

Appleford-on-Thames
Minutes of Parish Council Meeting 18 January 2021

Time: 19.30 – 21.50

Attendance:

Parish Council: Greg O’Broin (GO), Victoria Shepherd (VS), Andy Guinn (AG)
Parish Clerk/RFO: Sophie Gunputhram (SG)
County and District: Cllr Richard Webber (RW)
Public: Steve Flinders (SF), Chris (CH) & Mary Hancock (MH), David Hall (DH),
Craig & Katherine Jefferies, Lee Rainbow (LR), Robert Green (RG)
Sue & Russell Cox (RC), Sandra (SO) & Alan Oldfield (AO)
William (WF) & Katie Finch (KF), Julian Wade (JW),
Ian & Lyn Cook, Katherine Andrews (& Dave?), Claire Boyce (& Jim?)
Note: italics used where attendees did not share video or contribute

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Approx. 20 residents joined. The Chairman did not limit public participation.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Clare Cousineau. Emma Jhita.

3. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST

Andy Guinn declared his involvement on the Village Hall Committee.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2020

GO asked if any council members had any issues with the minutes.

GO mentioned that minutes ref 7(b) Village Survey should more accurately say “Road should be at ground level” in accordance with APC’s current position. The survey findings expressed village concern at the “height of flyover”. The Position Paper recently submitted to OCC and circulated to the village reflects this.

APPROVAL - The Minutes were approved.

5. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR (CLLR RICHARD WEBBER)

Cllr Webber confirmed lots of District and County Council staff are involved in the COVID vaccine roll out - it is progressing well.

There was a recent FCC Liaison Committee Meeting: Appleford & Sutton Courtney PCs were thanked for supporting public footpath maintenance. Speaking positively at these meetings is encouraged. Definite signs that things are being done and going in the right direction thanks to recent concerted support.

a) Village infrastructure

RW collecting data to supporting OCC’s Highway Programme for 2021/22 & beyond: keen for an Appleford contribution.

VS confirmed a ‘first pass’ spreadsheet was sent to Cllr Webber last week from GO. Cllr Webber will act on these requests.

ACTION - Confirm RW finds our contribution (March meeting). VS to share details with wider village so inputs can be captured (via Pressings - printed, email, Facebook, website and noticeboard)

b) Dog Mess

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Growing issue of dog poo locally. Only one dog warden for whole area. Working on improving the situation- particularly in Abingdon and Farrington.

VS confirmed complaints from Appleford, and proposed Street Warden approach to resolve (TBD).

c) Litter

GO mentioned that there has been litter in the village too. Thanked the Finches, Mary Hancock & others who have been litter picking. VS suggested formalising volunteers using [KeepBritainTidy](#), or similar, to build a baseline, e.g. LW currently organise two village-wide litter picks per year.

ACTION - GO will be looking at budget to cover village litter picking equipment. VS to seek volunteers for this and Street Wardens.

Cllr Webber asked whether the good PC turnout evidenced Appleford had co-opted new PCs? Not yet... PC and other village amenities, e.g. Village Hall, Church, etc. all seeking urgent support

ACTION - GO & VS to knock on doors in the village for PC, and other volunteers (see below, and Pressings postcard)

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

No applications have been noted.

NEW ROAD & RIVER CROSSING (SCHEME C)

a. Position Paper - Village position on New Road Development

This has been emailed to Road Working Group distribution list, and will be available on the village website. Paper copies available on request. VS, GO and Chris created this in light of all recent meetings with OCC, local landowners, village survey, etc, to formalise Appleford's position: the Appleford Railway Flyover is unacceptable. Paper gives a robust statement to OCC: hopefully a strong objection is registered. Both Appleford and Sutton Courtney Parish would be affected by road noise - it will be as high as the two-storey houses on Main Road (Appleford).

Cllr Webber mentioned that the current configuration will affect Sutton Courtney, perhaps more than they have yet realised: it will be useful to get Sutton Courtney fully on side given their size and history fighting off developments [note some raised eyebrows by Appleford residents formerly involved with campaigns mentioned].

