

# Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council Held in the Community Office at 8pm on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2012

**Present:**

**Councillors:**

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

**Officer:** Kristina Tynan

**District Councillor:** Anna Badcock

**Press:** Janine Rasiah

**Members of the Public:** 1

141/12 Apologies for absence

Nick Hancock, Charles Rowton-Lee, Nick Boddington

142/12 Chairman's Remarks

There were none.

143/12 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.*

Tim Horton declared a prejudicial interest in cheque number 103368 under 144/12 as it is made out to him. He signed the 'Declaration of Interest' book and left the room for this item

144/12 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2012 to be signed as a correct record

**District Councillor Report** (Minute 132/12), Robert Barber stated that he was not at this meeting and therefore did not ask the question on the services of the Vale of the White Horse. It was noted that this question was asked by Roger Beattie.

**Correspondence** (Minute 138/12 refers), Tim Horton said that he thought that it should have been minuted that the letter 277 from Pauline Harvey, was to be referred to the Planning Committee. This letter will be referred to the Planning Meeting on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January.

**Resolved:** That with the two amendments above, these minutes are a correct record of this meeting and that they be signed by the Chairman.

145/12 Matters arising from the Minutes

**Paper Shop** (Minute 130/12 refers) – Ian Hill reported that he has written to Paul Cox at Bicester Commercials regarding this and has had a reply which stated that they had a problem with the tendering process and are re-tendering at the moment. They hope works will start on this property in January 2013.

146/12 Public Questions

There were no public questions notified.

147/12 District Councillors Report – Anna Badcock

**Recycling Bins at Hill Road Car Park** – Biffa have said that they will empty these more regularly and will come at least twice a week if the bins are full. AB stated that everything that is put in these bins can be left at the kerbside with the green recycling bin – Biffa will take as much recycling that is left out as long as it is left in clear bags or is clearly marked. BA said that if these bins were removed it would free up 4 parking spaces. It was noted that these bins can be useful for people who cannot store extra recycling for 2 weeks, eg people in flats.

AB reported that there has been an increase in fly-tipping in South Oxfordshire and they are looking for ways of increasing prosecutions. Evidence is needed to prosecute. The Vale has made a lot of prosecutions and this has led to a reduction in fly-tipping.

***This issue to be an Agenda item for the next Operations Committee meeting.***

**Precepts** – AB stated that SODC were looking at Precepts in a meeting earlier today. TH said that he has been in contact with SODC regarding this issue and has prepared a note which will be discussed under the Finance Committee agenda item.

**Community Investment Fund** – TH asked what amount will be put in this fund for the next financial year. AB said that she knew it has been reduced from £1M to £1/2 M last year but does not know what the amount will be for next year. It had been previously £2M. AB said she knows it is on the consideration list for being increased and this will be discussed. She said it is very popular with Parish Councils and this has been noted by SODC.

**Core Strategy** – This will be going to SODC Full Council on Thursday (13/12/2012) to be adopted. This has been very well scrutinised by the Inspector and SODC Officers and Councillors.

148/12 County Councillors Report

Caroline Newton had sent apologies for this meeting, however Ian Hill met with her yesterday (7/12/12) and she gave him information on the following points:

**Car parking** – CN's annual steward's fund is spent up for this year. She said she will give the double yellow lines outside the Icknield a high priority in next year's budget

**Triathlon** – IH agreed to copy the WPC response to the new routes to CN. OCC have not yet formally responded but will do so on the basis of comments made by the affected parishes. The current feeling is that OCC is likely not to accept the proposed routes. CN has

been told there are also routes 4 and 5 but has not been able to see these yet. Rodney Rose, the OCC councillor responsible for approval of the routes is currently ambivalent about what the response should be. She recommended that we copy our response to the Henley Standard and the Oxford Mail.

**33 High Street** – OCC have now agreed to a meeting, which CN will attend if the date / time is possible. She has been told the financial information is available in draft but is waiting approval before it can be issued. She will try to get the draft released to us in confidence before the meeting so that we can be reasonably briefed.

**The Firs** – CN understands that OCC have identified a use for the building as a respite care centre for mentally disabled and are currently getting quotes for its refurbishment. The hope is that it will be completed and ready for use by 1 April, provided the refurbishment costs are not excessive.

**Broadband** – CN reported that she has received some comments expressing concern that the attempt to get ultrafast broadband would mean that Watlington misses out on the BDUK funding to upgrade broadband performance. Her view is that now that Oxford has received an increased budget for broadband improvements, more money will be available for rural areas and the central area of Watlington at least is bound to be included in the BDUK programme.

