

KIDMORE END PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held at the Church Room, Kidmore End on Wednesday 21 September 2016 at 8.00pm and concluded at 9.55pm.

Present: Dr C D Aldridge (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Ms S L Forde, Mrs S Hall, Mrs S J Hunter, I G C Pearson, T M Perchard, J A Swift QC, H Thresher.

Also present: K Bulmer (county councillor), R Simister (district councillor).

Apologies for absence were received from Ms S M Biggs.

4.01 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2016 were taken as read, confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the correct spelling of the word "Sub-Committee" in the resolution to Minute 3.14(vii).

4.02 REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR

The Council noted written reports by Mr K Bulmer, the county councillor for the Goring division, covering, inter alia,

- proposals for a unitary council;
- the consultation on the future of the household waste recycling centres;
- the service available from his Council for checking electric blankets;
- the Oxfordshire Comet – a bookable transport service;
- the consultation on a carers' strategy and carers' personal budgets.

Mr Bulmer reported orally on

- the ongoing discussions about unitary local government in the County, particularly seeking areas where the 2 levels of principal council were in agreement;
- recent planning appeal decisions in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where the District Council's position had been supported.

Mr Bulmer answered a question about his Council's stance on changes to the boundary with the Borough of Reading.

Mr Bulmer and Mr R Simister, the district councillor for the Kidmore End & Whitchurch ward, discussed at some length their personal preferences for the shape of possible unitary local governance in the future. They were not in agreement.

4.03 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Mr R Simister, the district councillor for the Kidmore End & Whitchurch ward, reported

- that his Council favoured a 3 unitary authority structure of local government in the County;
- on changes to the refuse collection arrangements, whereby no black sacks would be collected henceforth;
- that grants for community projects were available from the Police Property Fund;
- about the proposed changes to parliamentary constituency boundaries;
- that his Council encouraged all communities to produce neighbourhood development plans: Members indicated that that approach was not presently favoured by the Parish Council;

- that the Benefit Cap would be introduced in the District in November 2016, and would impact on 64 families in the District;
- on the consultation on the Strategic Economic Plan;
- that the Ministry of Defence had released Chalgrove Airfield to the Housing and Communities Agency, as a possible site for major development.

4.04 PLAY AREAS

(cf 3.04/16) The Clerk reported that the Kidmore End Cricket Club had made a donation of £50 to the scheme to refurbish the equipment at the play area in the Gallowstree Common Recreation Ground.

4.05 DELIVERING PUBLIC SERVICES

(cf 3.05/16) It was reported that the Transport Sub-Committee had met the County Council's Area Highways' Steward, on 25 July 2016, to discuss further the cutting of highways' verges in 2016 and future years. At that meeting, the Steward acknowledged that the verges in the Parish had not been cut by that date, and that only one cut was envisaged, except in cases of road safety. He was advised of the specific sites in the Parish which Members had suggested were priority for cutting, such as the vision splays at the Horsepond Road, Wood Lane and Wyfold Lane junction in Gallowstree Common.

The Area Steward had indicated that the County Council would be prepared to enter into an agreement, under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, whereby the Council would be authorised to cut grass verges on behalf, and exercising the powers, of the highways' authority. The Steward had advised that the A4074 road would be excluded from the agreement, and that, based on the length of verges in the Parish, the County Council would make a payment to the Council of £250 per annum for undertaking the work.

The Area Steward had subsequently sent a copy of the draft agreement, which, amongst other things had included a requirement for 2 cuts per annum, rather than the one cut undertaken on behalf of the County Council in 2016. This point had been pursued with the Area Steward, who confirmed that 2 cuts would be required.

Subsequently, the Chairman had met the County Council's contractor for "amenity" cutting in the Parish, (rather than the linear cutting, which was undertaken by another party). The contractor had explained that, for geographical reasons, he would not undertake mowing in the Parish until towards the end of the season in 2016. He advised that the likely cost of mowing to the standard required in the Section 101 agreement would be c£1,200 per annum. This price had also been suggested by another contractor who had been approached independently. The budget for 2016/17 contained provision of £3,000 for this work.

Members were concerned that the County Council was requiring a standard of cutting from agent authorities twice that it was presently providing, but paying far less than what appeared to be the market rate. Therefore, if parish councils took on the work, the cost to the general public purse would increase, although the cost to the County Council would probably reduce.

RESOLVED: That a meeting be sought with the County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and the county councillor for the Goring Division with a view to securing a revision to the terms of the proposed Section 101 agreement, and that the Council be represented at the meeting by the Finance and Transport Sub-Committees.

