

Appleford-on-Thames
Minutes of Parish Council Meeting 15 March 2021

Time: 20.00 – 21.50

Attendance: Parish Council:	Greg O’Broin (GO) Victoria Shepherd (VS) Andy Guinn (AG) Daniela Danaila (DD)
Parish Clerk/RFO:	Gill Brook (GB)
County and District:	Cllr Richard Webber (RW)
Several members of the public including:	Joanna Richardson, Robert Green, Sue Cox, Katherine Andrews, Claire Boyce, Chris Hancock, Sarah Vickers, Alan Oldfield, George Gale, Katie and William Finch, Cal and Emmie Robertson.

The meeting was quorate
Minutes taken by Gill Brook

GO apologised for the failed Teams start at 19.30 due to technical problems and thanked the Finches for stepping in with a Zoom link.

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

GO invited members of the public to address the meeting and explained item 1 is for public participation. Participation later on will be at Chair’s discretion.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Suezanne Murray-King, Norma, Emma Jhita, Lyn and Ian Cook.

3. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST

Andy Guinn declared his involvement on the Village Hall Committee.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2021

The minutes were approved.

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

RW reported as follows on the question of the new road and flyover over Appleford sidings: The negotiation with the County Council (OCC) will continue until there is a firm conclusion to the proposals. Options on the western route have been ruled out. A flyover is necessary but needs to be further away from the village. He has a difficult role to play as he represents both Appleford and Sutton Courtenay (SC) which has different interests and objectives to Appleford. For him to represent both villages, he needs to find a common position. OCC will be in purdah from 29.3.21 until 6.5.21 prior to the elections and he therefore advised Appleford to address OCC again soon, but to remember that the same issue cannot be raised twice. He believes that no final decisions on this enormously complex proposal will be made for several months.

GO: A hand of friendship had been offered by an individual in SC for the middle route.

Robert Green: Will the planning process indeed be completed in July?

RW: OCC is not the planning authority and it is unlikely to be completed by then.

VS: OCC want construction to start before the end of 2021.

RW: Letter (email) writing is the only possibility because of Covid. Money for the scheme is time limited and needs to be used by the end of 2023. However, if the money were withdrawn, it would leave the Vale exposed to speculative applications again.

GO: Reiterated that Appleford is not against the road, but the flyover must be moved back by 250 metres.

William Finch (WF): How do we get SC on board?

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There was a discussion about how SC could be encouraged to join with Appleford. There was a discussion about the relative roles and knowledge of elected OCC councillors and officers, particularly with matters of engineering. RW reminded the meeting that, while time was tight, even a new OCC after the election would likely to be sympathetic to Appleford's cause. WF asked for contact details and the key points for the writing campaign.

ACTION: GO to communicate contact details and key points to the village; to reply to the OCC response to the Appleford Position Paper this week; and to continue discussions with SC. Interested Appleford villagers can join SC Action Group via email and Facebook. Details will be shared in the forthcoming Pressings.

RW was thanked for his input and presence and left the meeting at 20.50.

6. CORRESPONDENCE & PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. Planning application P21/V0384/CM

This is phase 1 of the environmental site assessment and has already been approved by OCC and means that they can prepare for the additional railway line to be installed.

VS read out a message dated 11.3.21 from Richard Lewington relating to the noise from the work already started. While 6 villagers had responded to date about noise pollution, GO encouraged more to log any noise.

b. Planning application P21/VO402/SCR

Didcot Technology Park. Approximately 60 acres of land within the Parish of Appleford will be developed. VS questioned whether the name of Appleford in the title would be more appropriate.

c. Correspondence and discussions re proposed traffic lights on the bridge

GO: there are villagers for and against the traffic lights. GO has written to OCC and asked them to reassess the need for traffic lights and to look at alternatives (individual or multiple traffic calming measures) to achieve the same objectives, to make the bridge safer for road users, for passengers entering/exiting the railway station, and for access to the proposed cycle path between Appleford and SC. That there isn't universal support for lights was mentioned and is reflected in the minutes (drafted by OCC) of meetings in November 2020 and January 2021.