**Bus services** – CN agreed to see if there was any way that information to passengers for the Thames Travel services 101/106 could be improved. In particular IH asked why these services are no longer included on the matrix indicators at central Oxford bus stops and whether it would be possible for TT to be included in the SMS messaging services for stops outside the central area. There is an OCC meeting tomorrow night (8/12/12) on bus services and IH and TH will attend.

Roger Beattie asked if we could request that OCC grit Love Lane. BA said that it was taken off the gritting route, to save money a few years ago. It was thought that we need to get the views from the schools before we request this. BA to do this prior to the Operations meeting in January.

#### 149/12 Thames Valley Police Report

Ian Kent had sent through the following points as he was unable to attend tonight.

PC Kent confirmed that PCSO Greenwood is continuing to run the Parking Operation in Watlington, with the assistance of other PCSO's on the Thame sector subject to operational commitments

Due to staff restructuring on the team, PC Kent will cover the Chinnor Neighbourhood Area in addition to Watlington as PC Mick Goodenough, the previous beat manager for Chinnor, will now be covering the Thame Neighbourhood Area

All further reports to Council will be sent to WPC by PCSO Greenwood.

#### 150/12 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 apart from cheque number 103368 for £10. TH then left the room and this cheque was agreed to be paid.

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

151/12 Committees:

**A: FINANCE** - There has been no meeting – Tim Horton

Tim Horton said that there had been some information from OALC and SODC regarding to budget setting and the precept and gave out a note on this (which is attached to these minutes). We are still awaiting further information from SODC which is likely to be given out in early January. Therefore the next Finance meeting will be held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2013 and there will be a Full Council meeting prior to the Strategy Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, to discuss the Budget and Precept Issue only.

Ian Hill thanked Tim Horton for clarifying this issue.

**B: PLANNING** – 4/12/2012 – Rhian Woods

**Resolved:** That these minutes be accepted by Council.

RW said that there were two application of note discussed at this meeting:

**30 Hill Road** - RW had declared an interest in this item and left the room for discussion and the vote. After much discussion this was supported unanimously by the Planning Committee.

It was agreed that we should put a note in the Watlington Times which communicated a detailed explanation of why the Parish Council supported this application. It was noted that there were no planning grounds to object to it.

**Lys Mill** – This application was objected to on the following grounds:

Single track road is inadequate in width for the type of vehicles this use class requires. The applicant should include on-site parking, so lorries do not park on the road when the site is closed. Potential for inappropriate additional vehicle movements generated by some businesses in this proposed B8 use class, both on the lanes locally, and through Watlington and Britwell Salome .

**C: STRATEGY** – David Tindale

There has been no meeting.

**D. OPERATIONS** – 28/11/2012 – Barry Adby

**Resolved:** That these minutes be accepted by Council

**I-Play** – BA stated that we need to discuss this item as it is not working and needs some attention. The guarantee has now run out and we need to decide what to do for the best. There are 3 options.

1. Do nothing and have a piece of equipment which does not work.

1. To get it repaired at a cost of £751.

2. To take out a two year warranty at £895 (for two years) and an additional cost for new parts of £160.

It was noted that Playdale are the only company at present who can repair/maintain this equipment and the I-Play is one of only two in Oxfordshire. It was also noted that there is an additional annual cost of £200 for the mobile signal and link to the I-Play website which will need to be looked at in the future as to whether we need this facility.

Tim Horton has spoken to Playdale and they have agreed to look into the possibility of an Annual Contract, which would make much more sense and we await a response from them on this. RW said she was dismayed at the amount needed to refurbish this equipment which is only 3 years old.

**Resolved:** That when a response from Playdale on the Annual Contract issue is received that Barry Adby, Tim Horton and The Clerk be delegated to make the decision on this equipment and that they have authority to spend up to £1200 on the best way forward for the I-Play

**E. ALLOTMENTS – Harvey Batten**  
There has been no meeting.

**F. PAVILION AND SPORTS FIELD – 19/11/2012 – Tony Williamson**

**Resolved:** That these minutes be accepted by Council  
TW reported that he is very pleased with the review of the Football Club which is taking place. There is now a wide range of people involved with the Club and this is being led by Paul Griffiths. Attached to the minutes is a progress update which is very methodical. Ian Hill said it is good to see them being much more dynamic.

**F. AFFORDABLE HOUSING – David Tindale**

There has been no meeting but DT stated that we are chasing up the Housing Association for a progress report.

**H. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP – 10/12/12**

**Resolved:** That these minutes be accepted by Council.

**Resolved:** That Di Tolan be co-opted onto this Committee

**Resolved:** That council agrees that before the end of the calendar year it will submit to the SODC as a basis for approval an area for the Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan that includes part of the parish of Cuxham as marked on the attached map and that the application statement submitted with it includes the following text.