4.06 UNITARY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

(cf 3.06/16) With an e-mail, the County Director of the County Council enclosed a copy of the report by Grant Thornton UK LLP, commissioned by the County Council, setting out the partnership's review of local government structure in Oxfordshire. The Partnership concluded that that most efficacious model would be a single unitary council for the County, as opposed to other models providing for 2 to 4 unitary authorities and the retention of the status quo. The report mentioned a 6th option, comprising a

strategic unitary council for the County with constitutionally established area boards, reflecting the present City and district councils, exercising delegated powers and budgets.

Members considered what model of future local governance they would favour, in the light of the discussion between the county and district councillors mentioned in Minute 4.02 above.

RESOLVED: That consideration of this matter be deferred to the next meeting.

4.07 CHALKHOUSE GREEN ROAD, KIDMORE END - TRAFFIC SPEEDS

(cf 3.07(i)/16) It was reported that the Transport Sub-Committee expected to report at the next meeting on the possible imposition of a 20mph speed limit on Chalkhouse Green Road, Kidmore End.

4.08 DEVOLVING POWERS TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

(cf 3.08/16) The Clerk reported that, following his approach as instructed at the last meeting, 3 parish councils - Binfield Heath, Harpsden and Woodcote - had replied to the enquiry about interest in the further devolution of powers from principal councils. Generally, they were interested to see how things developed, although they indicated that they felt that the cost of the devolved services to the public purse would be higher. They were, nevertheless, prepared to support a further meeting on the subject.

4.09 TOWN AND PARISH FORUM

(cf 3.10/16) In a letter, the Policy, Partnership and Engagement Manager of the District Council gave advance notice of her Council's next town and parish forum, to be held on 2 November 2016.

4.10 TELEPHONE KIOSKS

(cf 3.11/16) Mr T M Perchard and Mr H Thresher reported that the door of the Council's telephone kiosk at Chalkhouse Green had been removed and repaired, and was awaiting repainting. It would then be refitted, and the remainder of the kiosk painted.

4.11 BUS SERVICES

(cf 3.12/16) It was reported that the FISH Volunteer Centre in Sonning Common had agreed to offer, for trial period, a prebooked minibus service on Monday afternoons each week (except once a month, when the service would be on a Tuesday), running from Gallowstree Common through Kidmore End and Chalkhouse Green to Friar Street, Reading. The timing would allow 3 hours in Reading. The trial would start on 3 October and run to 19 December 2016.

Details had been posted on the website, and would be published in the Parish Newsletter.

4.12 RECYCLING CENTRES

(cf 3.15/16) It was reported that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman had responded to the County Council's consultation about the future of the household waste recycling centres in the County.

The Chairman of the Council had reported a conversation with the County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, who had advised that residents should contact him if they were concerned about the possible closure of the recycling centre at Oakley Wood. This request had been publicised on the website and would appear in the Parish Newsletter.

4.13 BROADBAND

(cf 3.19/16) Mr H Thresher confirmed that fibre optic cabinets were to be installed by BT Openreach in Chalkhouse Green, Kidmore End and Tokers Green, to support the rollout of faster

Broadband.

In an e-mail, the District Council's Economic Development Manager indicated that her Council was keen to establish communities which still had issues regarding the speed of available Broadband. It was felt that speeds might be low in Cane End, given the distance from the fibre optic cabinet in Gallowstree Common.

4.14 NOTICEBOARD

(cf 3.22/16) The Clerk reported that he had approached Acorn Services about the repair of the noticeboard at Chalkhouse Green. The firm had quoted £120 to undertake the repairs, including the provision of a new "leg".

RESOLVED: That, notwithstanding Financial Regulation 11.1(h), the contract for repairing the noticeboard at Chalkhouse Green be let to Acorn Services.

4.15 FINANCE

(i) Balances

The Clerk reported that balances at the bank totalled £74,561.84.

