

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council,
on 1 December 2021, held at the Village Hall**

Time: 20.00 – 22.35

Attendance

Parish Councillors:	Greg O'Broin (GO) Chair, arrived at 20.10 Victoria Shepherd (VS) Vice Chair Daniela Danaila (DD)
Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO):	Gill Brook (GB)
District/County Councillor:	Richard Webber (RW), present 20.48-21.32
Members of the public:	Dr Sandrine Philippot-Gasc (SPG), Lyn Cook, Prof Emmanuel Mavrikis (EM), Heather Isaac, Stephen & Amanda Prior, William Finch (WF), Dominic Grigg (DG), Anna Richardson Taylor (ART), Patrick & Christine Gale, Jim Boyce, John Boumphrey, Chris Hancock (CH)

**The meeting was quorate from 20.10
The minutes were taken by Gill Brook**

In the temporary absence of GO, VS took the chair until he arrived at 20.10. VS gave an informal introduction and welcomed the villagers who are attending and all those who are supporting the council. She explained that all members of the council are relatively new so are all on a learning journey. The two spaces on the council are because of villagers having left the area. She particularly welcomed any newly-arrived villagers who would like to join the council. Three new families introduced themselves (Anna Richardson Taylor & Mat; John Boumphrey & Lilly and Emmanuel Mavrikis & Ani). Patrick & Christine Gale also introduced themselves, Patrick having moved in 80 years ago last September.

GO arrived at 20.10 and the meeting started formally.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Claire Boyce, Suzanne Murray King, Neil Shorney, Sue Helby, Deidre Walsh Grigg, Jacob Shepherd.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST

VS and GO declared being on the Parish Trust Committee. GO declared being on the Village Hall Committee.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

GO welcomed participation from the public during the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF MEETING ON 29th SEPTEMBER 2021 (previously circulated) – approved.

5. CO-OPTION OF 2 PARISH COUNCILLORS REQUIRED TO FILL THE COUNCIL

GO explained that that the council would not be able to operate with less than three councillors, as three councillors are needed to form a quorum and make decisions. The level of input is different for different councillors, both everyday matters as well as the proposed

new road. He referred to the upcoming governance review (see point 7d) whereby Appleford could be merged with another village. Dr Sandrine Philippot-Gasc and Prof Emmanuel Mavrikis volunteered and were formally co-opted onto the council, subject to the completion of the necessary paperwork.

ACTION GB to send the necessary paperwork.

6. REPORT FROM DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLOR, CLLR RICHARD WEBBER (RW)

RW introduced the latest news on the planning application for the proposed road (see point 8 below). The HIF (Housing Infrastructure Fund) bid, as all HIF bids across the country, is running into trouble with a serious cost overrun because of Covid, Brexit and the rapidly increasing cost of raw materials. Additionally, environmental regulations have been toughened up which have significantly increased the cost of the main bridge. There is an estimated shortfall on the project of £60-70 million and the project is bound to take at least one or two years longer to complete. The need to alleviate traffic problems, build additional houses and respect the outcome of COP26 has escalated costs which makes the current political situation problematical.

Questions

CH: is there any change to the planning process and the response time?

RW: an informal extension has been granted through to the date of the planning committee on 11.4.22, while recognising that the earlier responses are received, the easier they will be to incorporate ahead of the planning meeting. There have been further complications since that decision was made. There is a question whether the application will be ready and whether the committee will be able to sit on 11.4.22. The size of this planning application makes it effectively about six applications: what is being applied for is in the documents that have been published.

GO: Can councillors defer a decision?

RW: Yes. Planning regulations are important. There is a strict 'Chinese Wall' between OCC Highways Department and OCC Planning & Regulations Department but if the application went to appeal, with OCC Highways as the appellant, the costs would be paid for by OCC.

CH: all consultees must put in objections on the time scale we know about, before 11.4.22.

GO: will you oppose the planning application?

RW: I can't answer that question and still sit on the Planning Committee. There might be a question of conflict of interests but there are other county councillors who are also on the planning committee who are connected to affected villages.

GO: should we keep fighting?

