

KIDMORE END PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held in the Diamond Jubilee Pavilion, Gallowstree Common Recreation Ground on Wednesday 18 September 2024 at 7.30pm and concluded at 9.05pm.

Present: Dr C D Aldridge (Chairman), D P Malaperiman (Vice-Chairman), Ms G McCarter (from Minute 4.06), Ms D V C Page, G J Readings, N A E Room.

Also present: P H Dragonetti (district councillor).

Apologies for absence were received from A P Bowley, A P Harland, Ms J P M Mather, I G C Pearson.

4.01 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2024 were taken as read, confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4.02 REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Reports by Mr K Bulmer, the county councillor for the Goring division, had been circulated prior to the meeting, covering

- road resurfacing techniques;
- the review of his Council's spare seat (on school transport) scheme;
- the publication of the Oxfordshire Cycling Map;
- a personal statement about his decision to resign from the County Council's Conservative group, and to serve as an independent councillor;
- the approach to Government by the Local Government Association seeking the removal of Council Tax increase caps;
- monies available from his Councillor Priority Fund.

4.03 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Mr P H Dragonetti, the district councillor for the Kidmore End & Whitchurch ward, had submitted a report, which had been circulated, covering

- progress with the development of the joint Local Plan;
- proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework;
- his Council's revenue grant scheme to help organisations cover fundamental operating costs.

Mr Dragonetti answered questions on housing numbers within the draft joint Local Plan and the increase in the planning application fee.

4.04 OPEN SESSION

During the Open Session,

- Mr M Jan-Janin of Dysons Wood, Tokers Green, advised that officers from the County Council's Highways' team had agreed to the pump out the catch pit under the green at Tokers Green and the highway gullies draining into the pond and that he was seeking quotations from 3 suppliers for remedial works to the pond at Tokers Green;
- Ms J Feast of Rosebery Road, Tokers Green sought the Council's support for her and her partner's objections sent to the inspector hearing the appeal against the refusal of planning permission for the additional house at The White House, Rosebery Road,

- Tokers Green (see Minute 4.12(iv), below);
- Ms G McCarter of Horsepond Road, Gallowstree Common stated that she was seeking to slow down vehicles using Horsepond Road, and the enforcement of the speed limits on that road to improve safety in that village;
- Ms S M Biggs of Tokers Green Lane, Kidmore End indicated her role in the campaign against the inclusion of a third crossing of the River Thames in the vicinity of Reading (see Minute 4.27, below).

4.05 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL

(cf 3.04/24) The Council was reminded that there was a vacancy for the office of parish councillor, to be filled by co-option, following Ms C Mason ceasing to be a councillor. In this connection, by e-mail, Ms G McCarter of Horsepond Road, Gallowstree Common had expressed an interest in serving as a parish councillor.

RESOLVED: That Ms G McCarter be co-opted, in accordance with Section 89 of the Local Government Act 1972, to fill the vacancy for the office of parish councillor, vice Ms C Mason.

(Ms McCarter thereupon signed a declaration of acceptance of office, and joined the meeting.)

4.06 GALLOWSTREE COMMON RECREATION GROUND

(i) Trees

(cf 3.06(i)/24) It was understood that Kidmore End Cricket Club had arranged for the cutting back of some trees growing in The Slip (the land to the east of the Gallowstree Common Recreation Ground) to be undertaken earlier in September 2024.

(ii) Hedge

(cf 3.06(ii)/24) It was reported that no further quotations had yet been received for the removal of ivy from the aged hawthorn tree, in the boundary hedge of the Recreation Ground, near the vehicular entrance, raising its crown, and to raise the crown of, and remove epicormic growth from, the nearby norway maple.

