



Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held in the Community Office at 8.00pm on Tuesday 8th December 2015

Present:

Councillors:

Ian Hill –Chairman (IH)
Matt Reid – Vice-Chairman (MR)
Tom Bindoff (TB)
Rachel Huckvale (RH)
Tony Williamson (TW)
Roger Beattie (RB)
Terry Jackson (TJ)
Robin Wilson (RW)
Jane Bryant (JBt)
Jeremy Bell (JB)

Officer:

Kristina Tynan

County Councillor:

Steve Harrod

District Councillor:

Anna Badcock

Members of the Public:

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188/15 Apologies for absence

Jo Read, Jon Lorimer, Bob West, Liz Winton.

189/15 Chairman's Remarks

Ian Hill gave condolences to Tony Williamson on the loss of his wife Barbara.

190/15 To receive Declarations of Interest

Agenda Item 11 – TW declared a non-prejudicial interest in the Churchyard Grant. He took no part in the discussion and did not vote on this item.

191/15 Minutes of the Full Council Meetings held on the 10th November 2015 to be signed as a correct record

Minute 184/15 page 69 – Traffic Survey at Christmas Common – 'date' to be changed to 'data'.

Minute 184/15 page 69 – Neighbourhood Plan Forum – 'as' to read 'is'.

Resolved: That with the amendments shown above the minutes from the meeting be agreed as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman

192/15 Matters arising from the Minutes

Minute 180/15 – page 67 – SODC Town and Parish Forum – TB had stated that the SODC previous figure of winning appeals was 70% and it is now 48%. This figure was queried and the Clerk was asked to check the latest figures.

[**Post Minute Note:** The last published SODC figures for 2014 are that 45.3% were allowed and 54.7% were dismissed]

193/15 Public Questions

There were no public questions notified.

194/15 County Councillors Report – Stephen Harrod

SH said that he had not yet sent his monthly report but would send it out soon. The situation of the budget being worked on is still the same.

Waste Recycling Centres – Cllr Rodney Rose was on Radio Oxford this morning and he said that the situations on these will remain the same until 2017 but this still needs to be ratified by the Cabinet.

Britwell Road potential crossing – SH said that the OCC Design Team have looked at this and have said it is feasible. They will look at this in more detail and should be okay for the next financial year.

Love Lane/Spring Lane Hamp Re-Assessments – Keith Stenning is still to do this.

Flooding at Pound Close – OCC are monitoring this situation but if any problems are noticed let SH know.

Cuxham Road wall in Stream – SH said that some work has been done on this but it was noted that work is not completed.

Brook Street – sinking of road after Ecotec work – Keith Stenning has inspected this and said that it is not. IH stated that it is definitely is, there is a few metres which are at a much lower level than the rest of the road. SH will ask for a site visit with KS.

Area behind the Library – SH asked if there had been any response on WPC' request to have this area cleaned. KT said that there had not but that a local resident had offered to clean this area for the community and this offer was gratefully received.

Howe Road – Request for Dragon's teeth – This request was not supported by OCC.

Dirty Sign at the top of Howe Hill – KT said that this had been cleaned but not very well.

Cost Estimate for Relief Road – SH had said that he had been advised that this would cost in the region of £20M. Based on the cost of a cycle path from Henley to Shiplake which cost £5M he thought that a road would cost 4 times as much which would make the cost in the region of £20M. There is also a proposal for a new road in Didcot which is costed at £12M and the Watlington one would be one and half times as long. TB stated that looking at these figures a relief road would cost a lot less than OCC have advised.

LTP4 – Cllr Nimmo-Smith has said that the LPT4 is concentrating on the 3 main towns only and this is why the reference to Watlington has been taken out and that there is nothing sinister about it as it is just the detail which has been taken out.

Social Care – TB said that the 2% increase for social care/living wage is good for this but there is nothing done for anything else eg roads, children's centre etc. SH said that this would still make OCC short on meeting the cost of the living wage as there would be a £4.5M shortfall. SH said that OCC are still looking at where savings could be made.

If OCC could increase Council Tax by 10% which would necessitate a Referendum (which is still great the subject of a great debate), and would increase the Council Tax on Band D by £125 for the year. TW said that a 2% increase in social care would equate to a 4% increase in Council Tax if on top of the currently allowable 2%. SH said that he still does not have all the detail.

Care Home Providers – TW said that these are being cut back and homes are being closed because Council's money is not adequate to keep them going. He asked if there are any warnings of any in Oxfordshire being closed. SH said that he was not aware of any but that he would look into this issue.

IH thanked SH for attending the meeting.

195/15 District Councillors Report – Anna Badcock

New Enterprise Zone at Didcot – This will help with new businesses and also enable infrastructure to be put in place which will still be controlled under Planning and will bring money in for the whole District.

This does not affect Watlington in the fact that housing numbers will not change.

Waste Collection – There will be hangers put on bins this week which will show the Christmas collection dates. The bin collection has been a bit haphazard recently and if anyone has any problems to let AB know.