RW: Yes. Keep putting in your opinions. If the government changes something, we could add to our submission. The planning committee is given a recommendation by the case officer

CH: we are still in the position that we cannot change the planning application, but we can undermine the basis of the road being built, e.g. the claim that noise and traffic in Appleford will be reduced being unfounded.

RW: the funding shortfall has to be renegotiated with the government and the extra costs to move the flyover at Appleford would have to be included.

RW: Appleford can apply for a grant from RW's County Council fund and use it to pay for an independent expert on the cost of moving the flyover.

ACTION GO to write formally to RW to apply for £2,000 for this project including a quote from an expert.

GO: this is welcome news.

Question from the floor: what is the issue about moving the flyover?

RW: it is not in the application because it is 'too expensive', but while we are in this limbo position, we could use OCC money to challenge OCC.

GO: can we talk to other members of the planning committee?

RW: yes.

GOB: can we make a formal presentation to the planning committee?

RW: yes. You would get 5 minutes.

ACTION: ensure Appleford obtains 5 minutes in front of the planning committee.

GB: do all members of the planning committee read all the documents?

RW: not necessarily. None is a highways expert. The documents have to be explained.

EM: what is the interaction between the government and OCC?

RW: because the project is so big, it involves central government and a deal signed three years ago. Normally, planning is in the hands of the OCC planning committee, but because of costings and how local plans will fall away, it's necessary to negotiate with central government, before the planning committee can understand the implications. Negotiations are happening now and local county negotiators are being encouraged to play hardball with the government. It's the government that wants the growth in this area. Additional housing without the necessary infrastructure has led to problems. Central government is currently nervous about its reputation.

WF: is the decision binary i.e. either have the whole road stopped or accept it in its entirety?

RW: it could be deferred for clarification and for further justification. If they don't want to move the road, it might be a wise move to propose that if the road can't be moved, we would like A, B and C as a consolation.

Question from the floor: is there a danger that instead of the flyover, the new road is put straight through Appleford?

RW: this is unlikely

RW: Mentioned that he had come from a Thames Water Reservoir meeting. This is a £3-5 billion privately proposed project situated between Steventon / East Hanney / Drayton / Marcham. OCC is against it. Its construction would decimate all CO² targets because of e.g. the concrete used. It would be Europe's biggest above-ground reservoir. RW asked APC to consider supporting this group.

RW was thanked for his time and contribution and he left at 21.32.

7. FINANCE

(a) PAID INVOICES & COMMITTED EXPENDITURE

Invoice ref no.	Invoice date	The following invoices have been paid since the last meeting and were noted:		
2033	N/A	Gill Brook	September salary	305.50
2034	31/08/2021	George Downham, Crosscut	Rec tree works - approved 22.6.21, 7(k)	1,530.00
2035	N/A	Lloyds	quarterly bank charge	18.00
2036	13/08/2021	Mary Hancock	August newsletter	98.18
2037	01/09/2021	Greg O'Broin	Price's. Photocopying maps	15.54
2038	10/09/2021	Greg O'Broin	Hobs Reprographic	10.30
2039	N/A	Village Hall	trial transfer Share of St Edmund's rent of £200	1.00
2040	08/10/2021	Pet Waste Solutions	1.10.21	36.00
2041	30/09/2021	Jim Boyland Trading	Sept grass, litter, Knapp & Chambrai, hedge cutting	1,075.20
2042	16/10/2021	Calico UK	Annual domain name charge	36.00
2043	N/A	Oxfordshire South & Vale CAB	Donation - approved 29.9.21, 7(c) (i)	50.00
2044	N/A	Gill Brook	October salary	305.50
2045	22/10/2021	Pet Waste Solutions	12.10.21	36.00
2046	31/10/2021	Jim Boyland Trading	Oct grass, litter. Knapp & Chambrai	727.20
2047	N/A	Gill Brook	November salary	305.50
Committed expenditure:				
			Zip wire and bump stop. Approved £1,185, 22.6.21, 7(a)	1,185.00
		Playdale		
Additional commitments have been made since the last meeting and were agreed:				
		Playdale	Additional repair of Zip Wire	151.03
		Wicksteed	Rocking horse / see saw repair	218.75
		Environment Report	Re planning application	200.00
		George Downham, Crosscut	Storm tree damage repairs - estimate	170.00
		Playdale	Playground annual inspection - estimate	80.00

A thank you letter re item 2043 had been received from Citizens Advice and was noted.

