

Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council Held in the Community Office at 8pm on Tuesday 12th June 2012

Present:

Councillors:

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

Officer:

Kristina Tynan

District Councillor:

Angie Paterson

County Councillor:

Caroline Newton

Thames Valley Police:

PC Goodenough

Press:

Janine Rasiah

Members of the Public:

1

80/12 Apologies for absence
Roger Beattie, Di Tolan, Nick Hancock, Charles Rowton-Lee

81/12 Chairman's Remarks
Ian Hill welcomed Caroline Newton to her first Full Council meeting. He said we have a report from the Jubilee Committee. He thanked the Jubilee Committee and all the volunteers who helped with the events. It was noted that this weekend was a great success, despite the weather.
Resolved: That Ian Hill sends a letter to each member of the Jubilee Committee and the volunteers thanking them for their hard work and the fabulous events that were put on.

82/12 To receive Declarations of Interest
Tony Williamson declared an interest in the Recommendation on Age Concern from the Finance Committee. He signed the 'Declaration of Interest' book and left the room for this item.

83/12 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting on the 8th May 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.

84/12 Matters arising from the Minutes

Broadband (Minute 75/12 refers) – We have received some consultation forms for residents and businesses to fill in about their broadband speed. It was agreed that we put something in the Watlington Times to urge people to fill in this on-line questionnaire. Ian Hill stated that broadband has been upgraded in this area over the last few months but speed has not improved. It has removed the very slowest speed and speed is more consistent now with very little variations from time to time.

Air Quality Survey (Minute 79/12 refers) – The air quality machine is now operational which will allow more data to be collected on the air quality in the town.

85/12 Public Questions

There were no public questions notified.

86/12 District Councillors Report – Angie Paterson

Core Strategy – Angie Paterson stated that the Planning Inspector was having a further Inspection day on 21/6/12. This is to look at conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (Now to be referred to as ‘The Framework’) She hopes that this is the last delay to this but we are now looking at adoption towards the end of the year rather than sooner as hoped.

Boundary Review – All the ward boundaries will be looked at over the Summer period. The outcome of discussion will be presented to SODC in late August. This is about decreasing the number of Councillors and Watlington will become a one Councillor ward.

Localism Act – A new Code of Conduct has been adopted by SODC and OCC. A new code was needed as the Standards Board no longer exists but was still referenced in the old code. Although each Council can develop its own, a uniform code throughout the County is being adopted. She noted that it is on our Agenda tonight.

Angie Paterson then asked if there were any questions.

Robert Barber asked if she was aware of the changes to Householder Appeals in that no comments can be made further to the ones put on the consultation paper. Previously written comments or a right to speak at the Appeal were allowed. Under the Householder Appeals now, nobody can make any further submissions. The SODC report also has to stand as it other than minor amendments. He said he was not sure if the Household is allowed to make further submissions and asked if she could find out about this.

With regard to the Appeal on Marigold Cottage, CPRE did not comment at the time as they thought the response from the Parish covered all the points but did not realise that by not commenting they could not make a submission to the Appeal. Comments on this application have also been made by other Parish Councils and as they did not make a comment at the time of the original application these can not be taken into account at the appeal.

Tony Williamson said that the Core Strategy is an issue for this community as it is amongst the ‘large village’ housing allocation. He stated that there may be a shortage in the larger towns and would like to see some action. He is concerned that if someone has submitted an interest in developing in and around Watlington between the period 2012-2014 for example, how confident SODC is that this would be considered a significant development in which the opinion of the Parish should be given the level of attention it would receive once we have had time to prepare our Neighbourhood Plan

Angie Paterson said that they are expecting the Inspector's draft response by the end of the week. There is much uncertainty but it could be that a 20% buffer in land supply is required. SODC has put forward a contingency site in Thame which is accepted would help the rest of the District. Within each stage in the process the Core Strategy carries more and more weight. However as with all applications if a developer puts in an application SODC will be obliged to look at it on its own merit.

Neighbourhood Plan – Angie Paterson said that she had read the report from the Neighbourhood Plan Group and was concerned to read that 2014 has been given for the completion of this. She said that she thinks that this is a long time. Thame has nearly completed their Pilot Plan, Ian Hill said that the lack of current progress is partly because SODC advised that we wait until the SODC Forum on this issue for which we have not yet had a date given. Angie Paterson said that she is not happy to hear this as it is against the advice she would give. The other issue is one of cost.