Town and Parish Forum – This was held in November and AB hoped that all who attended it found it useful.

Grants – There are grants available for infrastructure improvements and applications can be made now. The grant legislation has been changed and organisations can now apply every 6 months even for the same project whereas before they had to wait for 2 years before applying again. AB said she has been approached by the Watlington Club to help them get a grant. WPC have put in an application for new play equipment in the Paddock.

Cyber Crime – AB said that she has a role in community safety, safeguarding etc. There has been a large shift to on-line crime including child exploitation. There is a Cyber Crime Survey on the Thames Valley Police website at the moment and AB urged people to fill this in. KT will find the link and circulate this.

Planning- AB said that SODC had a Local Plan and then with the new SHMA figures this has had to be reviewed which is going on at the moment. This puts SODC in the position of being vulnerable at the moment until the review is completed. A few years ago a large number of houses in Didcot was ring-fenced and this has led to the upgrading of the station and the second phase of the Orchard Centre. The houses which will be built will be of good quality. SODC are a bit behind in housing delivery in Didcot. SODC has to have a 5 year housing land supply and in Didcot this is six months behind, due to the recession and land banking. However in the rest of the District there is a 9 year housing supply. This could put SODC in the position that it could be ruled that SODC do not have a 5 year housing supply but this has been well argued and so far has stood up in Appeal. When planning applications have been turned down and then appealed the SODC argument has stood up. Regarding developments in Shiplake, Benson and Chinnor the Inspector allowed these but not because of a lack of housing supply, which was not cited as a reason for rejecting the appeals. Each village had been allocated a number of houses to 2027 but more houses will need to be allocated which is why the Inspector allowed these developments. SODC are defending the Chinnor development as they are in the process of doing a NP. The Benson development had been allocated in the original Local Plan for housing so SODC could not defend this one. How does this apply to Watlington? At the moment there is a golden opportunity for developers with the Local Plan being reviewed and developers are making the most of this. There is a presumption in favour of developments and development has been allowed where previously it would not have been. If Benson and Chinnor are vulnerable then we have to presume that Watlington is also. The NP process is holding back developers at the moment but they are pushing against the door. That a NP is being done and has a sensible delivery plan in a short time scale is the only reason that SODC can appeal against a planning application. Watlington needs to urgently form their planning policies because if developers do not see a significant development of a NP then the town would be vulnerable. It is important that sites and housing numbers are allocated. AB said that the NP needs to be completed within 12 months and planning policies need to be looked at urgently. RW said that if it needs to be done by 2017 our targets need to be re-looked at. IH stated that if a site is not included within the draft NP a developer could put in an application on that site until the NP has been accepted.

TW asked what the size of developments in Benson and Chinnor are. AB said that the one in Benson is for 200 houses and for Chinnor there are 3 sites of 200 houses each, a total of 600. AB said that Watlington is less desirable than Chinnor and Benson and this may be why no developer has put in an application as yet. MR said that the CRSI policy states that there must be a clear gap between parishes.

JB said that the housing numbers in the 2012 Local Plan has not changed but developers could apply for more because of the new SHMA figures.

AB said that she would be happy to talk to JB about the technical details on why SODC are still defending Chinnor even though the development has been allowed by the Planning Inspector.

RW asked that if Watlington put together a NP with only 79 houses would this be robust enough. AB

said that she did not think that the Inspector would allow this number as Watlington would need to allow more with the new SHMA figures.

RH asked what has changed recently that AB is now telling us to move quickly on the NP. AB said because the Benson, Chinnor and Shiplake developments have been allowed whereas previously they would not have been. IH said that we need to get on and choose our preferred sites and designated planning policies and we will be in a much better position.

MR asked when SODC will come up with a revised figure of houses for Watlington. JB said that 79 houses is manageable. AB said that SODC cannot give a revised figure as yet. As Didcot has been awarded Garden Town Status they may take more houses than had been allocated. TW said that it sounded like SODC did not want to make a decision on numbers and will leave it up to the NP's to come up with a figure. AB suggested that we speak to Peter Canavan on housing numbers. AB said that there is practically 0% of unemployed people in South Oxfordshire.

IH thanked AB for attending the meeting.

196/15 Thames Valley Police Report

It was noted that James Hopkin, our PCSO is now based in Watlington so he will be seen more around the town.

197/15 To receive the Balance of Accounts and approve the list of Payments

TW read out the Balance of Accounts and proposed that the list of payments be settled.

Resolved: That the Balances of Accounts and the list of payments be settled and that they be signed by the Chairman.

198/15 Committees:

A: FINANCE – 24/11/2015 – Tony Williamson

Resolved: That Council accept these Minutes.

Churchyard Grant Request – After discussion this was voted on: 6 in favour, 3 abstention.

Resolved: That Council allocate a grant of £850 for 2016/2017 towards the Churchyard maintenance subject to us receiving the Church Accounts and that the income from burials is given.