VS summarised the playground work and tree surgeon work relating to recent storm damage.

ACTION VS to talk to the Electricity Board (SSE) about a limb of Grey Poplar 007 which is overhanging the Aerial Bunch Cable.

GO: The Recreation Ground and Village Hall have been hired out to St Edmund's for a fee of £700 (split £500 for APC and £200 for the Village Hall). It is great to see children playing games. The ground is very good and level and therefore very attractive whereas the Village Hall facilities could be improved to include Wi-Fi and changing facilities for example.

CH: suggested that the Environment Report above costing £200 could be printed out from the website. GO had been advised that a purchased hard copy would be worthwhile but was happy for CH to print it off. The £200 remains as a provisional item pending further investigation.

(b) Update on £5,000 in principle committed expenditure to appoint professional advisors re HIF1 Development (see 8 below). £2,000 has been approved by Culham Parish Council. Clifton Hampden has approved some budget, but GO is not yet aware of the amount. Sutton Courtenay has a meeting on 7.12.21. Nuneham Courtenay is not clear yet. Amongst the group of villages up to £15,000 should be earmarked. GO reported that he had identified a legal advisor/planning consultant who had been recommended. He has provided a lot of input including travelling to meet the Neighbouring Parish Council representatives at Appleford Village Hall. He is helping build a team of experts and had requested raising an invoice for 4 hours of work at £150/hour in November for work after the initial meeting and consultation. GO has emailed to request this should be approved by the group. GO is waiting for the parish councils to respond.

(c) To consider requests for grants received from:

- (i) Clean Slate: Deferred from the previous meeting. See email dated 18.5.21. DD had researched this request and, while it seemed a worthy cause (helping victims of abuse in need of support) there were some gaps in the information on the website, the organisation seemed to be in a good financial situation at the moment, and there are no known village links. It was decided not to support on this occasion.
- (ii) NAG5: a request had been received from Rita Atkinson (RA), who is also a Sutton Courtenay councillor and is now also the point of contact for the Appleford Working Group, to (re) join the NAG5 (Neighbourhood Action Group) with Sutton Courtenay and Drayton and provide £160 financial support to look at speed and traffic modelling. See email dated 27.9.21. EM expressed an interest in joining NAG5 for Appleford. It was decided that no funds would be allocated at this stage but wait until further information was available via EM and RA.

ACTION GB to put EM and RA in touch.

(d) 2022/2023 precept planning & Community Governance Review. See email dated 12.11.21. GB has a training session tomorrow (2.12.21) on precept and budget planning and proposed putting the necessary papers together for a January parish council meeting to meet the Vale submission deadline of 14.1.21. The Community Governance Review was not discussed.

ACTION GB to prepare precept and budget papers for next meeting on 5.1.22.

8. **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE R3.0138/21**

<https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Planning/Display/R3.0138/21>

Consultation end date 11.12.21.

- The dualling of the A4130 carriageway (A4130 Widening) from the Milton Gate Junction eastwards, including the construction of three roundabouts;
- A road bridge over the Great Western Mainline (Didcot Science Bridge) and realignment of the A4130 north east of the proposed road bridge including the relocation of a lagoon;
- Construction of a new road between Didcot and Culham (Didcot to Culham River Crossing) including the construction of three roundabouts, a road bridge over the Appleford railway sidings and road bridge over the River Thames;
- Construction of a new road between the B4015 and A415 (Clifton Hampden bypass), including the provision of one roundabout and associated junctions;

- Controlled crossings, footways and cycleways, landscaping, lighting, noise barriers and sustainable drainage systems at a linear site comprising a corridor between the A34 Milton Interchange and the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden including part of the A4130 east of the A34 Milton Interchange, land between Didcot and the former Didcot A Power Station and the Great Western Mainline, land to the north of Didcot where it crosses a private railway sidings and the River Thames to the west of Appleford-on-Thames before joining the A415 west of Culham Station, land to the south of Culham Science Centre through to a connection with the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden.