Ian Hill thanked Angie Paterson for coming to the meeting.

87/12 County Councillors Report- Caroline Newton

Caroline Newton reported that OCC have concluded their Boundary Review, Watlington Division will lose areas north of the M40 and will gain a few villages to the south of the M40. It will now include Chalgrove. It is the largest division as regards geography and will remain so even with the changes. The Councillor who is elected next year will be very stretched.

She asked that we encourage everyone to fill in the County Council on-line form on broadband speed. The exchange should be upgraded soon as the town has a library, school etc. However she is not sure if Watlington will be a beneficiary of the Government funding to OCC for broadband as this area is relatively wealthy and too sparsely populated to probably receive funding. Chipping Norton is installing a community broadband system and she will be speaking to their Parish Council to see exactly what they are doing.

Regarding the Triathlon, there is recognition at the County Council that it was unhelpful to our local communities and very poorly managed last year with Christmas Common and the Stonor Valley being particularly affected. This year the County Council will be hand delivering a letter to everyone who will be affected, not just the houses on the actual route. They are also taking over marshalling the main route. The letters will be a form of consultation, residents will be able to have their say. There is an agreement that an alternative route will be sought for 2013 and OCC are very keen to work with Parish Councils on this. Caroline Newton stated that for International Events there is an Act of Parliament that governs these events and OCC could only refuse to hold an event on safety grounds, so there is very little that OCC can do regarding these types of events.

Tim Horton asked if Caroline Newton would be joining the Governing Bodies of the local schools. CN stated that she will be becoming a Governor of the Primary School.

Tim Horton also said that it is impossible to leave Watlington without being affected by the appalling water conditions on the roads which is beginning to have an economic impact on this area. The B480, B481 and the B4009 are bad in every direction. He said that OCC do not seem to have a relationship with the riparian owners to make sure that streams etc are kept clean and unblocked. The ponding situation could be cleared and it also needs to have a strategic view.

Hill Road is becoming very dangerous with the overhanging vegetation and County needs to write to the owners of the frontages. The Clerk stated that she has said she will supply County with a list of these and they will then write directly to the owners. Robert Barber said that it was 11 years ago that the County last wrote to the National Trust and other landowners asking them to cut back the overhanging vegetation.

Tony Williamson asked if it was a County strategy to squeeze people out of using the Oxford Tube outside of rush hours as there are less parking spaces now and it is very difficult to park after 8am. Caroline Newton stated that this is not the County's intention to do this at all, they have to make sure that the area is safe which is why the recent works have been done. She said she is not aware of any issues to stop parking in this area. Ian Hill stated that opposite Lewknor J6 it was not safe to pull out before the works were done. He also said that he has noticed that parking is now taking place North of Junction 6. Robert Barber said that before the road was widened that area was an accident black spot.

Robert Barber asked if she had been invited to join the Educational Foundation Committee. She responded that she has been but has not yet responded to them.

Ian Hill thanked Caroline Newton for attending the meeting.

88/12 Thames Valley Police Report – PC Goodenough

Speeding / Vehicle offences - We have not been able to secure the use of the Mobile Speed enforcement van for Christmas Common, however the local Neighbourhood team is making efforts to further secure use of the hand held Laser device to facilitate local enforcement checks. This device is shared between all the neighbourhoods covered by Thame, Henley and Didcot sectors and is therefore in great demand.

The hand held laser device was secured and last used by PC Kent and PC Hounslow during a speed check in Christmas Common on the morning of 29th May 2012. During this check traffic was light with the maximum recorded speed of 34 MPH (probably due to Hi-Vis warning motorists of the police presence on the straight section of the road). Further checks will be made on securing the Laser device.

On 1st June PCSOs Jacques and Howard requested the assistance of traffic officers in dealing with a motorist in Hill Road Watlington suspected of repeatedly driving without insurance. Following a thorough investigation his vehicle was seized by officers and the driver dealt with for a number of suspected offences

HGV Weight checks - During the month PC Kent has conducted several HGV checks at various times in and around Watlington. Although it is fully acknowledged that there are offending drivers entering this restricted area all the vehicles checked on these particular occasions had valid delivery documentation and therefore lawful excuse to operate within the zone at the time. Further checks will be carried out to apprehend and deter offenders in conjunction with operations by Trading Standards.