4.07 TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURES

(cf 3.08/24) With e-mails, officers of the County Council gave notice of the temporary closure of the following roads, under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

- Main Street, Stoke Row, on 29 and 30 August 2024, for carriageway surfacing and patching;
- Tokers Green Lane, Tokers Green, from 10 to 14 August 2024, for repairing leaking water boundary box;
- Chalkhouse Green Road, Chalkhouse Green, from 27 to 29 August 2024, for repairing leaking water boundary box.

4.08 GRANTS

(cf 3.09/24) The Clerk reported receipt of letters of thanks from Enrych Oxfordshire and Home Start Southern Oxfordshire for the grants made to the organisations by the Council.

4.09 PLAY AREAS

(i) Remedial works

(cf 3.18/24) It was reported that no further quotations had yet been received for a range of remedial works to the play areas at Gallowstree Common and Kidmore End.

RESOLVED: That consideration of quotations for remedial works at the play areas at Gallowstree Common and Kidmore End be again deferred to the next meeting.

(ii) Kidmore End - boundary fence

In an e-mail, Ms S Wilkins of Tokers Green Lane, Kidmore End referred to the fence on the eastern boundary of the Kidmore End play area, which fence was dilapidated, and children had been observed accessing land to the east from the Play Area. Subsequently, Mr E Madejski, one of the owners of the land to the east, had drawn the Council's attention to the condition of the fence.

Members were reminded that the Council's title deeds for the play area made no reference to any fencing responsibilities for the Council on the boundary concerned. However, it was also understood that Mr Madejski's deeds made no reference to fencing responsibilities either. Members acknowledged that the Council should seek to protect users of the play area in terms of the east boundary. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That, in the first instance, a quotation be sought for fencing the eastern boundary of the Kidmore End Play Area.

4.10 DIAMOND JUBILEE PAVILION, GALLOWSTREE COMMON RECREATION GROUND

(i) Condition survey

(cf 3.20/24) Following the decisions at the last meeting about arranging a condition survey of the Diamond Jubilee Pavilion, the Tenure of the Cricket Club Working Party had considered how best to secure the implementation of the resolutions. A building condition survey had been undertaken by Ajenda TDD Ltd in 2018, commissioned by the Council. The Working Party had been reminded that the Council's Financial Regulations provided that competing quotes or tenders were not required in every instance. Regulations 11.1(a)(ii) and (iv) allowed, for instance, single tender action for professional services or an extension of an existing contract.

Ajenda TDD Ltd had indicated, informally, that the cost of a review of the 2018 report would be £2,300 +VAT: providing the estimates of future costs would be additional. The Working Party recommended that, using the waivers of Financial Regulations mentioned above, the contract for the exercise agreed at the last meeting be let to Ajenda TDD Ltd.

As the Working Party wished not to delay the negotiations with the Cricket Club, Members had been asked to indicate whether they supported the recommendation of the Working Party. Informally, 6 Members had indicated their support for that recommendation, so the Chairman, as a matter of urgency, had approved the award of the contract for the survey to Ajenda TDD Ltd and their associates, Shakespeare, Pullen and Slade Ltd.

The contractors had inspected the premises on 16 September 2024.

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

(ii) Photographs

(3.21(i)/24) It was reported that, informally, Members of the Kidmore End Playing Fields Committee had advised that the photographs relating to the former Kidmore End Football Club had been removed from the Pavilion by persons associated with the former Club.

(iii) Biodigester

(cf 3.21(ii)/24) It was reported that the overhaul and servicing of the foul waste biodigester serving the Diamond Jubilee Pavilion had been scheduled to be undertaken on 19 September 2024. However, because of the problems with the borehole associated with the digester, discovered during the inspection on 16 September (see Minute 4.10(i) above), the works had been postponed.

4.11 FINANCE

(i) Balances

The Clerk reported that balances at the bank totalled £107,698.25: this figure included the second tranche of the precept for the current year.

