

Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council Held in the Community Office at 8pm on Tuesday 9th October 2012

Present:

Councillors:

Ian Hill – Chairman
David Tindale – Vice-Chairman
Rhian Woods
Charles Rowton-Lee
Ted Backhouse
Barry Adby
Harvey Batten
Robert Barber
Roger Beattie
Tony Williamson
Tim Horton

Officer:

Kristina Tynan

Press:

Janine Rasiah

Members of the Public:

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111/12 Apologies for absence
Nick Greaves, Nick Hancock

112/12 Co-option onto Council – There were 2 applicants and the two letters from Neil Boddington and Alex Woodeson were included in the papers for this meeting.
Vote: Alex Woodeson: 3; Neil Boddington: 7
Resolved: That Neil Boddington be co-opted onto Watlington Parish Council.

Robert Barber said that he thinks we should look at how we deal with co-option as it is difficult to judge application on one sheet of A4. He said perhaps we could have a more open and informative process, perhaps by inviting them to address Council.

Resolved: That the Clerk looks into any regulations on this issue and this can then be discussed as part of the Standing Order review at the first Strategy meeting of 2013.

113/12 Chairman's Remarks

Ian Hill thanked WIB for showing the slide presentation which was done for the WIB judges, prior to this meeting. He said that all Councillors have had an invitation to the WIB Celebration of the Gold Award taking place this Friday in the Town Hall and hoped that Councillors could attend this.

114/12 To receive Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations on interest from Councillors relating to items to be considered at the meeting, in accordance with the provisions of the Councils Local Code of Conduct.

Rhian Woods declared an interest in the Co-option item as one of the applicants is a client of hers. She signed the 'Declaration of Interest' book and did not vote on this item.

115/12 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting on the 11th September 2012 to be signed as a correct record

Resolved: That these minutes are a correct record of this meeting and that they be signed by the Chairman.

116/12 Matters arising from the Minutes

The Paper Shop – It was agreed that we write another letter to Paul Cox asking for a progress report. TB reported that he had seen a number of people with clipboards going in and out of the building.

117/12 Public Questions

There were no public questions notified.

118/12 District Councillors Report

Anna Badcock had sent her apologies via Ian Hill who spoke to her on the phone. The only issue she was going to bring up was that of the Neighbourhood Plan and he will report her comments under the Neighbourhood Plan agenda item.

119/12 County Councillors Report – Caroline Newton

Highways Issues

The Highway Team at OCC are putting together the maintenance plan for next year. At the moment there is nothing put in for Watlington. She said that if there is an issue that needs to be considered under the maintenance plan to let her know asap. CN advised that she had drawn to Highway's attention the state of Cuxham Road at the industrial estate roundabout.

Resurfacing in Watlington from Chestnut Place to Ingham Lane – BA reported that OCC have postponed this until February 2013 as there is a query about Pilgims Cottage (Listed) that they have to ensure that this is not damaged. The work will be done over a fortnight by night closures.

Ponding between the communities of Watlington and Britwell Salome – TH said that part of this road is flooded on a regular basis on a dangerous corner and asked if this could be considered under the maintenance issue.

33 High Street

CN asked if there is anything else that we wish her to do on this issue. Ian Hill said that he is concerned about the sale going ahead without having the last years accounts. He also asked about the assets of which there is no record currently on any information that he has seen. However it was thought that at this time there was nothing for CN to do but that Council will contact her if we need her support on this issue.

Area Steward's Fund

CN reported that there is a small amount left in this years budget which is uncommitted . If there is any small matter she may be able to squeeze it in.

Dave Tindale asked if there is still money available from the Big Society Fund. The criteria for this fund is that it has to answer a recognised community need which has to be seed funded, it will

not receive any more OCC funding in the future.

The Firs - Pauls Way/Chapel Street

CN was asked if she has been contacted about this property which has been empty for several years. TH said that there used to be joint commission between the health service and OCC but this seems to have broken down some years ago. He also said that the PCT is spending about £47,000 per year on renting this empty space which is an incredible waste of money. There was a positive meeting last month with the PCT and Social Services which was discussing the prospect of a revival of this property for respite care.

CN said she would look into this issue and report back on her findings.

It was noted that the Police have been looking into this as regards criminal damage to this property.