Alan Oldfield (AO) asked about the flow of traffic and the T-junction vs roundabout issue. GO had not had time to fully review the issue yet. Appleford village want access at the roundabout, SC do not.

VS suggested the idea of a joint Appleford/SC working group on the matter.

Chris Hancock will attend the 29.3.21 Didcot Garden Town and Parish Council meeting which other village parish councils and OCC Leader Ian Hudspeth will attend. No-one has seen any traffic or flood risk modelling as a result of the Didcot expansion.

ACTION GO and AO to liaise.

7. PARISH COUNCIL MATTERS

a. Recruitment of Parish Clerk from 1st February 2021.

The new Parish Clerk at the January meeting withdrew shortly afterwards, and Gill Brook was appointed with effect from 1.2.21. She introduced herself. She has lived in Didcot for 20 years and has been driving through Appleford all that time. She knows some of the villagers already. She is looking forward to sorting out some of the admin and finance so that the councillors

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can get on with their business. She officially works 5 hours/week for the Parish, and this is currently running well over during the first 6 weeks. GO thanked her for her input to date, mentioning that the Parish now had improved admin including internet banking so could make payments more easily.

b. Co-opting additional Parish Councillors
Daniela Danaila and Suezanne Murray-King were co-opted as councillors.

c. Volunteers for Pressings, website and social media

ACTION Villagers asked to volunteer to help with these.

8. VILLAGE HALL UPDATE

The village is still closed due to Covid. Jim and Claire Boyce have offered to help Clare Cousineau and take over from AG.

9. ITEMS FOR REPORT & RECREATION GROUND / GREEN SPACES

a. Playground

VS reported on the state of the playground. Replacement of the rotten small multi-play equipment is too expensive (£15-20,000), but three insurer-approved quotes for repairs have been received. It was felt that the playground and surrounds provide a lifeline for families and needed to be kept in good repair.

The following was approved:

- Printing 3 sets of signs (Welcome; Covid safety; equipment awaiting repair).
- Repairs to playground equipment (climbing frame, rocking horse, see saw) (£2,798.83 materials + £1,296 labour). Total: £4,094.83.
- Repairs to/maintenance of various Rec equipment: Zip Wire (£2,548.80); self-closing gate, basket swing, hip twister (£891.60) and represents the items described as 'moderate risk'. Total: £3,440.40

2 new benches have been bought – the first items to be paid for by the new internet banking system – and will be cemented into two points on the Rec. shortly.

b. Basketball ground – not discussed.

c. Tree maintenance

A quote has been received from George Downham to manage and maintain the trees at the Rec and on the Knapp. It was agreed that two more quotes should be obtained for the sake of good order.

ACTION WF to send details of his recommendation.

ACTION anyone else to come forward with another recommendation.

d. Village litter pick

With Covid, litter picking cannot be organised in a group. However, Linda Gelens, the Finches and VS all have litter pickers, available to anyone who would like to go litter picking. Katie Finch asked how to dispose of the rubbish. VS tries to keep recyclables in a separate bag. GO thanked the litter pickers saying that it was nice to see a tidier village.

e. Defibrillator

GO initiated work & got electrician to check there is power to the Kiosk. David Andrews (DA) has now taken on responsibility for village defibrillators and reported that he had contacted

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Well Medical about the defibrillator maintenance. To renew the date-expired pads on 2 units will cost £172.80. This expenditure was approved, up to £200, and he should send the invoices direct to the Parish Clerk for payment [applefordpc@googlemail.com]

GO thanked DA for this progress.

The ambulance survey recommended that another person should be listed as a person responsible in the absence of David or Katherine. WF offered and was thanked for this.

