

**Appleford-on-Thames**  
**Minutes of Annual Meeting of the Parish Council 5 May 2021**

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**Time: 19.30 – 22.00**

**Attendance:** Parish Councillors: Greg O'Broin (GO)  
Victoria Shepherd (VS)  
Andy Guinn (AG)  
Daniela Danaila (DD)  
Parish Clerk/RFO: Gill Brook (GB)  
County and District Councillor: Cllr Richard Webber (RW) (20.05-20.25)  
Several members of the public including: Katherine (KA) & David Andrews (DA),  
Clare Cousineau (CC), Katie & William  
Finch, Steve Flinders, Robert Green  
**The meeting was quorate** (RG), Chris (CH) & Mary Hancock (MH),  
**Minutes taken by Gill Brook** Alan Oldfield (AO), Joanna Richardson,  
Steve Roe & partner.

GO thanked the Finches for providing the Zoom link for the meeting.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR THE YEAR 2021-2022

GO & VS resigned their positions as Chair and Vice Chair respectively and offered themselves again for election for 2021-2022. There were no other candidates. They were duly elected.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Claire & Jim Boyce, Suezanne Murray-King, Charlotte Fisher, Neil & Noriko Shorney.

3. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST

AG declared his involvement on the Village Hall Committee.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

GO invited members of the public to participate.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH 2021

The minutes were approved.

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

RW reported on the outgoing year as County and District Councillor as follows: Appleford has made its presence felt and is creating a big stumbling block for the relief road project. It is very clear that the raised road is not acceptable and so close to the village. There is a question about whether the cost is out of control and whether the HIF [Housing Infrastructure Fund] can cover it and whether OCC ratepayers will have to pay, including the mitigation for Appleford. If elected, he wants to keep fighting.

**Appleford-on-Thames**  
**Minutes of Annual Meeting of the Parish Council 5 May 2021**

---

He is trying to get Hanson to bring representation to the liaison meeting (17.5.21) including sorting out the noise issue at Appleford sidings.

OCC has taken out massive borrowing against predicted future growth in the area, which has not materialised due to Covid. The poor state of the roads continues to be a big issue.

COP26 (UN Climate Change Conference) is being hosted [in Glasgow] in November 2021. The aim is to be Zero-carbon by 2040. Road-building projects create a big carbon output. This is raising questions of how OCC's general road building policies, where the money comes from, when it could be used to improve public transport, cycling routes etc.

One of the positive effects of Covid has been to bring communities together. Sutton Courtenay and Appleford have fed people, delivered medicines, and generally looked after villagers, and should be very proud of this which has led to an ongoing and regular exchange of views between the villages.

Questions:

VS: Is it not strange that the government has disallowed the continuation of virtual council meetings when not all have been vaccinated and we have otherwise been prevented from meeting indoors for over a year?

RW: It is very odd and there will be some legal challenges.

GO: Asked RW for a contact to follow up the noise issue as no response has been received from Hanson (despite two reminders) since the departure of David Normington.

GO: If all OCC and Vale meetings go ahead in person, Appleford will attend all meetings. A letter was sent earlier today (5.5.21) to the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick, requesting a six-month extension of the deadline for the road project. The letter was copied to Ian Hudspeth, OCC Leader and also asked if OCC was still open to compromise.

VS: Re COP26, we would appreciate the reinstatement of Sunday trains, and a more regular stopping service at other times too. There is particular interest with the Radcot Green plans re buses. Appleford should be on the agenda, including cycle safety as there is currently no safe way for young children to cycle in/out of Appleford which is a shame given the proximity of Didcot, Sutton Courtenay, Culham and Abingdon.

CH: Appleford is not on the map re the Science Vale Cycle Network. There have been modifications but they don't join up. Cycling is the answer not cars.

GO: Appleford rail bridge is closing 3-20 June for railway bridge repairs, although cyclists and pedestrians may cross, as well as emergency vehicle. CH recommended that Appleford explore means of monitoring traffic flowing south out of the village while the bridge is closed to provide a baseline for village traffic levels.

There was a discussion about the bridge closure, and at Culham, and how things work during closures.

**Appleford-on-Thames**  
**Minutes of Annual Meeting of the Parish Council 5 May 2021**

---

20.25 RW left the meeting.

**7. FINANCE**

- a. The 2020-2021 statement of accounts were considered and approved. GO noted that although there was a good balance at the bank, there were heavy costs for the coming year relating to keeping the Rec and playground in good order.
- b. The following payments made since the last meeting were noted:

Ref	Invoice date	Payee	Details	Amount
2001	09-Mar-21	Mrs I M Hancock	Printing newsletter & campaign letter	117.92
2002	23-Mar-21	WEL Medical Ltd	4 defibrillator pads	179.94
2003	27-Mar-21	Scoop Dotty Dog	Dog bins March 2021	83.75
2004	29-Mar-21	SLCC	New clerks' webinar 30.6.21 & 7.7.21	12.00
2005	04-Feb-21	Mrs V Shepherd	Gift to previous clerk	33.95
			Grass cutting, litter collection, pressure washing playground March	
2006	31-Mar-21	Jim Boyland Trading	2021	915.60
2007		N/A G. Brook	Clerk's salary	258.50

There was a discussion about how to manage the collections from the over-used car park waste bin, whether the bin should be removed/moved/increased in size.