(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	£165.84
NALC – Subscription to "Local Council Review"	£17.00
Ms S M Biggs – Removal of fallen tree branch	£20.00
Mr H Thresher – Materials for repair of telephone kiosks	£99.52
W A B Grove Ltd – Internal audit fee	£540.00
R F Penfold – Salary net of Income Tax	£375.29
HM Revenue & Customs – Income tax deducted	£250.26
R F Penfold – Printing agenda etc	£9.00

4.16 CONSULTATION ON PLANNING MATTERS

(i) Decisions

The Council noted that the following applications had been permitted conditionally:

barn to store hay and tractor at Collegewood Farmhouse, Cane End;
proposed front extension and alterations to the roof of existing bungalow at The Coppice, Russell Road, Tokers Green;
demolition of dwelling and garage and erection of replacement dwelling with basement and garage, and associated hard and soft landscaping at Greenbank, Chalkhouse Green Road, Chalkhouse Green;
alterations, including roof lights and porch, at The Old Piggery, Kempwood, Reading Road, Cane End;
proposed conservatory to side of Rokeby Drive, Tokers Green Lane, Tokers Green;
detached outbuilding to form a summer house in rear garden of Archmore, Mill Lane, Kidmore End;
proposed rear extension at Blossom Cottage, Hazelmoor Lane, Gallowstree Common

and that the application for 2-bay, timber framed, cedar shingle roofed, garage at Fairview, Tokers Green Lane, Tokers Green had been refused.

(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 extension of and modifications to existing bungalow at The Coppice, Russell Road, Tokers Green;
barn to store hay and tractor at Collegewood Farmhouse, Cane End;
alterations, including new roof lights and porch at The Old Piggery, Kempwood, Reading Road, Cane End;
new front entrance porch, rear extension to ground and first first floor and internal alterations at Ashgate Cottage, Hazelmoo Lane, Gallowstree Common;
2-bay, timber framed, cedar shingle roofed, garage at Fairview, Tokers Green Lane, Tokers Green;
detached outbuilding to form a summer house in rear garden of Archmore, Mill Lane, Kidmore End;
proposed rear extension at Blossom Cottage, Hazelmoo Lane, Gallowstree Common;
alterations/extensions to existing private dwelling including roof alterations to existing dormer windows at Long Hollow, The Hamlet, Gallowstree Common;
demolition of existing 3 bed detached cottage and studio annex and replacement with new 4 bedroom detached house, extend residential curtilage to include woodland, extension of existing driveway to provide in and out flow at The Cottage, Park Lane, Cane End;
proposed conservatory to side of Rokeby Lodge, Tokers Green Lane, Tokers Green (amended plan);
extension and conversion of existing outbuilding to form new 3-bedroom dwelling with attached garage at Oldfield, Horsepond Road, Gallowstree Common;
variation of condition 2 of permission P16/S0116/FUL re separate access for new dwelling at Hillfield House, Horsepond Road, Gallowstree Common (and amended plan);
part single storey rear, side extension at 2 Allwrights Cottages, Horsepond Road, Gallowstree Common.

(iii) South Oxfordshire Local Plan

(cf 3.15(vii)/16) Members noted the response sent, by the Plans Sub-Committee, on behalf of the Council, to the consultation on the next stage of the District Council's Local Plan.

(iv) Neighbourhood development plans

(cf 3.15(viii)/16) Members of the Plans Sub-Committee, together with the Vice-Chairman of the Council, met a planning officer of the District Council in August 2016 to discuss neighbourhood development plans (NDPs). The officer believed that the Parish was vulnerable to unwanted development if a NDP was not in place, especially in the south, adjacent to the Borough of Reading. She urged to Council to draft a plan, pointing out that funds were available, and that the preparation of a plan should take no more than 18 months. Members pointed to the experience in other parishes, notably Sonning Common, in respect of the cost and time taken. However, the overriding impression of the Members present at the meeting was that their concerns had been ignored.

Recognising the Council's stance about NDPs, but mindful of the risks of attracting unwanted development, the Sub-Committee had taken the view that the best course would be to publish information about the neighbourhood planning process in the Parish Newsletter, and to request residents if they wanted a public meeting to discuss the matter.

The Chairman of the Council had circulated an e-mail she had received from the Department of Communities and Local Government, setting out the Government's response to the technical consultation about changes to the neighbourhood planning process. Regulations would be issued, to take effect from 1 October 2016, designed to help communities to take up neighbourhood planning.

The County Officer of the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, by e-mail, referred to a discussion between the Chairman of the National Association of Local Councils and the Minister for Housing & Planning, during which the Minister referred to the Neighbourhood Planning Bill, to be laid before Parliament, and stressed the importance for communities of neighbourhood planning.

RESOLVED: That residents of the Parish be invited, via the Parish Newsletter, to indicate whether they were interested in a public meeting about neighbourhood development plans.