ACTION: DA to advise the NHS.

10. HIGHWAYS

- a. Road development including OCC response - dealt with under item 5 above.
- b. Railway service (presentation to MP) – not discussed.

11. FOOTPATHS AND RIGHTS OF WAY

Simon Lazare from SC continues to upskill VS on historic Public Rights of Way (PROW) between SC and Appleford. He is currently awaiting feedback from OCC re 01886 DMMO application (the path between All Saint's Lane and Churchmere Road, via the Millennium Common). Appleford also needs to stay on top of PROW towards Long Wittenham and Didcot.

Katie Finch has reported that there was a broken step on one of the little bridges along the Appleford/Long Wittenham footpath. She has removed it for safety and will report this.

ACTION: To put quick links in Pressings about how to report various issues.

12. STRATEGIC PLANNING (NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN)

- a. Neighbourhood plan

VS: A Parish Plan was produced in 2009 and a Neighbourhood Plan/statement of objectives is necessary to provide a mandate for the Parish Council in terms of recognition by VWHDC on local planning etc.

ACTION: Is anyone able to offer help to get this going?

13. LIAISON GROUPS

George Gale has offered a trailer to bring gravel offered by Hanson's for the village and church car parks and other places.

RWE: National Grid (Gas) is upgrading an Above Ground Installation so there is possibility of noise and cycle rerouting in mid-April. Exact timelines to be confirmed.

14. FINANCE

The following items for payment/reimbursement were approved:

28-Feb-21	Jim Boyland Trading Ltd	Monthly litter pick/rubbish collection	£ 78.00
01-Mar-21	OALC	OALC annual membership	£ 146.16
		Clerk training 23.2.21	
13-Feb-21	OALC	'Preparing for year end'	£ 60.00
03-Mar-21	Scoop Dotty Dog Ltd	Empty dog waste bins x 4 dates	£ 67.00
paid			
25.1.21 +		Printing costs Oxford Brookes	
8.2.21	Mary Hancock	(£28.08+£117.18)	£ 145.26
13-Feb-21	Mary Hancock	Printing costs Printworx	£ 77.50
		Total	£ 573.92

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15. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA

Annual General Meeting and Election

South and Vale may produce a joint plan – implications for villagers.

16. TO AGREE THE DATE FOR THE NEXT MEETING (ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING)

Monday 17th May 2021, but subject to change depending on Covid guidance.

17. CHAIR'S COMMENTS

GO advised the meeting that he and VS were co-opted to the Parish Council in September 2020 and he took over as Chair following the sudden and unexpected resignation of the previous Chair in November. In the last six months two other councillors stepped down. AG will be lost soon as he is moving from the area. GO has taken advice from Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC), to which APC belongs. If meetings are not quorate the Parish Council cannot conduct its business. If the Parish Council remains non-quorate, VOWH will appoint councillors to work with the Parish Clerk and administer the village. If that persists there would be a formal review and a possibility of a merger, with SC or with Didcot.

The next election year for APC will be in 2023 so there is no way of calling an election this year. GO called on villagers to join the Parish Council and give the village the broadest possible representation. He said that we need young people and people from lower Main Road. He also heard suggestions that the village was not being represented which he did not accept. He made it clear that there was a place for all views.

In order to provide space and opportunity for new people to come forward and to take a prominent role in the village, including if they wish, Chair and Vice Chair, GO and VS will resign as Chair and Vice Chair at the AGM so there will be an election. GO & VS will remain as councillors and at the AGM, councillors will elect a new Chair and Vice Chair from among their members.

If villagers have concerns, they should, in the first instance, write to the Parish Clerk [applefordpc@googlemail.com] rather than stopping councillors in the village during their leisure time. Writing is the best way to get a considered response. He invited more people to step forward and offer their service to the Parish.

GO thanked everyone for their contributions and help and closed the meeting at 21.50.

GB/18.3.21
Approved 5.5.21