her search for grant funding for the reinvigoration of that play area.

6.26 AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUB-COMMITTEE

It was reported that Affordable Housing Sub-Committee had, as mentioned at the last meeting, met the Rural Housing Enabler of the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and a planning officer from the District Council on 15 November 2010. Good progress had been made at the meeting and the Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership had been asked to respond to certain issues the Sub-Committee had raised. The Sub-Committee expected to be in a position to put recommendations on next steps to the Council at its meeting on 15 December 2010.

6.27 RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

An approach from the Chiltern Society was reported, concerning works which the Society was arranging for the replacement of stiles with kissing gates on footpath 11 between Kennylands Road, Sonning Common, and Chalkhouse Green. The Society wished the Council to act as client for the works, for which a grant had been secured, and pay for the materials, so that the Council could thereafter claim back the VAT paid on those materials. Members were reluctant to acquiesce to what appeared to be a tax avoidance scheme.

RESOLVED: That the suggestion of the Chiltern Society be not adopted.

6.28 NOTICEBOARD

(cf 4.26c/10) Mr S France of Acorn Services submitted a quotation in the sum of £200 for the manufacture and erection of a noticeboard at Cane End, to replace that demolished by a falling tree earlier in the year.

RESOLVED: That, notwithstanding Financial Regulation 11.1(h), the quotation of Acorn Services Ltd for manufacture and erection of a noticeboard at Cane End be accepted.

6.29 ALLOTMENTS, CANE END

(cf 4.26d/10) The Chairman pointed out that a number of preparatory works were required to enable the allotments at Cane End to be brought back into use. One of these works was the felling, and removal of roots, of 3 large fir trees, for which works Acorn Services had submitted a quotation of £375.

Members expressed caution about proceeding with the project, in case the demand for allotments proved illusory.

RESOLVED: That consideration of the quotation for the removal of trees from the site of the allotments at Cane End be deferred to the next meeting.