Also during this month Trading Standards did carry out an HGV check with their video car, however the results are unknown as the data is held with TS.

Crime- As reported locally and in the National press TVP conducted a recent operation to execute a series of warrants at scrap metal dealers in the fight against illegal metal theft. In addition to dealing with any offences identified during this operation, officers believe that such initiatives help deter and disrupt this illegal activity especially when combined with the ongoing local police approach of enforcement and deterrent. In fact on the day and time when these warrants were being carried out, PC's Kent and Hounslow sighted and stop checked a Ford Transit in Christmas Common loaded with scrap metal. On investigation a number of aspects of this check appeared suspicious and following further enquiries into the status of the vehicles insurance and compliance with SODC waste operator rules the vehicle was seized with the driver being dealt with for a number of suspected offences. Further local checks identified the same vehicle being in the Watlington rural area over the preceding days, suspected again of looking for scrap metal.

Rhian Woods asked about Hare Coursing which PC Ian Kent has previously reported on. PC

Goodenough said these are big money events and the police will prosecute if they catch the offenders. The majority of offenders come from other areas and this area does have a large population of hares. TVP are doing operations on this as they have wiped out the hare population in some other areas.

Ian Hill thanked PC Goodenough for his report.

89/12 To receive the Balance of Accounts and approve the list of Payments

Tim Horton read out the Balance of Accounts and proposed that the List of Payments be settled apart from the SODC invoice for the Election costs and Zurich Insurance which will be taken under the Finance Committee, which has Recommendations on these.

Resolved: That the Balance of Accounts be approved and the List of Payments apart from the one for the SODC Election costs and the one to Zurich for Insurance be settled and that these both be signed by the Chairman.

The SODC and Zurich Invoice will be discussed below under the Finance Report.

90/12 To approve the New Code of Conduct – Information was attached to the agenda

Ian Hill reported that he spoke to Kathy Finder (SODC) on this. The SI defining Prejudicial Interest on the Code of Conduct was published on Friday and only addresses pecuniary interests. The Standards Board no longer exists so a new code must be adopted. He said that he was concerned that this Code was only published on the 8th June and had to be adopted by the 1st July 2012, a very short time scale.

Robert Barber stated that this document lacks guidance and Ian Hill stated that this will be produced shortly. IH stated that this Code has been adopted by the District and County Councils.

After further discussion it was :

Resolved: That this Code of Conduct be adopted provisionally for 6 months at which time there will be a review and the Code will be either re-affirmed or replaced after this time.

91/12 To approve the information to be sent to the External Auditor- information was attached to the agenda.

Tim Horton gave a brief report on this information. He said that the Internal Auditor had approved all the items and given the accounts a clean bill of health. The Clerk was thanked for her work especially with the difficulties she had with her eye after her operation. Tim Horton stated that the End of Year Balances are in a healthier position than was expected in the budget figures. The Fixed Asset register always remains at the 2010 level which has been decided upon by the External Auditor.

Resolved: That all the information to be sent to the External Auditor is agreed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

92/12 Committees:

A: FINANCE - 10/4/2012 - Tim Horton

Resolved: That these minutes be accepted by Council

Age Concern Rent for West Room

Resolved: That we reduce the Age Concern amount per session from £25 to £20 for the year 2012/13.

Insurance

Tim Horton thanked Ian Hill for his work on this issue.

Resolved: That Council enters into a 3 yearly contract with Zurich and that after this three year period Council to review other insurance companies as was done last year.

Staff Appraisals

Harvey Batten said that it was important to accent the positive in an appraisal and to try to keep the process as simple as possible. We have included that Chairs of Committee be consulted on any issues they may have prior to the appraisal taking place.

Resolved: That the attached Staff Appraisal Procedure be followed.

Election Invoice

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That Council pay the Election Cost Invoice for £847.33

Discussion took place on this issue and it was noted that Benson Parish Council have paid this bill but taken out the amounts which pertain to the postal vote part of the costs. It was noted that the postal vote cost to Watlington on this bill amounts to £110.83 and would therefore reduce the invoice to £736.50. It was thought that we should make the point to SODC about the problems about the last election especially the postal vote fiasco and not pay the full amount.