Triathlon

There is a meeting on this on Friday 12th October. It was noted that 3 different people have been in touch as they were unable to leave their properties on the triathlon day. Also there was an organised Duke of Edinburgh Award and the final location was in an area where the road was closed and the children on this were unable to be met at the pre-arranged meeting place.

120/12 Thames Valley Police Report

PC Ian Kent had sent his apologies and there was no report given. However he will be attending the Operations Committee meeting on the 26th October to discuss parking in the town and any other police issues.

121/12 To receive the Balance of Accounts and approve the list of Payments

Tim Horton read out the Balances of Accounts and proposed that the payments be settled. It was noted that the 2nd half of the precept was received on the 1st October.

Resolved: That the Balance of Accounts be agreed and the list of payments be settled and signed by the Chairman.

122/12 Committees:

A: **FINANCE** - 18/9/2012 – Tim Horton

Cheque Signatories

Resolved: That the 3 signatories are Tim Horton, Ted Backhouse and Kristina Tynan (Clerk)

Review of Financial Regulation for 2012/2013

Resolved: That the Financial Regulations for 2012/2013 be looked at again at the next Finance meeting in November.

SODC Seminar on possible changes to the Tax Base and implications for Parish Councils

Tim Horton reported that he and the Clerk attended this on 19/9/2012 at SODC. The implications of this is that the Tax Base will be altered for the next year. The Council Tax will be delivered in a different way. Only 90% of the Council Tax rebate from Central Government will be given to the District Council (100% at present) which will affect both District and Parish Councils.

However NALC have put in a proposal that would ensure that Parish Councils would not be affected by the 90% limit. This proposal is being considered at the moment.

A change that will be made is that second home owners will now be a discretionary matter as to if any rebate at all will be given. Oxfordshire's five District Councils have agreed to operate the same policy. However there will be changes which will vary from parish to parish depending on the number of second homes in the parish, which will alter the tax base.

We have been advised to see what the Government is going to decide to do and then it will be looked at on a more local level. This will likely set back the Council Tax process and it will

probably mean that the precept level for parishes will need to be decided upon later than usual. TH said that this may alter our pattern of meetings to fit in with the SODC deadlines and an extra Finance meeting may need to be fitted in. As regards the Council Tax leaflet we need to draft this and leave the space for the financial item to be slotted in as soon as we know what is happening.

B: PLANNING – 2/10/2012 – Rhian Woods

Resolved: That these minutes be accepted by Council.

Rhian Woods reported that this was a very short meeting with only two applications for discussion. Both were approved.

C: STRATEGY – There has been no meeting

The Chairman of this Committee, Ian Hill, has resigned and the first business of the next meeting will be Election of Chairman.

D. OPERATIONS – 26/9/2012 – Barry Adby

Resolved: That these minutes be accepted by Council.

Barry Adby stated that there were no recommendations to Council from this meeting. However we have asked our District Councillors to look into the issue of having the recycling bins in the car park emptied twice a week as this area mostly looks very unsightly with rubbish being left all around as they fill up very quickly. BT have taken responsibility for the cutting of the Leylandii trees and the hedge at the Johnson's Alley side of their property and they have put in an order for these to be cut.

Ash Tree at the Pavilion – We have received an email from Hugo Loudon, Heritage Tree Services in which he states:

'It is our opinion that the tree is not only in poor structural condition, but potentially lacks the vigour to respond to what would have to be, quite serious pollarding which would be aesthetically poor. In addition, the general human activity in and around the tree signifies a high target risk, should there be a failure or collapse, within the canopy or the entire tree itself. As discussed, the last time we worked on the tree, succession planting with the Watlington tree warden insuring aftercare/watering would be a good long term recommendation and felling the tree on safety grounds would, all things considered, a good course of action. If this was a too emotive decision for the Watlington Council, a heavy crown reduction pollard would be the 2nd choice with the obvious concerns already voiced'.

There are therefore two choices, to remove completely or to pollard.

Resolved: That this be discussed by the Operations Committee and that they make the decision on this tree.

Dog Waste Signs in the Recreation Area – The wording for three signs in this area will be agreed at the next Operations meeting.

Hedge Cutter – This was discussed and it was:

Resolved: That we purchase a hedge cutter up to a cost of £500. The Chair of Finance and Operations to discuss the options of whether a petrol or battery powered one is purchased.

