

Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council in the Community Office Held at 8pm on Tuesday 13th November 2012

Present:

Councillors:

Ian Hill – Chairman
Tim Horton
Tony Williamson
Ted Backhouse
Barry Adby
Roger Beattie
Harvey Batten
Nick Hancock
Nick Greaves
Rhian Woods

126/12 Apologies for absence

Robert Barber, David Tindale, Charlie Rowton-Lee, Neil Boddington

127/12 Chairman's Remarks

Ian Hill thanked everyone who helped out with the car park survey. He will be analysing the information shortly.

128/12 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.

Roger Beattie declared an interest in Watlington Youth Club as he is the Vice-Chairman. He signed the 'Declaration of Interest' book and left the room for this item.

Rhian Woods declared an interest in the 33 High Street issue as she is likely to be appointed as agent to act for a potential purchaser. She signed the 'Declaration of Interest' book and left the room for this item.

129/12 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting on the 9th October 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.

130/12 Matters arising from the Minutes

116/12 –The Paper Shop - Ian Hill stated that he has not yet written this letter but will do ASAP.

131/12 Public Questions

There were no public questions notified.

132/12 District Councillors Report

Angie Paterson gave the following report:

Core Strategy - The District Council's core strategy has now been approved by the Planning Inspector (at last!). It will go to Cabinet this week and Council in December. If adopted will become a key planning document from that day. It will replace the Local Plan which is now out of date. The new Core Strategy has also been approved as in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework. So will have an agreed vision and strategy to take us through to 2027. On a personal note, I am delighted that we have got to this stage given that steering it through has been my remit in my Cabinet Portfolio. There is still much to do in planning policy, not least and probably most urgent, is the allocation of the housing numbers amongst the larger villages.

Recycling – The Vale of the White Horse and SODC are first and second respectively in this. A piece of good news to end – this year Vale of White Horse came top of the national recycling league with South Oxfordshire second. So between us we are keeping at the top year on year. Well done and thank you to all those who keep up the recycling. The benefit is in the recycling credits that we get which in turn help keep costs down.

Boundary Commission – The consultation on District Wards has come out today. Cuxham and Lewknor have been taken out of the Watlington Ward. If the proposed changes are accepted the Watlington Ward will consist of the following parishes: Watlington, Pishill with Stonor, Britwell Salome, Swyncombe, Stoke Talmage and Pyrton. Any changes will not come into force until 2015.

Benefit System – Changes have been made and there are some concerns about these. A briefing will be coming out. If any residents have any concerns regarding this issue it will need to be picked up quickly and sorted out, in confidence, if necessary. Any concerned resident to be passed to AP.

Angie Paterson then asked if there were any questions.

TW: Is SODC still the lead Council in relation to Air Quality issues?

AP: Yes, this issue comes under Environmental Health. They are still moving forward with the Air Quality issue in Watlington.

RBr: There seems to be confusion since the merger of some services with the Vale of White Horse as to where Departments and Officers are based. He has been notified of this by a number of residents who phone SODC and then are told to phone the Vale. Is there not any way that calls can be transferred?

AP: There is a rationalisation process going on regarding this and hopefully this is a problem which will be resolved as it is very annoying.

TW: Regarding the Neighbourhood Plan what proportion of money given to SODC from Central Government will be passed out to parish councils?

AP: SODC are looking into this issue at present and seeing how it should be divided up. Some small parishes with no allocation of housing will find it much cheaper to do a Neighbourhood plan than other larger parishes. Watlington will be 5th or 6th on list if the NP is submitted very soon. SODC will directly fund Publication, Designation, Inspection and the Referendum. Apart from holding onto the money for these costs, the rest of the money given by Central Government will be given out fairly and not just on a first come, first served basis to towns and parishes.

AP stated that she hopes things on this issue will be made very clear at the Town and Parish Forum meeting next week at which the NP is a major item.

TH: There is to be a meeting of large villages in January and would it be helpful for this Council to send some notes in advance to SODC?

AP: Please send them in ASAP as it always more helpful to have questions etc in advance of any meeting.

IH There seems to be some problems with some bus passes not working in all the machines on the buses and the drivers are saying that the problem is with the cards and not the machines.

AP: OCC are responsible for bus passes and should contact them regarding any problems.

Ian Hill thanked Angie Paterson for attending the meeting.

133/12 County Councillors Report

Caroline Newton had sent her apologies but did say she did not have anything to report this month.

134/12 Thames Valley Police Report

PC Ian Kent had sent his apologies. It was noted that he attended a meeting of the Operations Committee in October to discuss various issues.

135/12 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

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

136/12 Committees:

A: FINANCE - Tim Horton

There has been no meeting.

TH stated that the Finance Meeting scheduled for 20th November will be cancelled and a new date for the meeting will be sent out after information for setting the precept has been received from SODC.