VS/GO advised of ongoing discussions with Sutton Courtenay, Culham and Long Wittenham Parish Councils. Sam Casey-Rerhaye (Chair of Culham PC & a Cllr at SODC) was not aware of the flyover and is interested in learning more. Appleford generally keen to obtain as much local support as possible, particularly making everyone aware of the Railway Sidings Flyover, which may not still be known about, let alone favoured...

ACTION – GO & VS to agree date and time with SC, Culham and LW to present Position Paper).

b. Meetings OCC (20/09/2020, 20/11/2020, 7/01/2021 & planned 21/1/2021)

ACTION - Cllr Webber would like join meeting on 21/01/2021. GO to send invitation and details.

VS gave an update - OCC pushing full-steam ahead, focused on Nov 2024 deadline when funding runs out. OCC aim to submit planning permission this summer. We need to make it known that we want to be heard.

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VS stated someone recently came to recreation ground to take photos to illustrate how Appleford will be affected (by flyover?).

ACTION - VS to request details from OCC AHEAD of Planning submissions (on agenda for 21/01/21)

c. Campaign against flyover

GO stated the village needs to build a campaign around NO FLYOVER (recognising need to illustrate this with railway sidings to avoid confusion with Thames Bridge). Our aim is to show that we want to fight this and take a position of leadership in the area.

The plan is to get ourselves heard. Make it known in the village and beyond that we are not happy for this to go ahead. Big banners to be made for the village. Keen to have received support for campaign: posters, emails, letters etc,

The more noise we can make now the better: we should be making a lot more given the proposed village impact. Mary Hancock, Steve Flinders and David Hall all volunteered to help with the banner design.

Lee Rainbow offered to put a banner outside his house - good train & road visibility.

Cllr Webber suggested presenting at the beginning of the county council meeting (2/3 min slot) as a very effective way to get public attention: press will be present, and villagers' campaign outside.

ACTION – GO & Cllr Webber to discuss outside of meeting.

A letter-writing campaign should also be conducted. Villagers will need to issue letters/emails to OCC cabinet members including Ian Hudspeth (Council leader), Environment & Highways, Finance and the Chief Executive.

ACTION - ALL Village campaign: NO RAILWAY SIDINGS FLYOVER. Circulate a menu of opportunities to support/get involved, letter, and email prompts to villagers (MH, DH, SF, etc)

d. Issues discussed:

GO summarised “the flyover bridge with trailing embankments on both sides will be visually intrusive and damage the village landscape. An elevated road will bring traffic noise and road pollution (emissions & particulates); the flyover will amplify both traffic and rail noise with the bridge construction acting as a sound tunnel.”

VS mentioned that the current alignment will cut 1/3 off Appleford Parish area. The height of the road will be circa 6m, width circa 13-18m. CH confirmed the likely dimensions, shared a visual representation (architectural model) showing a concrete tunnel supporting the flyover: the train tunnel will act as a noise amplifier for both road noise above it and train noise going through it.

VS raised the issue of the **T junction** which does not serve Appleford's needs in maintaining links to SC: Appleford wants direct access to SC via the roundabout [noting that SC would prefer a T-junction]. Also, that there is some traffic-modelling evidence to support the selection of the western route over the eastern route (January 2019).

GO mentioned discussions with OCC about the possibility of sound recording equipment to measure noise. Five residents' families have agreed to have sound equipment in their gardens. This will be mentioned at the upcoming OCC meeting. It is important to get pre-measurements as a benchmark, not least given upcoming Hanson Sidings extension.

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Robert Green (RG) thanked everyone for being so proactive. He asked if there is a feasible ground-level solution. CH advised there are feasible options and presented a route departing from the Ladygrove ring road, heading North, as included in the Position Paper. This will be presented to OCC on Thursday 21/01/21, to request further feasibility work. Landowners will need to allow for road to go through their land, but constraints unlikely to be greater than those already being faced.

All stakeholders have confirmed that every route would have challenges. CH estimates that the proposed alignment with an expensive bridge over the railway sidings would add an estimated £25m to taxpayers' bill. CH said Appleford needs to make sure that all feasible alternatives alignments have been professionally examined.