(ii) Accounts paid

It was reported that, in accordance with the authority granted by the Council at its last meeting and Financial Regulation 5.2, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman had approved the payment of the following accounts on 21 August 2024:

Shield Maintenance Ltd – Servicing dog hygiene bin	£13.26
Moore – Reminder letter re AGAR	£48.00
Ian Kendrick Ltd – Mowing highway verges	£954.00
Iain Pearson – Service contract for and repair of biodigester at Recreation Ground (reimbursement)	£4,066.61
R F Penfold – Salary net of Income Tax	£174.95
HM Revenue & Customs – Income tax deducted	£116.63

(iii) Replacement cheque

The Clerk reported that Barclays Bank had declined to honour the cheque drawn in August, in favour of Iain Pearson (see Minute 4.11(ii) above), on the grounds that the cheque was not drawn in accordance with the mandate. In order not to disadvantage Mr Pearson, the Chairman and another Member had signed a replacement cheque, which had been honoured by the bank.

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

(iv) Accounts for payment

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

Shield Maintenance Ltd – Emptying dog hygiene bin	£13.26
J D Sheldon – Electricity meter box for Pavilion (reimbursement)	£59.98
Moore – Statutory recommendation fee (re AGAR)	£378.00
R F Penfold – Salary net of Income Tax	£174.95
HM Revenue & Customs – Income tax deducted	£116.63

4.12 CONSULTATION ON PLANNING MATTERS

(i) Decisions

The Council noted that the following applications

erection of single storey extension to rear and other alterations at Church View, Tokers Green Lane, Kidmore End;
proposed part rear extensions and alterations to fenestration at Fernbank, Horsepond Road, Gallowstree Common;
replace conservatory at rear with 2 storey extension and alterations to front porch at Elmhurst, Elm Road, Tokers Green;
installation of an air source heat pump at Stanley Cottage, The Hamlet, Gallowstree Common;
double storey rear extension with apex window and juliette balcony at Farthings, 15 Tanners Lane, Chalkhouse Green;
variation of condition 2 (approved plans) in respect of application P21/S3287/FUL at Oldfield House, Horsepond Road, Gallowstree Common

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 part rear extension and alterations to fenestration at Fernbank, Horsepond Road, Gallowstree Common (amended plan);
single storey rear extension (conservatory) at Four Winds, Chalkhouse Green Lane, Chalkhouse Green.

(iii) Applications

The Council considered an application referred to it since the last meeting.

RESOLVED: That the following comments be submitted in respect of the application for proposed pool and trellis at Summer Cottage, Cane End "No strong views, providing that use of the swimming pool is restricted to residents of Summer Cottage, and there is no use connected with the many commercial operations on the land adjoining the dwelling".

(iv) Planning Appeal

In a letter, the Head of Planning of the District Council advised that an appeal had been lodged against the decision of his Council to refuse planning permission for a new 4 bedroom detached house adjacent to The White House, Rosebery Road, Tokers Green. The appeal would be determined on the basis of written representations, the closing date for any comments to the inspector being 4 October 2024.

RESOLVED: That the objections submitted to the District Council about the planning application for a detached house adjacent to The White House, Rosebery Road, Tokers Green be restated to the inspector appointed to determine the above appeal.

(v) Former Family Fairway golf course, Emmer Green

(cf 10.12(iv)/24) The Council recalled that it had, in March 2024, requested the District Council, under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, for all information held by that Council about the future of the northern part of the former Reading Golf Club course/the Fairways Family Golf Centre.

The District Council had eventually responded in August 2024 advising that the request had been interpreted, as it included planning matters, as being under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Therefore, a package of information had been attached under that legislation. The package had been referred to Ms S M Biggs and John Swift KC in the first instance.

4.13 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Council received a report (24/25 - 8) by the Chairman about the consultation, by the Government, on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

However, the Chairman had recognised that Members had not received the requisite notice of the proposal in her paper, so a decision on the subject could not be made at the meeting. As the closing date for the consultation was 24 September 2024, the Chairman had proposed an out-of-meeting urgency decision-making approach.