B: PLANNING – 6/11/2012 – Rhian Woods

Resolved: That these minutes be accepted by Council.

Co-option onto Planning Committee

Resolved: That we co-opt Di Tolan and Alex Woodeson onto the Planning Committee

**P12/S2526/FUL (Retrospective) Newlands, Platts Lane Northend (in the parish of Watlington)
Retain the use of land for the stationing of a residential caravan/mobile home.**

The Committee objected unanimously to this application on the grounds of it being contrary to SODC Policy and that there are no special circumstances that were provided by the applicant to warrant granting planning permission.

It was noted that the previous permission was granted personally to the previous owners and one of the mobile homes has been removed off the site.

C: STRATEGY – 16/10/2012 and 7/11/2012 - Harvey Batten

Resolved: That these minutes be accepted by Council.

Icknield Community College – There will be a meeting set up with the ICC and Ian Hill, Rhian Woods and Harvey Batten to discuss ways of working more closely together.

Outreach within the Parish

Resolved: That we invite all parish residents that live outside the town (approx 15%) to an open meeting at a suitable venue to raise issues and ask questions of councillors. It is hoped a reasonable number of councillors would attend and this to be arranged for April/May. This could then be advertised in the Council Tax Information Leaflet

Thames Valley Police Area Beat Officer reduction

Resolved: That we write to the Chief Inspector expressing our concerns that our police presence is decreasing due to the reduction in police officers.

HB to draft this letter.

Watlington Youth Club

Recommendation to Council: That a letter be sent on the grant issue only to the Youth Club Management Committee. The letter to be based on the discussion in Strategy on this issue. The Pavilion Committee to be sent a copy of this letter for comments prior to it being sent to the Youth Club.

TH and HB to draft this letter.

HB stated that the Youth Club will need the Council's financial support to continue and there is a need to establish some kind of understanding with them. The Parish does not normally give grants towards running costs, grants are usually given for specific projects which is not the case in this instance. Ground rules need to be established prior to any grant money being given. The Strategy Committee need to agree the rules first and then need to discuss with the YC Management Committee.

It was noted that the Grant issue and the Extension issue need to be treated separately.

TW said that the extension will only be viable if the Youth Club is doing well and that we need to see the long term viability of the YC. He also stated that Parish Councils can enter into agreements longer than the term of the Council.

TH said that we need to make the distinction between Running Costs and Capital Project costs and at the moment we have no money in our draft budget to help with any projects such as the extension to the Pavilion. Any requests for this would probably not be proposed until the next financial year.

33 High Street – After discussion it was:

Resolved: That Council continue with the working group of the following members; Ian Hill, David Tindale, Tim Horton, Charles Rowton-Lee, Nick Greaves, Tony Williamson and Ted Backhouse who will consider the legal and financial issues that would arise from the disposal of 33 High Street that is part of the Charlotte Cox Trust.

The Committee should seek an urgent meeting with appropriate County Council Officers and Members and report back on positions first to the Strategy Committee. No more than three members of the working group should attend to represent the Council.

The Council shall keep Cllr. Newton as local County Council Member appraised of its action and position on the matter of disposal

Copas Farm – (Letter No 259) - re Willow Pond – agreeing to our request for a meeting on this issue.

TW reported that he had contacted them regarding wheelchair access to the willow ponds. He said you can get a wheelchair to them from the Howe Road but he hoped that access could also be from the Britwell Road. He stated that Mr Copas is looking forward to meeting members of the Parish Council.

Storage Issue for the Town - TW said that he was surprised that following our letter to all organisations in the town, that St Leonards Church has responded by saying they have no storage needs. He said that there are pews that could be stored elsewhere rather than taking up valuable space in the Church. It was noted that someone will need to speak to them regarding this before this issue is discussed.

It was noted that the Storage Issue, with the responses received from organisations will be an agenda item at the next Strategy Committee meeting.

Christmas Reception – This will take place on Friday 7th November at 7pm in the Pavilion.

D. OPERATIONS – 26/9/2012- Barry Adby

Resolved: That these minutes be accepted by Council.

BA stated that it was very useful to have PC Ian Kent attend the meeting and have discussions of various issues.

TOE Energy Audit

Resolved: That we apply for an Energy Audit in January 2013 for our public buildings.

Ash Tree by the Pavilion – RB asked that this be further discussed at the next Operations meeting in the light of the Ash Tree disease epidemic.

E. ALLOTMENTS – There has been no meeting.

It was noted that volunteers have cut 50 yards of the hedge between the Allotments and the Recreation Ground.

F. PAVILION AND SPORTS FIELD – There has been no meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 19th November.

G. AFFORDABLE HOUSING – There has been no meeting.

H. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP

NH reported that SODC have now said that we cannot submit a NP until the neighbouring parishes agree to be included. We have to await their comments on our plan before we can submit it. It is hoped that we are in a position to do this by end of this year or early next year. If the parishes do not agree to be included we will need to reduce the area.

