

Minutes of the **Meeting of Appleford Parish Council** on
Wednesday 16th March 2022, at 20.00, in the Village Hall,

Time: 20.00 – 22.30

Attendance

Parish Councillors:

Greg O’Broin (GO) Chair
Victoria Shepherd (VS) Vice Chair
Sandrine Philippot-Gasc (SPG)
Manu Mavrikis (MM) (from 20.10)

Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO):

Gill Brook (GB)

County/District Councillor

Richard Webber (RW) (until 21.04)

Members of the public:

William Finch (WF), David Piper (DP) (until 21.04), Chis Hancock (CH)

The meeting was quorate

The minutes were taken by Gill Brook

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Daniela Danaila, Heather Isaacs, Jim & Claire Boyce, Frances & Lionel Reid, Katherine Andrews (KA).

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 asked for any comments or questions from the public. There were none. He added that they could comment later if appropriate.

4. **MINUTES OF MEETING ON 2nd FEBRUARY 2022** (previously circulated). **Approved.**

5. **REPORT FROM COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLOR RICHARD WEBBER.**

GOB, RW, SODC, VoWHDC and OCC were present at an OCC cabinet meeting on 15.3.22. The SODC Leader and VoWHDC were concerned that the local plan could fail if the HIF road plan was stopped. Part of the problem is that the road must be completed within a certain time frame for financial reasons. Many key officers have changed jobs. RW accepted that there was a problem as the Didcot housing expansion would lead to further traffic congestion, which, in 2012, HIF was designed to alleviate. However, since then, population statistics, the climate emergency, and evidence that building leads to more building means there is no short-term solution. Any new infrastructure takes years to build while traffic increases and reduces any benefit. The current position makes HIF an unwise solution that will not solve the problem and the question has been raised that there are better ways: get people out of cars / connect more intelligently to where people work/live/socialise etc. Didcot’s population has risen from 18,000 to 45,000 in 25 years. The Cabinet did not all agree but alternatives are being considered although national government pressure still exists. The Cabinet discussion moved towards greener, more adaptable alternatives such as light rail/rail/trams that would be about half the cost of a road. 40% of the Cabinet and 50% of the Councillors agreed with this.

It is difficult to backtrack on such a major project already so advanced, but it is possible. Such alternatives would be better news for Appleford: reduced noise, lower traffic volume, rail connections, links between the county's science and living areas (Harwell, Didcot, Milton, Culham, Oxford etc.)

The meeting to discuss the whole, huge planning application has been postponed from 11.4.22 to at least June 2022. If the original plan is destroyed, the additional housing still exists and there will be financial penalties.

Questions:

CH: what about freight? How can the A34 connect with East Oxford/M40, including HGV traffic?

RW: this is a battle we still have to fight. The HIF links to housing not freight. From local studies in nearby areas, the traffic problem is cars, not freight.

CH: what about the increasing extension of Didcot including retail distribution centres?

RW: it's more about science and technology.

VS: this is part of strategic improvement in Didcot enabling distribution centres and big retailers. We need to remember the bigger picture with some potential to transfer development elsewhere (with reference to 'levelling up'), but many existing companies and inhabitants feel that the road, and particularly the new river crossing are long overdue.

RW: which is better? Appleford does not want to have HGVs: noise and air quality.

RW: It is only now that major changes to this scheme are being mooted, but there is still the problem of timing and penalties if the planning meeting moves into September.

SPG: the Green Party has a position for light rail.

ACTION SPG to circulate message.

DP: what about the money that has already been spent? Some compulsory purchases have gone ahead.

VS: instead of, or perhaps in addition to, creating a light railway, could the existing railway be improved?

WF: there are successful recent examples of light rail solutions in Cambridge, Nottingham and the West Midlands.

MM: has been involved in a similar project in the past. Is light weight cost effective over longer distances?

RW: if the aim is to connect work with houses, it is only from Harwell to Culham, so about 5 miles.

NOISE ISSUE

RW: Hanson has written that they were shocked to learn that Appleford is concerned about local noise: they have been continuously invited to appear at meetings to discuss this.

CH: Hanson has not made noise recordings available. Local interest groups and parish councils must be kept informed. Should people continue to object to the whole road plan?

RW: Yes. And ask for alternatives to a road.

CH: Is it still worthwhile to criticise the planning documents?

RW: suggested that parish councils hold back on further financial investment in this area and wait for the results of the Cabinet Action Group's (CAG) meetings

GOB thanked RW for attending and for his contribution. RW, DP and WF left at 21.04.

6. FINANCE

(a) PAID INVOICES, INVOICES FOR PAYMENT & COMMITTED EXPENDITURE:

Invoice ref no.	Invoice date	The following invoices have been paid since the last meeting and were noted		Amount £
2063	31/01/2022	Jim Boyland Trading	Jan litter & bins	60.00
2064	26/01/2022	Pet Waste Solutions	Collection 19.1.22	36.00
2065	10/02/2022	Pet Waste Solutions	Collection 2.2.22	36.00
2066	N/A	Gill Brook	February salary	305.50
2067	N/A	Gill Brook	Clerk's expenses 12 months	73.99

The above items were **noted** and **approved**.