4.14 OXFORDSHIRE MOTOR PROJECT

By letter, the Marketing & Development Director of the Oxford Motor Project requested the Council to consider making a donation to the cost of the new premises for Trax, which offered long-term vocational studies for vulnerable young people who have been out of mainstream education for over a year.

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

4.15 OXFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

(i) Members' update

The Council noted the updates for members published by the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils in July and August 2024, in particular the paragraphs about training courses, the local environment conference and signing up to the Oxfordshire Councils' Charter.

(ii) Annual subscriptions

By e-mail, the County Officer of the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils advised that, at an extraordinary meeting to be held on 7 October 2024, the Association would consider a significant increase in member subscriptions with effect from the financial year 2025/26, in order to cover existing operating losses. The County Officer asked member councils to settle their position on the proposal prior to the general meeting.

RESOLVED: That the proposed increased membership subscriptions to the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils for the financial year 2025/26 be supported.

4.16 TOKERS GREEN LANE, KIDMORE END – SCHOOL SIGNAGE

(cf 10.05/24) Ms S Wilkins of Tokers Green Lane, Kidmore End, by e-mail, urged the Council to secure the installation of signage in Tokers Green Lane, Kidmore End, warning of the entrance to the school in that road. Whilst local residents and the parents of pupils were aware of the dangers, other drivers, eg delivery van drivers, were not.

RESOLVED: That the County Council be requested to erect suitable signage for northbound drivers in Tokers Green Lane, Kidmore End, warning of the entrance of the school.

4.17 KIDMORE END CEMETERY – PATH FROM TOKERS GREEN LANE

In another e-mail, Ms S Wilkins enquired about responsibility for the maintenance of the footpath from Tokers Green Lane, Kidmore End to the cemetery, particularly the removal of over-growing vegetation.

Members were reminded that the footpath was not recorded as a public right of way on the Definitive Map, and that, although the cemetery was owned and managed by the District Council, that Council denied any responsibility for the path, despite having been granted a right of way over it, when its predecessor council acquired the land now forming the cemetery.

It was noted that the path had been cleared from time to time by volunteers, including Members of the Council. In the circumstances, it was felt that reliance on volunteers amongst the community was the best course to secure vegetation clearance.

Members noted that work had been carried out on the surface of the roadway in the cemetery.

4.18 WINTER PREPAREDNESS

The Highways Operations Manager of the County Council, enquired, by e-mail, whether any road salt was required for the salt bins in the Parish. The Chairman had inspected the bins, and had found that one – between Kidmore End and Tokers Green in Tokers Green Lane – needed replenishing. The County Council had been asked to restock that bin.

4.19 CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, KIDMORE END

Mr N A E Room, in his role as a churchwarden of the church of St John the Baptist, Kidmore End, by e-mails, requested the Council to consider making a contribution towards the cost of maintaining the churchyard: the Parochial Church Council had already spent £1,838 on works to trees and servicing a mower.

Members recognised that the Council had habitually contributed towards the cost of maintaining the churchyard, and, to that end, provision of up to a grant of £1,730 was included in the budget for the financial year 2024/25.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £1,730 be made to the Parochial Church Council towards the cost of maintaining the churchyard at St John the Baptist, Kidmore End in the financial year 2024/25.

(Mr N A E Room declared a pecuniary interest in the above matter as a churchwarden, and withdrew from the meeting in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.)

4.20 DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE SEMINARS

The Council noted an invitation from the Data Infrastructure Programme at the County Council to a webinar to update parish councillors on the team's latest projects in the District, to be held on 14 October 2024.

4.21 BUILDING NAMING

The GIS Team Leader & Street Naming and Numbering Officer of the District Council advised, in an e-mail, that the buildings known as The Maples, Dysons Wood, Tokers Green had been renamed Aurora Rowan School.