To discuss:

- (a) Residents' challenges to the Planning Application
- (b) The engagement of experts/professional advisors
- (c) How and by whom funding will be managed: Parish Council funds; crowd funding
- (d) Volunteers
- (e) Neighbouring parish council group/committee

GO: Five parish councils, led by Appleford, are cooperating in a loose alliance. We need to formalise the appointment of the legal advisor: Charlie Hopkins has provided clarification. We will object to the road. All 5 parish councils said they were very dissatisfied with the consultation, remain concerned by the lack of information shared, and amendments made during the 'consultation' period. The proposed road is an arterial road of about 9 miles, connecting the A34 with an eastern route into Oxford via Nuneham Courtenay and just short of the M40. Issues include: traffic volumes, noise, proximity, sustainability, and changed COP26 requirements, landscaping and visual intrusion.

GO: We have a budget of c. £15,000 to pay for this and may also explore crowd funding.

Question from GO: do residents support Appleford joining with the other four local parish councils (Sutton Courtenay, Nuneham Courtenay, Clifton Hampden & Burcot and Culham)?

Yes (appeared unanimous on a show of hands).

SPG: has Appleford agreed to spending the £5,000?

GO: No, it has only been agreed in principle.

GB: Centralising the 5 parish councils' funding to be held by a single parish council has to be balanced with the fact it may push the income or expenditure level over the external audit threshold which would carry a time and administration cost in terms of the need to appoint an external auditor.

EM: is there a template response?

VS: it's currently either accept or reject. Sutton Courtenay resident, Robin Draper has fought planning applications and produces a newsletter as a neighbourhood group with a template. He suggests what people might want to say: express concern at the lack of effective public consultation; OCC's disregard for the concerns of the villages during the consultation, particularly the proximity of the road to Appleford; the lack of detailed data proving its contention that the proposal will decrease the flow of traffic through the villages and of the failure to include mitigating measures. They might also mention any fears they have that the traffic will increase rather than decrease. Now is the last opportunity for villagers to make their views known on this crucial plan, which will have enormous impacts on the local communities, so please register your views asap.

ACTION VS to circulate a template to encourage villagers to respond by 11.12.21, noting anticipated updates to their response which will hopefully follow as we learn more.

CH: agreed that people should write individually now with global objections and then update later with additional detail.

ACTION GO: to arrange an online meeting inviting interested stakeholders to join the Working Group.

9. DOG WASTE BIN EMPTYING CONTRACT: UPDATE

Heather Isaacs, Dog Warden, had earlier reported that there were two collections in November. Thanks to WF for putting up the temporary notices on the bins to ask dog owners to take their dog waste bags home with them if a bin is full. GO said the service level had improved but still needs a watching eye. Given the shortage of dog waste collection companies there is no plan to change.

10. NOISE ISSUE: UPDATE

- (a) Emails & letters to Hanson Aggregates re scraping noise from very early in the morning to late at night. GO has received emails complaining about the noise and now has a point of contact at Hanson (Colin White) with whom he has asked to meet to discuss the noise issue, including whether the Hanson noise monitor is working. The noise may also be from FCC or Frontera, but it is believed to be mostly Hanson.
- (b) The possibility of buying our own equipment £400-500. Deferred pending (c) below.
- (c) Volunteer for a noise warden. ACTION GO to talk to Lionel Reid who has been maintaining a log of events. It would be helpful if other residents also kept a noise log

11. MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF RECREATION GROUND AND PLAY AREA: UPDATE

- (a) REPLACEMENT CONTRACTOR FOR JIM BOYLAND for grass cutting and other village maintenance with effect from end February 2022. Email dated 17.11.21. GB has found four contractors who are interested in quoting and is currently waiting for a date to meet Jim Boyland to understand what is required. VS suggested considering automatic grass cutters. Patrick Gale also has a contact.

ACTION GB to follow up.