E. ALLOTMENTS – There has been no meeting.

F. PAVILION AND SPORTS FIELD – 24/9/2012 – Tony Williamson

Resolved: That these minutes be accepted by Council.

Tony Williamson stated that there is a good communication on the Football front with the FA and they are getting more organised.

G. AFFORDABLE HOUSING – There has been no meeting.

H. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP- 12/9/2012 and 2/10/2012 – Ian Hill

Resolved: That these minutes be accepted by Council.

Ian Hill stated that the Clerk had done a good detailed report of the meeting on the 12/9/12. Regarding the Minutes from the 2/10/12, CRL's comments on the capacity of the sewerage plant is an important factor to note. The area agreed upon as the NP area includes bits of neighbouring parishes, Britwell Salome, Pyrton and Cuxham which will give the opportunity to preserve the distinction between these villages and Watlington. It is possible that this area may change. It was felt important to protect the open spaces between Watlington and other Parishes. This does not commit us to go any further and there is no expense to date. However costs will escalate the further the NP goes on

Ian Hill said that Anna Badcock has urged strongly that we say we are interested in doing a Neighbourhood Plan. The Core Strategy is still on-going and may still not be adopted. If it is not adopted by April 2013 we may have no protection against planning decisions enforced by Central Government. However if we have stated our intention to do a NP than we would have grounds for fighting any case that may come up.

David Tindale stated that the NP Boundary is of our choosing and does not just have to be restricted to just our parish or to include our full parish. CRL stated that Britwell Salome are keen on being part of our NP and they will be discussing it at their meeting on 26/11/12. RW said that smaller parishes would not have the resources to do their own and therefore is a good reason to join up with a bigger parish.

All the neighbouring parishes will be informed of our proposed area.

Resolved: That we submit the map with the Neighbourhood Area (outlined in red and orange) and the attached Scope of the Neighbourhood Plan to SODC and that a final decision on the initiation of a plan will be subject to:

- 1) responses from neighbouring parishes on the proposal to enter jointly into the process.
- 2) a financial appraisal of planned work.

Charles Rowton-Lee said that every external meeting on this he has attended has put great emphasis on the amount of work needed for a NP. Everyone is stretched already so we will need other people from the community to come onto the NP committee. Ian Hill said it is very early in the NP process and we will need to sit down work out time, costs, what work is needed. Not all the issues will be done at the same time. Rhian Wood said we have the forerunners of Thame and Woodcote and could use their plans as a guide and the experience they have gained by doing it.

Tim Horton said that from a financial point of view this could be the largest growth item in our revenue budget for next year and the following year. We will need to look at making a budget for this and he hoped this will be addressed at the next Strategy meeting. This will probably need to be about the 'best guess' for the budget implications. Mrs Ducker did raise that she wondered in Central Government may come round to 'capping' local councils. We would not want to use our reserves but would need to build it in.

Ian Hill said we will need a small core group with a larger group for the NP, but we will need

to look at the structure of this.

123/12 Correspondence for Information - List Attached to Agenda

Correspondence will only be discussed if urgent and if it cannot be passed to the relevant committee to discuss.

Letter No 234 Copas Farm - creating an addition permitted path – this has been referred to Strategy.

Letter No 230 – Ashtav Meeting – TH reported that he is attending this as he is a member in his own right.

124/12 Representation on other bodies – To note reports that have been received

There were no reports received.

125/12 Other Matters for Discussion at the discretion of Chair

To note any other matters raised by Members of the Council

Early Intervention Hub – IH attended the meeting on this on 2/10/12 which was held in Chinnor. This is a replacement for youth funding from OCC which has been removed from rural areas. They need to set up rural boards and this was the first meeting for them. There will be a Thame and Watlington hub. Most of the discussion was about what actions they can take. Schools can call on their support with family counselling etc. We need to make sure the school's are aware of it. Roger Beattie said that the Youth Club have been working with the hubs for the last 12 months. Watlington also has the 'Children's Centre' which works also with them. It was agreed that Roger Beattie will attend future meetings on this and Ian Hill will write to the Chair of the meeting letting him know that Roger Beattie will be representing Watlington on the Early Intervention Hub meetings.

It was also noted that Chalgrove and Chinnor Parish Council have taken over the running of the Youth Club since OCC have stopped their funding

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.26PM