

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council,
on 22 June 2021, held at the Village Hall**

Time: 20.00 – 22.05

Attendance

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| Parish Councillors: | Greg O'Broin (GO) Chair Victoria Shepherd (VS) Vice Chair Daniela Danaila (DD) |
| Parish Clerk/RFO: | Gill Brook (GB) |
| Member of the public: | Katharine Jefferies (KJ) |

The meeting was quorate

The minutes were taken by Gill Brook

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Claire Cousineau, Katie Finch, Andy Guinn (AG), Sue Helby, Suezanne Murray-King
2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST - none
3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

GO thanked Katharine for attending and invited her to comment at any time.
It was noted that with the departure from the village of AG, the Parish Council is looking for additional councillors.

ACTION VS to talk to village newcomers.

ACTION GO to talk to a villager who said he might join.

ACTION ALL VILLAGERS to consider being co-opted to the Council.

4. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 5 MAY 2021 (previously circulated) – approved

It was noted that District & County Councillor Richard Webber had stated his intention, if re-elected, to keep fighting against the current proposal for the flyover positioning.

5. REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR, CLLR RICHARD WEBBER, (RW)

RW had produced a report for all the parishes, placed on the Parish notice board 15.6.21, and copied below:

Since the May elections, much has been happening – not least the need for the new administration to get its feet under the table as it picks up a mass of issues across the County.

Below is an update on just some of the issues affecting our area.

Hanson Sidings noise

Many residents have been affected by the increased activities and noise emanating from Appleford Sidings. The issue has been taken up with Hanson and with the Environmental Protection team at VWHDC. The departure of the long serving and trusted Hanson Rep on the Local Liaison Committee has been an added source of frustration. However, we are promised a replacement and this should ensure more rapid responses to village concerns in the future.

Rights of Way

The Liaison Committee, together with the Parish Councils of Sutton Courtenay and Appleford have met with FCC and OCC Pathway officers to arrange work on outstanding issues of overgrown and poorly maintained pathways and byways on FCC land. Not everything is agreed yet, but work will be started imminently on improving and maintaining the many rights of way. This will be welcome news to walkers and horse riders.

HIF1 Road

The change in administration at OCC has allowed a review of these proposals. There are, we are told, a number of constraints that we cannot change. These include:

The Government time limit on the delivery of the road (completion by the end of 2024).

The threat of speculative housing application all across the wider area to the District Local Plans if the scheme falls through. In meeting the deadlines, the planning application must be submitted for consultation by September 2021 and brought before a planning committee in February 2022. Even then, the timetable for delivery will be tight. Moving the road and flyover to the west over old land tip would, we are told, be prohibitively expensive involving digging out the area and replacing soil. It would also introduce a further delay to the delivery of the scheme. The good news is that both the strategic and the detailed traffic modelling data on which the whole scheme is based will be released for public scrutiny in the next few weeks. There will also be a number of public engagement events in all areas affected before the planning application goes in. This will, at least, give residents and Parish Councils some say in the process.

Solar Farm

The FCC application for a large Solar Farm is causing much concern amongst local residents over its potential visual impact and its impact on present rights of way. The opportunity for people to comment has been very limited. I have requested that the application must go before the planning committee where further public comment and opinion can be presented before any decision is made.

A34 Drayton Roadworks.

Roadworks are taking place on the A34 at Drayton. Details attached. These are to adjust the former slip road in an official layby.

Marcham and Frilford Junction traffic

Work is going on to consider options to address these issues. All options and their implications are on the table including a possible Marcham Bypass, investment in public transport, cycling and active travel. Trying to predict the needs of a transport system beyond a few years is an enormous challenge. Balancing the impact of new technologies Electric autonomous vehicles and the climate emergency against the needs of a prosperous growing area is staggeringly complex. I am hoping that once the immediate constraints of Covid are behind us, we can set up a brainstorming session with interested residents in the new Marcham Community Centre to get some input into the OCC considerations.

Richard Webber Cllr, 01235 534001, Richardwebber777@gmail.com

GO noted that RW's report states OCC's position that to shift the flyover would be too costly. We do not accept the messaging from the highways people. We want RW to be an advocate for Appleford residents and to fight our corner. His commitment to support us if re-elected, which he made at the last Parish Council meeting, was noted. We need him to actively support our case.

GO advised that he and Chris Hancock met with RW on 14.6.21 at the Village Hall. We confirmed that our strong resolve to fight the proximity of the new road, particularly at the southern end of the village, and to agree baseline noise, traffic, light and other pollution, such that appropriate mitigation is planned for, and could be retrofitted, if required. It was noted that RW was not aware that Sutton Courtenay supported Appleford's compromise route. Other local Parish Councils also support Appleford's approach. RW is to get a date from Cllr Liz Leffman, the new OCC leader, so that we can present our petition to her.