After discussion it was:

Resolved: That we pay £736.50 to SODC for the Election costs. A explanatory letter to be sent with the cheque.

Council Tax Leaflet 2013/14

Resolved: That the Strategy Committee discuss this issue and this committee suggests that it is kept to 2 sides of A4 and be made simpler and have a different layout.

B: PLANNING – 11/6/2012 – Rhian Woods.

Resolved: That these minutes be accepted by Council

Rhian Woods reported that the meeting took place last night as it had to be moved from it's original date due to the extra Bank Holiday for the Queens Diamond Jubilee.

She reported that she had been again elected as Chairman and Charles Rowton-Lee as Vice-Chairman.

The committee had 17 applications to consider last night, of which they refused 2 applications and approved the other 15. The two applications that were objected to were:

P11/S0219 17 Spring Lane, Watlington Two storey and single storey side extensions

OBJECTION - Unneighbourly, Excessive Bulk and Mass, Overdevelopment, Detrimental to the Street Scene.

P12/S0864/FUL (Watlington & District Care Home, Hill Road, Watlington. Single storey side extension

OBJECTION -Watlington Parish Council has only one objection to this application, that of the window materials. WPC does not feel that UPVC window frames are appropriate and the windows should match the existing wood frames.

C: STRATEGY – There has been no meeting

The referral from Finance Committee will be added to the next agenda.

D. OPERATIONS – 29/6/2012 – Barry Adby

Resolved: That these minutes be accepted by Council

Committee Meeting Time and Date

This was discussed and Tim Horton said that he thought it should remain on a Tuesday evening, as this committee has been given greater powers and as a key committee should be given status

by having an evening meeting. Barry Adby stated that it was moved to a Tuesday evening as it was thought that more councillors would come onto the committee, however this has not happened and that none of the current members have a problem with Wednesday morning, which also gives the opportunity to look at things in the daylight.

Day and Time of Meetings

Resolved: That the Operation Committee revert back to its original Wednesday morning meetings. The starting time to be 10.30am.

Vote: 4 in favour, 1 against, 4 abstentions

Co-option onto the Operations Committee

Resolved: That Linda Nicholson be co-opted onto this committee.

Vote: 7 in favour, 2 abstentions

Car Park

Resolved: That this hedge is cut down to 10ft or the agreed height after Robert Barber has looked at it.

E. ALLOTMENTS –There has been no meeting.

F. PAVILION AND SPORTS FIELD – 7/6/2012- Tony Williamson

Resolved: That these minutes be accepted by Council

Tony Williamson reported that this was a good and very positive meeting. The meeting with the FF and the FA has taken place. Paul Griffiths attended this on behalf of the Watlington Football Club who are moving to a positive way forward. Martin Edis has sent a letter re a proposed extension to the Pavilion for the Youth Club and there will be a meeting with them on the 2nd July to discuss this issue. Martin Edis and Neil Boddington will be in attendance.

G. AFFORDABLE HOUSING – There has been no Meeting

H. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP

The minutes from the last meeting 17/4/2012 still need to be approved.

93/12 To make any changes to Committee Membership and Town Hall Trustee Body.

Town Hall Trustee Body – Charles Rowton-Lee to become a trustee.

Planning Committee – Barry Adby to come off this committee

Operations Committee – Ian Hill to join this committee

94/12 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.

95/12 Representation on other bodies – To note reports that have been received

Public Charities and Support Fund - It was noted that Sarah Pullen has been elected as Chairman and Robert Barber as Vice-Chairman.

96/12 Other Matters for Discussion at the discretion of Chair

To note any other matters raised by Members of the Council

Jubilee Committee and Jubilee Weekend – Tim Horton reported that during this event he noted a number of points which he will ask to be discussed by committees later this year.

Watlington Speaks Final Report – Ian Hill said that these need to be distributed to households in the Town. He will be asking for some help with this.

Lewknor – Field for Car Park – One of the landowners had offered land for car parking in this location and it was noted that this is no longer available as it has been earmarked for a new use. It was also noted that a car park in this location is unlikely as there is no money for this. Lewknor are happy with the current parking arrangement.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 10.22PM