(v) Proposed development near Bryants Farm, Emmer Green

Members were advised of the proposed development, by Gladman Land, for 276 houses on land between Peppard Road and Kiln Road near Bryants Farm, Emmer Green, in the Parish of Eye & Dunsden. The Clerk reported that he and the Chairman had individually attended the public exhibition about the proposed development on 14 September 2016. No planning application had yet been submitted, however.

Members enquired as to the position of Eye & Dunsden Parish Council about the proposal.

4.17 SALARY OF CLERK

(cf 10.05/16) By letter, a civil servant in HM Revenue & Customs indicated that the arrangement proposed by the Council for payment of waived salary (see Minute 8.21/16), with the appropriate PAYE deductions being made at the time of payment, would be acceptable. It was noted that the arrangement would commence in September 2016.

The Clerk advised that, as a result of the concluded national negotiations, his salary had increased, in accordance with the salary scale adopted in October 2005, to £2,728 per annum with effect from 1 April 2016, and would increase again, on 1 April 2017, to £2,755 per annum.

4.18 FISH VOLUNTEER CENTRE, SONNING COMMON

A representative of the FISH Volunteer Centre, Sonning Common asked, in an e-mail, for the Council to consider making a grant to the Council to consider making a grant to the Centre, in recognition of its support by providing bus transport in the Parish (see Minute 4.11). The Centre sought a grant of £400. The Council noted that the budget for the financial year 2016/17 contained provision of £2,000 for a replacement bus service.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £400 be made to the FISH Volunteer Centre in the financial year 2016/17.

4.19 OXFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

The Council noted updates for members published by the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils in July and August 2016, with particular reference to the paragraphs about grants from TOE, and portable [electrical] appliance testing.

4.20 TRANSPORT REPRESENTATIVES

By e-mail, the Director (Business Development and Partnerships) of Community First Oxfordshire had enquired whether there would be any support for meetings of transport representatives, in the face of the decision of the County Council to cease subsidising bus services. Such a meeting had been

scheduled for 6 September 2016. The enquiry had been passed to the Council's Transport Representatives.

4.21 SUE RYDER DUCHESS OF KENT HOSPICE

In a letter, the Fund Raising Assistant of the Sue Ryder Duchess of Kent Hospice in west Reading asked that the Council consider making a donation towards the cost of the hospice, and its associated facilities in Newbury and Wokingham, which provided round-the-clock assessment and palliative care for c1,200 patients from western Berkshire each year. Members felt that the Council was more likely to support the Sue Ryder hospice at Nettlebed.

RESOLVED: That no grant be made to the Sue Ryder Duchess of Kent Hospice in the financial year 2016/17.

4.22 JOHN HOWELL MP

The Council noted an e-mail from the Chief of Staff in the office of John Howell MP, concerning meetings arranged by Mr Howell across his constituency during the period 22 to 29 September 2016. The Vice-Chairman advised that she would attend the meeting in Sonning Common on 26 September.

4.23 VICTIM SUPPORT

The Victim Services Administrator of Victim Support Thames Valley asked, by letter, that the Council consider making a donation towards the cost of free, independent and confidential (if appropriate) advice services to the victims of crime.

RESOLVED: That consideration of the request be deferred until later in the year.

4.24 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL

(cf 9.11/16) In an e-mail, Ms A S O'Reilly of Coopers Pightle, Kidmore End, expressed her interest in serving as a member of the Council, to fill one of the 3 current vacancies.

The Council recalled its discussion, in February 2016, about a reduction in the maximum number of councillors.

RESOLVED: That consideration of the interest of Ms A S O'Reilly, in serving as a councillor, be deferred to the next meeting.

4.25 PLAYING FIELDS COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Playing Fields Committee reported that the Committee had met on 14 September 2016. The Committee had discussed

- work resulting from an examination of the hot water system in the Diamond Jubilee Pavilion;
- how to proceed in respect of the cracks in some internal walls in the Pavilion, which cracks had been present when the building had been "signed off" by the architect: the cracks were to be filled;
- replacing some of the light fittings in the Pavilion;
- in general terms, the need to adopt a planned maintenance programme in the Pavilion, to address wear and tear.

4.26 KIDMORE END POND

It was reported that the Chairman of the Council had taken urgent action to ensure the removal of a branch from the willow tree at the Kidmore End pond, which branch had fallen into the highway during July 2016. The Chairman had proposed that professional advice be sought on the stability of the tree, as a number of limbs had fallen in recent years.

RESOLVED: 1 That the action of the Chairman be approved and confirmed.

2 That professional advice be sought on the future stability of the willow tree at Kidmore End pond.