**ACTION VS** to keep monitoring.

The following invoices were approved for payment:

Our ref	Invoice date	Payee	Details	Amount
2008	31-Jan-21	Jim Boyland Trading	Unpaid January invoice. Monthly litter pick & rubbish disposal	60.00
2009	30-Apr-21	Jim Boyland Trading	2 grass cuts rec, 2 litter picks/bins, knapp cut, triangle cut	739.20
2010	09-Apr-21	Creative Badger Scoop Dotty	Managed web site hosting 12 months	290.00
2011	29-Apr-21	Dog	Dog bins 4 dates April	67.00
2012	30-Apr-21	Play Inspection Co	Resistograph Timber Testing of Zip Wire. Approved at 15.3.21 meeting	360.00
2013	29-Apr-21	Crosscut PPC	Tree surgery. Invoice no 1992AP	40.00
2014		Aggregates	Top-up bark to go under Zip Wire	159.00

**Appleford-on-Thames**  
**Minutes of Annual Meeting of the Parish Council 5 May 2021**

---

The Council agreed that GO and GB should proceed with renewing the Parish Council insurance policy, which includes public liability and the Village Hall buildings, checking that there is no duplication with the policy held by the Village Hall.

**ACTION** CC to send through a copy of the current Village Hall insurance policy.

- c. GO presented a motion to reimburse the Parish Clerk an additional £175 as partial compensation for the extra time required to bring finance, administration and other backlog information up to date during the last 3 months. This was approved to be paid in the May salary.

## 8. CORRESPONDENCE & PLANNING APPLICATIONS

There were no planning applications.

The following major correspondence was noted:

- a. 18.3.21 Question to OCC re Didcot to Culham river crossing.
- b. 21.3.21 Walk-through-village-meeting with OCC Leader Ian Hudspeth. A further walk through of FCC site happened on 16.4.21.
- c. 22.3.21 Question to OCC at OCC meeting 23.3.21
- d. Support received from:
  - Long Wittenham Parish Council 9.4.21
  - Sutton Courtenay Parish Council 19.4.21
  - Culham Parish Council (awaiting formal letter)
- e. 5.5.21 Letter to Robert Jenrick seeking extension of the road completion deadline, which was similar to Sutton Courtenay's letter dated 29.4.21.
- f. 5.5.21 Copy of above letter to Ian Hudspeth and letter asking if OCC are still open to moving the road and continued consultation.

Two small pieces of information have been shared by OCC: noise and NO<sub>2</sub> level measurements. Sutton Courtenay Parish Council (SCPC) has asked similar questions, particularly focused on traffic modelling. Rough costings for a technically feasible compromise route have been requested but no reply received. Technical people seem to have already made their mind up but it may still be possible to influence on the political side. RG thanked GO, VS and CH for their efforts in trying to represent Appleford residents based on the village mandate from the 2020 Village Survey. VS: it is useful to challenge OCC on due process for use of taxpayers' money, particularly given the proximity and long-term impact on the village. Signs and posters around the village do demonstrate local feeling. Part of the problem has been the exceptional year we've all had. Once the diggers are in, it will not be possible to stop the project. There was a discussion about the merits of another letter-writing campaign.

**ACTION** GO to email villagers encouraging them to write to MP David Johnston and to re-assess after the 6.5.21 election results are in. CH has written a letter.