Meetings (attended by GO, VS & CH) with landowners - Hanson (4/12/2020), FCC Environment (17/12/2020), RWE (15/01/2020) all positive. GO said he was surprised how forthcoming Hanson, FCC & RWE were: very open to looking at alternatives and sharing local site plans/information. When questioned they all said they were surprised how close the road was to Appleford and understood Appleford's reasonable concerns. They "wouldn't like it if they lived in Appleford." Feedback suggests that OCC chose the line of least resistance to deliver a road as quickly as possible. It looks as though the FCC corridor could provide alternative routes: feasibility study needed. Time, money and continued safe operations are the immediate constraints for all parties. No evidence that OCC have embarked upon a comparative analysis of an alternative road: we want them to. OCC are planning to submit planning permission this summer. We want a compromise by being constructive and working with them in the meantime.

7. PARISH COUNCIL MATTERS

a. Recruitment of Parish Clerk / Interviews - status update (GOB)

GO introduced SG. Thanked Anne and Caroline for their service to the village. SG said she lives in Grove and is excited to take on the role with Appleford-on-Thames. She hopes to meet everyone and become familiar with all the details in coming months.

b. Vacancy for 2x Parish Councillors

ACTION - GO & VS will be knocking on doors to encourage people to join.

Chris has done great work as part of the Working Group, but is not part of the Parish Council: we need more councillors to cover sickness or absence. Here is an opportunity to be part of the Parish Council. We encourage everyone over voting age, particularly younger residents, to join us. **Please volunteer ASAP.**

c. Parish Website (GOB) / The Pressings (VS)

Modifications to website have been made. Link to Position Paper needs to be corrected by Jennie at Creative Badger (web service provider).

ACTION - GO & SG to update on website.

VS confirmed PC side of the noticeboard has been updated with December Pressings. January issue to follow shortly, but we need an editor: no volunteers came forward. VS mentioned merging with Sutton Courtney if we cannot find someone, which Appleford would like to avoid.

GO asked for volunteers to assist with media updates, Facebook & website. Need to audit current PC Facebook members to ensure they live in or adjacent to the village. No response!

d. Wider Appleford Involvement (ALL)

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e. Vacancy for Maintenance person (ALL)

ACTION – VS to include ALL vacancies mentioned above in January Appleford Pressings (imminent)

8. VILLAGE HALL UPDATE

Apologies from Clare Cousineau: GO said Village Hall (VH) closed due to Covid-19.

AG confirmed Peter Walker (PW) has stepped down, so just him and Clare on VH Committee. VH now cannot operate, as needs a minimum of 3 members (now just 2). Anne to confirm if Village Hall can proceed under the banner of the Parish Council, although this has previously been considered unlikely as it's a registered charity: **3 volunteers needed asap**. [AG house for sale, so his move & departure imminent.]

ACTION – SG & GO to liaise with former PC (AD) for initial guidance on including Village Hall within APC.

9. RECREATION GROUND / GREEN SPACES

- a. Bin Cleaning
Litter and dog poo issues discussed elsewhere. Bin emptying currently done by Jim Boyland, and Scoop Dotty (dog bins).
- b. Playground safety risk and cleaning

Annual inspection received (Dec 2020). AG in touch with Playdale Playgrounds Ltd. who are quoting for swing repairs. Awaiting feedback from another supplier to fix other equipment, particularly the smaller, rotting climbing frame. Desirable to get smaller climbing frame fixed asap as VS considers current safety risk, per annual inspection report. Materials need to conform to strict standards, therefore expensive. Need for information to be provided to SG.

VS leading on playground oversight, other volunteers welcome. Playground clean approved at least meeting but not yet done.

ACTION – SG & VS obtain Annual Inspection Report. Organise playground clean and critical repairs asap

- c. Basketball Hoop (PW/AG)

No update. The ground now too wet to do work. We should set in motion so ready to start in the Spring/when the weather dries out.