Review of Financial Regulations for 2015/2016

Resolved That Council accept the Financial Regulations for 2015/2016 with one change on paragraph 3:4 that the limit that the Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of Council which is necessary to carry out any repair or replacement which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, to increase this amount from £500 to £2000

Increase in Precept – TW said that there was a lot of discussion on this and different percentage increases were considered. A recommendation to Council will be coming to the January Full Council meeting. If tax payers were to pay an extra £1 per month (Band D) for the parish element of the Council Tax this would give us an extra 15% which was thought to be necessary with regards to all the extra things we may need to pay for eg SODC stopping our Street Cleansing Grant, SODC ceasing the Top Up Grant, OCC not funding the Children's Centre, the NP, extra grass cutting etc. IH said that if we kept the precept the same as last year we would have £6,000 less because of the removal of grants from SODC

Survey on Budget – this was hand delivered to all residents in the parish, put in the Watlington Times and on our website and Facebook page but the response was very disappointing we only had 30 responses. The responses that we did received were overwhelmingly in favour of putting up the precept for Watlington.

Clerks Holiday – RH said she was appalled that the Clerk is owed 4 weeks holiday and this needs to be addressed for next year so that this situation does not happen again.

B: PLANNING – 1/12/2105 – Jeremy Bell.

Resolved: That Council to accept these Minutes.

JB said that all the applications considered were passed unanimously by the Committee.

Regarding the Old Church at Christmas Common which will be considered by the SODC Planning Committee, MR will speak against this application at their meeting.

C: STRATEGY- 17/11/2015 – Matt Reid

Resolved: That Council accept these Minutes

Subsidised Bus Services – It was noted that all the cuts proposed by OCC are going ahead. This means that subsidies to all the Watlington services will be cut. We may lose the 124 Thame service in addition to the Wallingford and Reading services. Some Operators may continue some services without the subsidy. There will a meeting of the 5 Parishes Groups soon to discuss all issues.

Ecotec – RB stated that they have now put in a planning application in Chalgrove and MR will look into this.

Communications Strategy – There will be a special one hour Strategy meeting to discuss this issue only in January. A date will be sent out by the Clerk.

Children’s Centre Consultation

Resolved: That IH and RH be delegated to write the WPC response on this consultation.

33 High Street

Resolved: That in preparation for the transfer of the Trusteeship of the Charlotte Coxe Trust to Watlington Parish Council, we appoint a ‘Shadow Trustee Body’ for the CCT with up to 6 Parish Councillors and to a smaller number of non-councillor representatives. This shadow body would not be able to make any decision on the future of the Trust and would report to the Council. Its role would include advising Council on any draft documents from OCC or the Charity Commission, as well as using the intervening time to look into issues of 33 High Street. The eventual Trustee Body will not necessarily be drawn from the shadow body. This shadow body would not be able to make any decision on the future of the Trust until the Charity Commission completed the transfer, but would use the intervening time to look into issues of 33 High Street and to have a site visit to inspect the building. The eventual Trustee Body will not necessarily be drawn from the shadow body.

It was agreed that the Clerk ask FOWL for two nominations for this shadow body so that we can appoint this Shadow Trust Body at the next Full Council meeting.

Grievance Policy –Review

Resolved: That Council agree this policy for 2015/2016.

Complaints Procedure –Review

Resolved: That Council agree this procedure for 2015/2016

Twinning with Mogliano Italy – MR is looking into this.

Icknield Community College Link – MR will take over this position from Ian Hill.

D. OPERATIONS – 18/11/2015 – Tom Bindoff

Resolved: That Council to accept these Minutes.

Johnson’s Alley Hedge – This has been cut successfully.

Light not working in Johnsons Alley – The Clerk has reported this to OCC 6 times but it is still not working. She will continue to chase OCC on this.

Watlington Town Walk Leaflet – The committee is hoping to find some money to get these reprinted.

Car Park Drainage – TB is organising for a group of volunteers to dig trenches in the bank to alleviate drainage. This will be done in January.

E. ALLOTMENTS – There were no issues to discuss.

F. PAVILION AND SPORTS FIELD – 9/11/2015

Resolved: That Council to accept these Minutes.

The minutes of the 3/12/15 will be approved in the January Meeting. IH said that he felt this was a constructive meeting on the budget issues.

G. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE – 30/11/2015 – to be accepted at the January meeting.

Terms of Reference for the NP Forum – The NP Forum have asked that these be changed so that membership is not limited to Watlington residents. This issue to be discussed at the January NP Steering Committee so that a Recommendation can be sent to the January Full Council meeting

199/15 Correspondence for Information – **The List was attached to Agenda**

Correspondence was noted.

200/15 Reports from Organisations and Representation on other bodies – To note reports that have been received

There were no reported received.

201/15 Other Matters for Discussion at the discretion of Chair

Watlington Club – It was requested that the Clerk write to the Trustees and ask what their plans are for the future of the Club.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 10PM