6. FINANCE

(a) AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21).

- It was agreed to sign the Certificate of Exemption (as being under the £25,000 threshold)
- The Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21 was noted
- The Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 was considered and signed
- The Accounting Statements for 2020/21 were considered and signed.
- The dates of the Exercise of Public Rights (viewing accounts) as Thursday 24 June 2021 to Wednesday 4 August 2021 were noted.

(b) The following invoices have been paid since the last meeting:

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|------|------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| 2014 | 18/05/2021 | PPC Aggregates | Hardwood play chippings | £179.99 |
| 2015 | 04/05/2021 | Arthur J Gallagher - Came & Co | Insurance | £1,544.37 |
| 2016 | 10/05/2021 | AVA Recreation | Play Park repairs | £1,191.30 |
| 2017 | N/A | Gill Brook | May salary + 175 bonus | £433.50 |
| 2018 | 21/05/2021 | Glasdon | Bench concrete & fittings | £47.42 |

and the following invoices were approved for payment:

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|------|------------|---|---|-----------|
| 2019 | 19/05/2021 | Hobs Reprographic. Reimburse M Hancock | Road petition flyers | £16.80 |
| 2020 | 10/05/2021 | Alan Lambourne | Internal audit 2020-2021 | £23.40 |
| 2021 | 31/05/2021 | Jim Boyland Trading | May grass, litter, Knapp, Chambrai Playground repairs | £739.20 |
| 2022 | 31/05/2021 | Wicksteed Leisure | (15.3.21, item 9 – already approved) | £4,094.83 |

(c) It was agreed that the signatories on the Parish Council's NS & I account would be any two out of three of: GO, VS and GB and that the interest payments would be paid into the Parish's current account. The papers were signed accordingly.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

GO thanked VS for all her work on upgrading and making safe the playground and play equipment.

(a) The zip wire (16 years old) and its bump stop need repair. VS has received 3 quotes ranging from £1,185 to £1,600. She recommended the £1,185 quote to replace the zip wire and bump stop. £1,185 Approved.

(b) Play bark underneath the zip wire. The original order of 20 litres was not enough and a further 80 litres is needed. Ordinary wood chippings are cheaper but too rough and, as it is a public area, it was felt appropriate to buy a product that is certified for playground use. It should also be possible to ask for the same driver, who had been helpful and avoided any damage to the Rec when delivering. £799.96 Approved.

(c) Concrete for basketball court. A deposit was paid in September 2020. Mary Hancock had tried to contact GH Bowler in December 2020 without success and VS has been unable to contact the supplier to get the job completed but will continue trying.

- (d) Parish Trust. The Parish Trust is currently holding about £26,000 for projects that would benefit the whole village, £6000 of which is approved for the basketball hoop project. GO and VS became Trustees at the Appleford Parish Trust meeting 3.6.21. Robin Holcombe (Treasurer) and Mary Hancock (Chair and Secretary) are longstanding Trustees. There was a discussion about possible projects that could be proposed to the Trust (e.g investment in changing rooms to facilitate more use of the field, an awning). Under the terms of the Trust deeds, access to the remaining capital (about £20,000) can only be gained by village vote and the vote requires three months' notice to villagers. The aspiration was expressed that improvements to the hall/field might be proposed and agreed over the summer so that a village vote could be arranged for January 2022. Someone is needed to co-ordinate such a project and get ideas and quotes. The Parish Council noted the situation.
- (e) Website. GO has asked the website editor to add a network rail notices section along with another section for e.g. road closure notices.
- (f) Parking. Network rail operatives should not park in Chambrai Close, but use the Rec car park and walk, as they block access and create a noise disturbance when arriving and leaving at night.

ACTION GO to follow up with RW about whom to contact.

- (g) Noise. There is currently a lot of noise from the landfill site area, Hanson sidings and OCC works drilling/testing the ground for the new road. Noise is a problem on Main Road e.g. JCBs driving along the newly laid matting. VS to continue action by getting photos and details on mitigation screens etc, including recent information of how, for example, Germany mitigates its Autobahn noise, which, anecdotally, seems extremely efficient.

ACTION GO to refer to RW.

KJ mentioned that there had been lots of noise complaints last year and freight coming into FCC was investigated by the Environment Agency. The line closed but GO advised it has since reopened. The current problem should be reported to OCC as they monitor the Hanson site.

ACTION KJ to send contact to GO, including information about network rail acoustic tool.

- (h) Dog poo. So far, no villager has offered to act as a dog warden and keep an eye on the bin situation. Thanks to Linda Gelens who helped clear up the overflowing dog bins when we had been let down by our supplier. GO emailed, called and posted urgent call-to-action messages on Facebook and Pressings. Scoop Dotty Dog (SDD), who are contracted to empty the 5 bins once a week, have been very difficult to contact and have let us down. We are not the only parish to have suffered in this way. No invoice has been received from SDD for the month of May. SDD did do one 'crisis collection' but it was agreed that the service was not acceptable. GO has received verbal quotes from Pet Waste Solutions.