“The application covers an area that includes part of the Parish of Cuxham and the attached letter from the Cuxham Meeting supports parishes, Pyrton and Britwell Salome, about the means by which development on the lands between the villages and Watlington could best be controlled. This may lead to inclusion of the parts of those expected from these two parishes before the end of the six week consultation period.”

It was noted that the Neighbouring Plan Group will need to consist of members other than Parish Councillors.

152/12 War Memorial Repairs

**Resolved:** That the Parish Council agree that the necessary works to the War Memorial be commissioned and that the Parish Council pay 50% of the costs, the other 50% will be a grant from the War Memorial Trust. The estimate total cost of these works will be in the region of £1000.

153/12 Ash Tree by the Sports Pavilion –

BA reported that at the last Operations Committee meeting it was resolved that we would pollard this tree. However we have received an email from the Estate Manager of Beechwood Estates which stated ‘ *In the absence of a qualified report to say that the tree is perfectly safe knowing its proximity to public access. We think the only option is for the tree to be felled as soon as possible. Liability in this situation is very ambiguous and if there is the slightest possibility of Beechwood Estates being liable for the ash tree, then*

*we insist on its removal..... We are sorry to be so negative about the tree's future but given it's condition, the extreme weather we have had (and forecast to get) and the possibility that it might have Chalara fraxinea, we feel that there is no other course of action'*

This issue was discussed and it was agreed that it puts us in an awkward position as we cannot get a report which states that this tree is in a good condition. It was therefore felt that we have not choice but to cut this tree down. It was noted that we will need to discuss grinding out the stump at some point if we wish to plant another tree in this location.

10 in favour, 1 abstention.

**Resolved:** That we accept the offer from Beechwood to cut this tree down at no cost to the Parish Council.

154/12 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 283** – SODC Consultation on Leisure - IH to have a look and see if it is feasible to respond. If it is he will do so.

**Letter No 291** – SODC Electoral Boundaries – deadline 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013 – It was noted that we need to put in some response. IH to look at with the Clerk and make a response.

**Letter No 315** – OCC Rights of Way – It was agreed that TH and RBr put together a draft response on this consultation. TW asked if they make the point of wheelchair access. It was agreed that this then be discussed by the Operations Committee in January if the Clerk can get an extension to the deadline.

**Letter No 287** – Howard Sharp and Partners - Land at Pyrton - It was noted that their letter on the meeting infers Council opinion on matters that have not been discussed and which could lead to an assumption that these are Council policy. IH will send a response to them stating this.

155/12 Representation on other bodies – To note reports that have been received

There were none.

156/12 Other Matters for Discussion at the discretion of Chair

*To note any other matters raised by Members of the Council*

**Christmas Reception** – Robert Barber thanked everyone who worked on this. He said it was unfortunate that we had to change the date to a week earlier. He said that he hoped that next year it would be able to be held in the Town Hall.

**Johnson's Alley** – It was noted that this was cleaned up by a member/s of the public who did an incredible job.

**THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.40PM**

## Working note on Watlington Tax base and precept : 2012/13 to 2013/14

For the **current** year, with a **tax base** of 1,197.2 and the application of a Band 'D' demand of £71.92, the Watlington **precept** was **£86,106** (This was a rise of approximately 1% on the previous year)

As a result of the change in the Council Tax Benefit Scheme, now to become the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) the tax base is **reduced**.

However, as a consequence of the new powers to district councils to vary discounts for second homes and the introduction of new discounts for certain empty homes, the tax base will **increase** for the Council.

**Overall** the tax base will be **lower** (as is the case in nearly all town and parish areas). In Watlington's case the tax base will be established for 2013/14 at 1,117.6. **This is a reduction of some 6.64%.**

**If the same 'Band D' rate we applied for 2013/14 as in this year, then the precept would be £80,378 – a reduction of £5,728.**

However **NEXT WEEK** SODC will learn of the level of grant from central government that will 'help mitigate the negative impact of the new council tax reduction scheme'. Under these arrangements the district will be expected to pass on sums to parish councils to localise these effects. I am advised that typically the level of mitigation will be in the 'high 80s' in percentage terms. **Therefore it may be expected that the overall effect will be a reduction in receipt - IF 'BAND D' WERE UNALTERED - of less than £1,000.** It will be expected that this kind of compensation via the district will remain in subsequent years and therefore a component of income will be outside the traditional precept – and be 'vulnerable' to changes in different ways in future years.

It is not expected that any 'capping' rules upon minor authorities will apply to communities as small as Watlington.

Tim Horton

11 Dec 2012