TH said that at the SODC meeting of the large villages in January he expects that progress on the 1054 housing allocation will be given out. He said that he hopes that issues such as air quality, green belt, conservation areas, sewerage will be considered prior to allocation of housing numbers to villages.

Resolved: That we need to have a meeting of this committee in December.

The Clerk will circulate a date for this meeting.

137/12 Triathlon 2013– Three routes have been suggested by the organisers, It was noted that Comments need to be sent to OCC by December 22nd 2012

It was noted that one route (2) comes to Ingham Lane and then turns back. It was noted that all 3 routes have an impact on Watlington but Route 2 is the one which would affect Watlington the most. BA said that we did have a promise that our Parish would not be on the triathlon route for the next 3 years but this seems to now not be the case.

Resolved: That we send a letter to OCC noting the comments above and objecting to all 3 routes.

IH to draft this and BA and Rbr to consider it before it is sent.

138/12 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 276 - S Rawston – Gardening Club – Bulb planting on verges into Watlington – It was agreed that this is a good idea and the Clerk to send a letter stating this.

139/12 Representation on other bodies – To note reports that have been received
There were no reports received.

140/12 Other Matters for Discussion at the discretion of Chair

To note any other matters raised by Members of the Council

Display Cabinet for Trophies/Awards – TH said that he has purchased a cabinet which could either be put in the Town Hall or the Community Office for these items.

To be an Operations Agenda item

Community Broadband – This item had been notified to the Clerk and Members prior to the meeting. RW said that this is a new exciting project and that she is a member of the Community Broadband Group. RW explained what things are happening on this issue

[*The paper submitted to Council is attached to the end of these minutes*].

Following discussion it was:

Resolved: That WPC offer support in principle of this and they are happy to make the facilities of the Parish Office available to support the work of this group for the next two years.

Car Park at the Recreation Ground – BA reported that this car park will be closed on 20th and 21st November as it has been hired out for the parking of cars who are filming in Shirburn.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.42PM

The Watlington Community Ultrafast Broadband Project

□ The Watlington Community Broadband Project has been established by Anna Badcock and Caroline Newton who have been working on this for some time.

□ Currently internet speeds in the Watlington area range from 15mbps in the centre of the town to less than 1mbps on the outskirts of the town and in the surrounding villages and hamlets.

□ Ultrafast broadband delivers speeds of 1000mbps.

□ If provided locally, ultrafast broadband will enable local businesses to perform at the same level as city centre competitors. For many businesses, particularly the small high tech or creative firms that are located in our area, fast broadband is essential. If their connectivity doesn't improve, more businesses will move from our area to the larger towns.

□ It would also bring significant benefits to local resident's lives, offering better access to many internet services such as iplayer, online gaming, or film clubs such as LoveFilm.

□ OCC is currently running a project with Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), but the areas of Oxfordshire that would be covered have yet to be confirmed. In addition, the technology proposed in the BDUK project would include optical fibre cables to BT cabinets, but no further. Copper cables would cover the distance between BT cabinet and homes; but in copper cables, useful distance is restricted to about 500m; anyone connected more than 500 m away from a BT cabinet would not benefit from this project. For the properties covered, the top speed would be iro 20mbps. Thus, even if fully implemented, this project would *only* cover the central areas of Watlington, and NOT the outskirts of the town, or the surrounding villages, and could not provide the ultrafast solution our community needs..

□ By working with alternative broadband suppliers, *comprehensive* ultrafast broadband coverage in our rural areas CAN be achieved. This involves working with a supplier which will install optical cables up to every property boundary for a direct optical cable connection. With all cabling in optical and not copper, the maximum distance from a BT cabinet becomes greatly increased and will include almost all properties in the wider parish area. This can be achieved by working directly with an alternative broadband supplier, but which would “piggy-back” any infrastructure implemented under BDUK to keep costs down, and the project could be further helped with additional funding unlocked from SODC by community groups. This will be the best way to cover our *whole* rural area.

□ To this end, Anna and Caroline have recently formed the “Watlington Community Broadband Group” comprising local residents, and of which I am a member, in order to move the process to the next phase which is a community consultation, with an eventual aim of making ultrafast broadband available to anyone in the area.

□ By this method, if successful, ultrafast broadband can be supplied to Watlington, its surrounding villages, and including even the most remote houses and farms in our area.

□ The Watlington Community Broadband Group is currently in talks with an ultrafast broadband supplier which can achieve this aim.

□ The Watlington project could act as a blueprint for other communities within South Oxfordshire.

□ For further information on the Watlington Community Broadband Project contact Anna Badcock at annabadcock1@gmail.com or on 01491 614707.