ACTION GO to get a formal quote.

ACTION ALL DOG-OWNING VILLAGERS to consider being a dog warden to keep an eye on a bin/the bins.

- (i) Litter. There was a discussion about the overflowing ordinary waste bin in the Rec carpark and the best way to deal with this. It was noted that the National Trust had got rid of all of their bins. Much of the waste is McDonald's and Costa Coffee, which are also present on the litter pickings, evidenced by KJ. It was decided to ask Jim Boyland to remove the Rec carpark waste bin on a 3-month trial and report back.

ACTION VS.

- (j) Pyramidal orchids growing on verges. We received an email from villager Duncan Russell, Bellapais, Church Street earlier today pointing out that there are currently several Pyramidal Orchids on the verge outside Elizabeth Duffield's house on Church Street.

ACTION VS to talk to Duncan to find a way to protect the orchids by marking them and making sure that the district council does not mow there.

- (k) Tree management. VS has received quotes from 3 tree surgeons. George Downham comes widely recommended and his quote is at the lower end of the range. It was agreed to spend c. £2,000 to do the high priority items using any combination of the quotes to get the best outcome.

ACTION VS to continue work on this, itemising what needs to be done and what can be achieved for £2,000.

It was noted that a Tree Survey Report is recommended every 18 – 24 months and that we need to continue active management of the Rec. It works out cheaper to stay with Sarah Venners for the next report. VS is trying to create a roadmap of Appleford's work as ongoing work needs to be done. It was agreed to spend up to £350 for an updated report in the autumn of 2022, once the current work has been done. £350 is to be included in the 2022/23 Budget.

- (l) Rocking horse in playground. It would be nice if this were painted, but is a lower priority.

ACTION ALL VILLAGERS: does anyone know someone who can do this?

- (m) Pressings. The newsletter is on hold during the summer because there is not enough time to prepare it.

ACTION ALL VILLAGERS: is there someone who would like to take this over? In the meantime, we will use the village notice boards, Facebook and the website for communication.

- (n) Public Rights of Way (PROW). GO reported that Mary Hancock is delegated to work on PROWs including the rail crossing which Network Rail has no PROW to cross. She is doing a great job, supported by VS and liaising with the Sutton Courtenay PROW team. Any undocumented PROW must be legally established before a deadline of 1.1.26. There is a footpath walk on 14.7.21 9.30 – 12.30 hosted by FCC/OCC (invitees only).

ACTION ALL VILLAGERS to consider helping with PROW towards Long Wittenham and Didcot.

- (o) Defibrillators. GO reported that those at the Village Hall and the Knapp work and there is a spare one at David Andrews' house, Zealand Cottage. GO thanked David, and Steve for their work.
- (p) Meetings
- Online meeting with Hanson on 20.7.21 and OCC on 1.7.21
 - Meeting 24.6.21 with RWE Didcot A Power Station with an update from Christine Hall
 - Working group road campaign, meeting 28.6.21. GO reported on the engagement with OCC, how there is real resistance to changing the road alignment, the meeting with Hanson, and a possible meeting with FCC on 14.7.21.
- (q) Clerk's hours: GO thanked GB for her work to date and the extra time she has spent over and above her contracted hours of 22 per month. He proposed increasing her monthly hours to 26 with effect from 1.7.21. Approved. GB thanked GO.
- (r) Petition. GO advised that the petition results show 93% of households have signed and support the compromise route. This is a very high percentage, but the calculations need to be checked for accuracy. RW has undertaken to get a date from Cllr Liz Leffman, the new Council Leader so we can present the petition to her. We will also formally present the Petition (petition address) at the full OCC Council meeting on 13.7.21.

ACTIONS

1. VS to review the Petition Lists and check calculations (the number of households who did not sign. This determines the overall percentage). The original petition was handed to VS.
 2. GO to send GB the Village Contact List so that she can compare it with the Electoral List, identify who is missing and invite them to join the VCL. It was noted that not all villagers may show on the Electoral List.
- (s) Replacing old bench on Rec with new bench. The old dilapidated memorial bench at the northern end of the Rec needs to be removed for safety reasons and so that the new bench can be installed there. As she has a connection to the villager to whom it was dedicated, Angela Jones has offered to remove it and restore it. Agreed.

ACTION VS.

8. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Update on meetings with OCC (1.7.21), Hanson (20.7.21) and FCC (maybe immediately after the site meeting on 14.7.21)

9. TO AGREE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – to be arranged. [Propose Thursday 9th September 2021 at 20.00. Meeting moved to Wednesday 29th September 2021 at 20.00]

Meeting closed at 22.05

GB/Approved 29.9.21