4.22 SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICE CONTRACTS

The County Council's Public Transport Planner, in an e-mail, advised that the contracts for some subsidised bus services, including service 123 between Watlington and Reading, via Stoke Row, Chckendon and Kidmore End, would expire on 30 March 2025. In advance of the procurement of new contracts, comments were sought on the current and potential future provision.

RESOLVED: That the County Council be asked to supply patronage information for service 123.

4.23 KIDMORE END PLAYING FIELDS COMMITTEE

The Council received, and noted, the confirmed minutes of the meeting of the Kidmore End Playing Fields Committee held on 8 July 2024 (report 24/25 - 9). It was noted that the Committee had met again on 9 September 2024.

4.24 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE SUB-COMMITTEE

The Council considered a report (24/25 - 10) of the Clerk updating it on projects adopted for possible use of the Community Infrastructure Levy funds held by the Council and to consider an additional project for inclusion on the list.

RESOLVED: 1 That the project to surface the entrance drive and the carpark at the Gallowstree Common Recreation Ground proceed, on the basis of the quotation issued by Hazell and Jefferies Ltd, in the sum of £35,896.26, the cost to be met from the Community Infrastructure Levy funds held by the Council.

2 That the District Council be requested to secure the footpath etc promised by the developer of Fox Heath Gardens, Cane End in the planning applications for that development.

3 That consideration of the project to install a picnic bench at Kidmore End pond be deferred, pending further details of size and siting etc.

4 That "Speedwatch" road signs be purchased for installation in Horsepond Road, Gallowstree Common, the cost to be met from the provision in the budget for 2024/25 for traffic management.

4.25 TENURE OF CRICKET CLUB WORKING PARTY

The Vice-Chairman referred to the inspections of the Diamond Jubilee Pavilion in connection with energy consumption and the general condition (see Minute 4.10(i), in respect of the latter). He reported slow progress on reaching agreement with the Cricket Club on the heads of terms of the proposed lease, but expected to report further on that matter at the next meeting.

4.26 BIODIVERSITY POLICY

(cf 3.22/24) The Council considered a report (24/25 -11) of the Chairman, arising from the decision at the last meeting, setting out a draft policy in respect of the Council's statutory duties on biodiversity, and a draft action plan for implementing the policy.

RESOLVED: That the circulated Biodiversity Policy and action plan be adopted.

4.27 READING BOROUGH COUNCIL'S TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2040

The Council received a report (24/25 -12) by John Swift. KC about the inclusion of a third Thames bridge in Reading Borough Council's Transport Strategy 2040, recommended for adoption by that Council at its meeting on 15 October 2024.

The Chairman moved the following motion

"That the Council note the report of John Swift KC on the inclusion of the scheme for the Third Thames Crossing in the Reading Transport Strategy 2040 and approve his report for use at the meeting of representatives of parish councils in South Oxfordshire on 3 October 2024".

The motion was voted upon and declared carried.

RESOLVED: That the report of John Swift KC on the inclusion of the scheme for the Third Thames Crossing in the Reading Transport Strategy 2040 be noted and approved for use at the meeting of representatives of parish councils in South Oxfordshire on 3 October 2024.

4.28 TOKERS GREEN DEFIBRILLATOR

The Council considered a note by Ms F Harland of Rosebery Road, Tokers Green (report 24/5 - 13) setting out the cost of installing and maintaining the publicly accessible defibrillator in Tokers Green and requesting a contribution towards expenditure on the equipment in the current year and the cost of consumables in the future.

RESOLVED: That a contribution of £339.54 be made towards the cost of a new battery and pads for the defibrillator in Tokers Green, the cost to be met from the provision in the budget for 2024/25 for unspecified projects.

4.29 MEETINGS, CONFERENCES ETC

Ms D V C Page reported orally on the meeting of Henley-on-Thames Town Council's Townlands Steering Group, held on 22 July 2024, about the future of the services available at the Hospital.

The Chairman advised that she would be attending Scribifest.