- (b) LITTERING AND RECREATION GROUND CAR PARK BIN. VS had the car park bin moved and the littering problem improved until about six weeks ago, and then the last two weeks it was better again. VS contacted Abingdon PCSO (police community support officer) and will raise the issue again if necessary. Two other general waste bins are emptied regularly. Jim Boyland also does a litter pick before mowing.
- (c) WICKSTEED ROCKING ANIMAL SEE SAW: awaiting parts for repair. Noted.
- (d) ANNUAL PLAYGROUND MAINTENANCE REVIEW following annual inspection (December). Noted.

ACTION GB to confirm go ahead per previous year.

- (e) LOOSE DOGS ON THE RECREATION GROUND. Email dated 10.11.21. We appeal to dog owners to be responsible for dogs. It was noted that some particularly vulnerable, young and old, people can be nervous around dogs and be alarmed. Comment from the floor that dogs sometimes chase DG when he is running. GO observed this too. Please report any issues when they arise. ACTION: to be kept under review.

- (f) OVERNIGHT STAYS IN THE RECREATION GROUND CAR PARK. It is private land. If a mobile home were to be parked up permanently, it would become a real issue. It remains occasional for now e.g. a tent pitched one night.

ACTION: generally, keep an eye on the situation.

- (g) GRAVEL FOR CAR PARKS: thank you letter sent to Hanson Aggregates 18.10.21 following their donation of gravel for the recreation ground and church car parks: noted. George & Patrick Gale were thanked for rough spreading the gravel. It was decided to defer any further fine-tuning work as the gravel may settle without further work.

- (h) TREE MAINTENANCE: Crosscut Trees made good storm damage, 29.11.21. £150 to be paid: awaiting invoice. Recommendation to contact SSE re: Grey Poplar 007 overhanging Aerial Bunch Cable.

12. DEEP CLEANSE SERVICES. Dates for Appleford: 17.2.22 to 21.2.22. See email and form dated 1.11.21.

ACTION: VS to invite people to send us their suggestions. Deadline to the Vale, one month before cleaning dates (17.1.22), so deadline say by 10.1.22 to allow time for collation.

13. SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT: update including St Edmunds FC, field being used for youth activities (see above point 7a).

ACTION GO & VS to formalise what we want with SPG who will contact Georgie at Europa School to pass on our request to Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award students looking for 1 hour/week voluntary service.

Comment from the floor: yes, we could improve the website and make it a good place for newcomers to look when they arrive in the village. E.g. Brightwell. ART offered to help.

14. BASKETBALL COURT: update. No response has been received to our letter asking for the deposit to be returned. GO suggested contacting the contractor to do the job and then get paid the balance. VS: the basketball post and the hoop are in the village hall waiting to be installed. Also, the bench needs to be cemented in at the same time.

ACTION: can anyone help with this concreting?

15. VILLAGE HALL: update on legal standing. GO has been liaising with Jim and Claire Boyce who have increased the hiring tariffs. The village hall is being used for storage and GO is looking for vision on how we could use it more creatively e.g. outdoor summer area, changing rooms, showers, Wi-Fi/screen. The village hall is currently a separate charity but is leased from the parish council who owns the hall, but the lease is out of date.

ACTION: Volunteers to support with the Village Hall welcomed. GO to follow up in the new year with Jim and Claire.

16. MILLENNIUM COMMON. To discuss. See email and document dated 27.10.21. The new housing estate in Sutton Courtenay does not have direct access to the Common. The Millennium Common Management Committee believes no additional footpaths should be created. Sutton Courtenay Parish Council will discuss shortly. Appleford residents Susan Ironside and Richard Lewington are on the committee and are asked to report back when there is further news. It was noted that the proposed HIF road would cut Appleford off from the Common.

ACTION: GB to ask Susan Ironside and Richard Lewington for their recommendation and to keep us updated.

17. OTHER BUSINESS

Defibrillators. GO confirmed that they are active and registered. There is one on the Knapp, one at the Village Hall, and a 'mobile' one at David Andrews' house.

18. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA

2022/2023 Precept and Budget.

19. TO AGREE THE DATE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 5th January 2022, 20.00, Village Hall.

GB/12.12.21
Approved 5.1.22