Invoice date	The following invoices were proposed for approval and payment:		Amount £
28/02/2022	Jim Boyland Trading	Feb litter & bins	60.00
22/02/2022	Pet Waste Solutions	Collection 16.2.22	36.00
07/03/2022	Pet Waste Solutions	Collection 1.3.22	36.00
01/03/2022	OALC	Annual membership	150.00
N/A	Gill Brook	March salary	305.50
N/A	Gill Brook	April 2021-March 2022 backdated 1.75% nationally agreed salary increase	c. 64.75
23/02/2022	Neighbouring Parish Councils - Joint Committee, via Clerk to Nuneham Courtenay Parish Council	Phase 1 to identify tech issues. Approved 6, 5/7.1.22, in principle. This invoice has now been received and is made up of the following: full amount £1,333.33	1,333.33

The above items were **approved** for payment

Committed expenditure:		
Playdale	Zip wire and bump stop. Approved 7a, 22.6.21	1,185.00
Playdale	Additional repair of Zip Wire. Approved 7a, 1.12.21	151.03
Environment Report	Re planning app'n. Approved if required. 7a, 1.12.21	200.00
Neighbouring Parish Council Committee	Phase 1 to identify tech issues. Approved 6, 5/7.1.22	1,500.00

The above items **remain as committed expenditure**, £1,333.33 of the final item being included in the above invoice dated 23.2.22. It was noted that Playdale had recently completed the work on the zip wire.

GOB: reported that he is waiting for amendments to the agreement on how the NPCJC operates.

- (b) To consider an additional (reserve) signatory to the internet banking mandate (GB). It was **agreed** to add MM and SPG to the bank mandate for authorising payments in the event of GOB or VS being unavailable.

ACTION GB

- (c) £250 grant option from South & Vale. MM reported that this is past its deadline.
- (d) NAG5. MM reported that NAG5 have a meeting with the police next week to discuss the areas in which to monitor speeding. It costs about £150 per trip line and the monitoring results includes vehicle details (cars, HGVs etc). VS: this is a valuable opportunity to inform ourselves and the CAG re: current traffic flows, updating the HIF1 pre-pandemic modelling.

ACTION MM to present a brief document of the details and costs to the next Parish Council meeting for consideration.

7. **NOISE** – update on noise at sidings and noise survey, including email from Jonathan Durham (GOB), engagement with Hanson (Lionel Reid LR), sidings survey.

GOB: LR is keeping a log of noise events and will pass it through to GOB for OCC, VoWHDC, Hanson etc. Hanson (Colin White) has promised to send us the noise readings. The noise survey is completed. 78 people answered.

ACTION GOB to circulate the results.

Other matters relating to noise were dealt with above – see point 5.

8. **HIF1 PLANNING APPLICATION**, including to consider formal objection to Planning Application, update on reports from the NPC-JC work, site visit landscape and green belt, to consider NPC-JC agreement for approval, to consider amendments.

This matter was dealt with under point 5 above.

ACTION CH to draft a formal reply to object to the planning application.

9. **FRIENDS OF THE EARTH CAMPAIGN** - update and to consider working with the campaign opposing the road including bike ride.

VS has spoken to Chris Church who is keen to work with Appleford re the HIF road which is being dubbed 'South Oxfordshire's road to ruin'. The cycle ride is on hold.

ACTION VS to continue follow up with the focus on 'no road' rather than light rail which could be a red herring.

10. **WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA DEVELOPMENT** - update (SPG). See doc 10. SPG reported that she has found a student, to work with.

ACTION SPG to contact Anna Richardson and meet next week with Anna, the student, VS and GOB if available.

ACTION GB to resend document 10 to all.

11. **GENERAL ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION:**

- a) Village Hall – update including lease situation, general enhancement, broadband, TV. Cheque received. Item postponed.
- b) Car park – update re raking & disposal of remaining real Christmas tree (VS). GB reported that the last dumped Christmas tree has now been removed from the car park. VS reported that there will be a village clean-up on Saturday 19.3.22 which will hopefully level the gravel around the car park.
- c) Small jobs around the playground - update, including clarification on expectation from builders (MM).

MM reported that he is looking for a handyman who need to know specifics.

ACTION MM to draft a tender request for the basketball area. MM to send to George Horseman and GB to send to Drewe.

- d) South & Vale deep cleanse of Appleford from 30/05/2022 to 01/06/2022. See doc 11d.

ACTION GB to re-send document 11d to all.

ACTION VS to make a list with Mary Hancock.

12. **EMERGENCY (RESPONSE) PLAN** - update and approval of document (DD). Item postponed.

ACTION DD to circulate draft document to all

13. **QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION ORGANISED BY APPLEFORD COMMUNITY PROJECT FOR 5.6.22** – update.

DD and KA had circulated an email with details. There was a discussion about whether to produce items for all villagers e.g. a mug, a tea towel. It was **decided** to avoid creation of material items and think about something more symbolic and longer lasting e.g. village photo (as already planned), planting some trees, a virtual calendar with village photos.

ACTION SPG/VS/MM to ask youngsters for ideas.

14. Items for next agenda to include: Ukraine; NPCJC; planning applications; noise at sidings.
15. Date of next meeting Wednesday 4 May 2022

GB/27.4.22
Approved 4.5.22