Deposit payment update – need SG to establish if we have paid anything, and how we can set this in motion

ACTION – SG to establish from former PC if deposit paid. Confirm next steps/email trail with PW/AG

- d. Replacement Bench on the Knapp
- e. And Benches for Recreation Ground

ACTION – SG to get material (suppliers' quotes) from AD or AG and order.

- f. Confirm the terms of hire for the Recreation Ground.

Will be clarified when Covid restrictions lifted (rates partly market driven)

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ACTION – GO has drafted terms sheet. GO will finalise with 1st hire post Covid.
Hire Rates determined by demand / market and can change.

g. Wildflower meadow

Wildflower meadow approved: need to better understand and communicate details to villagers.

ACTION – SG to obtain contact details from AD & AG, confirm Jim Boyland won't cut this area

h. Tree Maintenance (Rec Ground)

75 trees approx. on recreation ground: need to be maintained. One tree on the near railway is recommended for cut down. Others that would benefit from annual maintenance.

ACTION – SG/ VS Identify tree, and obtain fresh quote/s from tree surgeon / Jim B.

Football Pitch (request from St Edmunds) (GOB)

GO stated communications with football teams have stopped with COVID. APC previously agreed to make pitch available to one team for St Edmunds free of charge for remaining season. St Edmunds have asked for sole rights to include their other teams to use the pitch. APC need to est. market rate to cover circa £6000 cost of grass cutting & maintenance for the Recreation ground. GO said we need to generate revenue. It is one the best pitches in the area, good specifications and flat.

ACTION – SG to follow-up with football clubs in due course - for Spring/Summer bookings

10. HIGHWAYS

a. HGVs through the Village

VS received notification of vehicle warning. Please continue to take pictures and send them in.

Include in next liaison meetings: Appleford Bridge weight limit, and potentially in letters to local developments.

ACTION – VS to raise at upcoming liaison meetings. All to update if HGVs increase through the village, particularly if one company is cause.

b. Access onto B4016 by University of Reading site

ACTION - SG & Former PC to handover details to support [Crowdace](#) letter requesting details of access points along B4016, and to discourage HGV drivers from using Appleford due to weight restrictions.

c. Village Parking and Traffic

Network Rail parking at Chambrai Close (should use Village Hall car park), and litter reported by Dianne Miles. GO suggested people take a photo of number plate and send to Appleford Parish Council.

Hanson have extra gravel and have offered to fill in holes in car park, by church, and potentially along Church Street (flooding). Sutton Courtney have asked for it to improve footpaths, that Appleford could then benefit from too.

Fix my street – make sure potholes, etc, are reported and PC informed so can escalate via RW into Highways Authority Plans.

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ACTION - VS Follow up with Hanson on offer to provide gravel FOC for car park

REQUEST Volunteers to support

d. Proposed traffic lights on bridge

Long discussion on the OCC proposed traffic lights at Appleford Railway bridge and their impact.

Three people expressed strong opposition – R Cox (RC), A Oldfield (AO) & S Flinders (SF), including an assertion that the bridge crossing is not dangerous, rarely used, and proposal is not possible.

GO said the bridge and approach to Bridge Farm is not safe (disabled people, families with buggy etc).

Someone has already been struck by a car in the day and it is a particular risk at night.

Mention of new station car park proposed in Radcot Green paper, if safe access available. Long list of associated benefits and challenges.

GO advised the proposal was presented by OCC traffic engineers as an advantage and part of the road / cycle path to Sutton Courtenay. AG said traffic lights had been talked about for many years.

GO advised the Position Paper says, “subject to liaison with affected residents” and suggested that all who are unhappy with this to write to OCC. He asked that APC be copied.

VS stated we need to work together as a village. VS said the forthcoming meeting with David Johnston & Rail Group should also address safe access to and from the station.

11. FOOTPATHS AND RIGHTS OF WAY

ACTION - Volunteer to champion safe rail access, and foot/cycle entrance/exit to the village (TBA)

12. LT STRATEGIC PLANNING

a. Neighbourhood / Village Plan

New planning guidelines - if we do not have a Neighbourhood Plan, lose our place and any bargaining power in planning discussions. We need to encourage people to step up and engage: a neighbourhood plan will lay out the direction of our village, with funding to support us. If we can provide data on footfall of areas, now is an opportune time to do it, and also to note which resources and amenities are important to people.