**Appleford-on-Thames**  
**Minutes of Annual Meeting of the Parish Council 5 May 2021**

---

9. PARISH COUNCIL MATTERS, RECREATION GROUND, GREEN SPACES

- a. Additional Parish Councillors. GO again asked for people to step forward to be councillors.
- b. Volunteers for Pressings, website, social media. Still needed.
- c. Noise from sidings. There is a meeting with FCC/Hanson on 17.5.21 ref above.
- d. 20's Plenty for Oxfordshire. The Village Survey (October 2020) indicated strong village support for a 20mph speed limit through the village. In December 2020 OCC committed to 20's Plenty for Oxfordshire. Plans to implement this remain to be discussed. There was a discussion about how this might be done, with various views. The item will stay on the agenda.
- e. Playground. VS reported that the Zip Wire timber support structure has been given the all-clear (Timber Testing Report received from the Play Company 28.4.21). The bark underneath will be replenished shortly (see 7 above, item 2014). Zip Wire testing is scheduled shortly [completed 7.5.21]. Ava and Wickstead have ordered parts to carry out the remaining repairs which should start imminently. [Ava completed some 7.5.21].
- f. Tree surgery/updated assessment. Quotes are also being received for the tree management including to deal with split/diseased trunks. There is a recommendation to remove the ivy and dead tree that have fallen on top of the back of the Village Hall to prevent pest problems. GO: with 75 trees on the Rec, it's important to have an ongoing management plan. VS: It would be nice to have a vision for the Rec, including with reference to the proposed new road: there are saplings growing along the railway line that should be removed, but could become beneficial elsewhere. OCC have a budget for planting trees which might help to block the view of the road. Are there any volunteers who would take on management of the Rec?
- g. Village litter pick. MH reported that there is a small but active team doing litter picks. She will work with the Keep Britain Tidy campaign 5.6.21 which is providing some equipment (bags, scoopers, hi-vis jackets). GO complimented these people for making a big difference to the village, although it is an ongoing and often thankless task.
- h. Defibrillator. DA thanked the council for the funding to buy more defibrillator pads. 2 defibrillators are now available: one at the Village Hall which is working and registered, the other at the Knapp which needs a BT electrical supply to the cabinet to maintain a constant environment for the battery and pads. He hoped that this will be working and registered by 7.5.21 and thanked Steve for working on the electrical side. A 3<sup>rd</sup> device could be 'mobile', being made

**Appleford-on-Thames**  
**Minutes of Annual Meeting of the Parish Council 5 May 2021**

---

- available to groups for an event away from the village, with an offer to store this at Zeeland Cottage, Church Street.
- i. Household Photo Record/Census Project. Item deferred.
  - j. Appleford Rail Group call for reinstatement of rail service. See item 10c.
  - k. Access onto B4016 by Uni of Reading Site (Crowdace). Not discussed.
  - l. Spray-painting dog-poo. VS commented on the idea that dog poo can be marked with biodegradable red spray as a warning.
  - m. Railway bridge white lines for safety. There was a discussion about the railway bridge and whether delineating the edges and centre with white markings would make it safer. AG mentioned that markings are not possible due to the width. DA reported that a convex by the bridge had broken and that one on the Knapp could help too.  
**ACTION** GO to follow this up to find out more about the nature of the bridge repairs (see point 6 above). CH asked if a traffic survey could be conducted while it was closed. **ACTION** GO to follow this up.  
[Subsequent to meeting it was established from the Contractor that the works are maintenance driven with the need to replace damaged/crumbling bricks, repair pointing, vegetation clearance and some drainage work. It is likely there will be scaffolding on both sides which will narrow the bridge road area]
  - n. Footpaths and rights of way. Access across the level crossing has rarely been refused and it is thought to be an established right of way, albeit arguably permissive based on current signage. There are other footpaths on FCC Land between Sutton Courtenay and Appleford that should have been opened up. Hopefully all will be appropriately registered and protected before 1.1.26. GO thanked MH for her continued work in this field. **ACTION** MH to continue working on rights of way over the level crossing and onward into Didcot and Sutton Courtenay, including liaising with Simon Lazare in Sutton Courtenay.
  - o. Strategic Planning (neighbourhood plan). Vale is promoting a new Strategic Planning methodology and funding. This links to other items on the agenda and should remain on Appleford's wish list, time and resources permitting.
  - p. Smell of rotting meat. This was a problem for villagers on Main Road. The Environment Agency has been asked.
  - q. Culham industrial incident on 28.4.21 created a noxious smell in Appleford and beyond. FCC replied within 30 minutes that they were not responsible. Culham residents were advised to close their windows. **ACTION** GO to continue follow up, and to be raised at 17.5.21 Liaison Meeting.

**Appleford-on-Thames**  
**Minutes of Annual Meeting of the Parish Council 5 May 2021**

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**10. UPDATE FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS**

- a. Village Hall (CC)
- b. Table Tennis (MH)
- c. Rail Group (GO)
- d. Green Apples (MH and VS)
- e. Choir (GO for Charlotte Fisher)
- f. Appleford Parish Trust (MH)
- g. Appleford Community Project (KA)

The above organisations presented their reports, which are attached to these minutes.

**11. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA**

Single item meeting: AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21) including:

- Signing the Certificate of Exemption
- Receiving the Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21
- Signing the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21
- Signing the Accounting Statements for 2020/21

**12. DATE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

As meetings must now take place physically, and as the Village Hall had already been booked on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month, the date of Tuesday 22.6.21, at 19.30, was set.

GB/10.5.21  
Approved 22.6.21