ACTION – separate sub team required to do this – tabled for Q3/4, VS to consider limited planning

b. Sunday Rail Service / RH David Johnston MP

GO thanked Sandra Oldfield (& Steve Roe for train timetable stats) for preparing a presentation for a meeting with RH David Johnston MP on Sunday Services. These were withdrawn for electrification works and were not restored. VS keen to include importance of a more regular service on others days too, and safe platform access for all.

GO, VS, CH, SO & W Finch agreed to attend, time permitting.

ACTION – SO to agree date with our MP, and who else to invite. GO to lead.

13. LIAISON GROUPS (ON-GOING)

a. FCC & Hanson - four per year

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- b. RWE / Didcot Power - frequency tbd
- c. SCPC / FCC & OCC - adhoc footpaths & PROWs
- d. Covid 19 - fortnightly 30-minute call Saturdays 9.30 am –10.00 am. SC provide high-level minutes via Robin Draper's SC Action emails. All villagers can request to be added to this list.
- e. Summary of the liaison groups given - much of the detail already mentioned within earlier sections: more detailed minutes from each meeting available in PC archive. All landowners (FCC, Hanson & RWE) open and co-operative. GO delivered a robust position on Appleford's opposition to the Flyover & elevated road. General support, incl. from SCPC (one applauded, and followed up by email directly thereafter requesting a copy of the position paper). OCC represented, albeit not vocal.

REQUEST: ALL Volunteers required to attend these & support (minutes, etc.)

14. **FINANCE**

- a. Budget and Precept Submission for 2021/2022

GO presented the Budget for 2021/22. Major costs include grass cutting £6k, cleaning / dog poo removal £1.5k & Resilience reserve £8k.

A Precept of £17,842 is required to match revenue with costs. The Parish Council agreed to request a precept of £17,842 which is an increase from £96.66 to £111.79 pa. for a band D property.

Post Covid the Parish Council will look to raise some income from rental of the Recreation Ground / football pitch.

APPROVAL: Budget approved. GO & SG authorised to amend & finalise for Precept submission

- b. Items for Payment

GO presented the costs below which were approved for payment.

- o Scoop Dotty Dog £83.75
- o Scoop Dotty Dog £67.00
- o Jim Boyland Trading £60.00
- o Jim Boyland Trading £60.00
- o The Play Inspection Co £81.00
- o Mary Hancock £45.00
- o Anne Davies £319.70
- o HMRC £81.40

- c. Improved Systems / Internal MIS

GO / SG to look at utilizing modern IT technology to improve admin and visibility of transactions.

ACTION – GO & SG to look at cloud accounting / banking approvals on-line & gen. file sharing over coming months.

- d. New P Clerk / handover / plans forward

ACTION – SG to arrange handover from former PC (AD) – GO has prepared a Handover List as a guide

15. **CORRESPONDENCE**

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None flagged by previous Parish Clerk.

16. ITEMS FOR REPORT

The defibrillator box at the Knapp does not have a defibrillator in it. AG provided some background clarification on need for special electrical installation.

Discussion on need to get this operational ASAP. There is one at the Village Hall, but it is far away for many (useful when village hall in action/for Rec. users).

Katie Finch is first aid trained, expects others are too and keen that people have opportunity to take defibrillator (together with first aid) training once Covid restrictions are lifted. However, it is not necessary to be trained to use the defibrillators. 999 / ambulance service support you through the process; adults expected to be able to use without any experience.

ACTION – Knapp defibrillator to be commissioned ASAP (TBA)

17. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA.

Road Development. Railway Service, and Safe Access. Footpaths. Playground. Basketball Ground. Defibrillator. Tree Surgery/ updated assessment. Christmas Trees?! Village litter pick. None other noted.

18. TO AGREE THE DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

15th March 2021 was agreed, 19:30, to be hosted on Microsoft Teams.

END

Approved 15.3.21