



Minutes of the Meeting of the Strategy Committee Held in the Community Office At 8pm on Tuesday 24th January 2017

Present:

Councillors:

Matt Reid – Chairman
Ian Hill
Tom Bindoff
Tony Williamson
Stephanie Van de Pette (later)

Officer: Kristina Tynan

01/17 Apologies for absence

Roger Beattie, Terry Jackson.

02/17 Chairman's Remarks

MR said that there are a lot of issues to deal with at this meeting. A number of items have been asked to be deferred; Agenda Item 10, Car Park Issue and Chalgrove Solar Park and Agenda Item 7:4 WPC strategic plan.

03/17 Minutes of the Strategy Meeting held on 25th October 2016 which were received by Council on the 14th November 2016, 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.

04/17 Declaration of Interests

There were none notified.

05/17 Matters Arising

Smart Meters – KT reported that she had asked SSE to install these in our properties however they have a schedule of areas that they are doing and we could only get them installed earlier if we paid for them. They will be installed during this year and they will advise us when they are coming to this area.

Fire Safety Consultation – MR said that he has not yet responded to this consultation but will follow up on this.

06/17 Update on on-going issues

1. **33 High Street** – Tony Williamson said that there has been some movement with this issue and he has discussed it with Rachel Huckvale and Ian Hill. He asked that the committee agree to the following Recommendation:

"Strategy Committee RECOMMEND Council to agree to the principle of the Custodian Trusteeship being transferred from the County Council to the Parish Council, subject to a future Report to the Parish Council from Ian Hill, Rachel Huckvale and Tony Williamson, indicating that all the necessary information has been received from the County Council and that a satisfactory report has then been received from WPC solicitor"

After discussion:

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That Council agree to the principle of the Custodian Trusteeship being

transferred from the County Council to the Parish Council, subject to a future Report to the Parish Council from Ian Hill, Rachel Huckvale and Tony Williamson, indicating that all the necessary information has been received from the County Council and that a satisfactory report has then been received from WPC solicitor.

The following points were agreed:

- that Ian Hill, Rachel Huckvale and Tony Williamson, should investigate the transfer of the Custodian Trusteeship from OCC to WPC
- That we think there is a strong case that the Charlotte Coxe Trust should be managed in Watlington rather than in the County Council.
- That we do not think that the Recommendation above involves any financial commitment by WPC, apart from the legal cost of transfer.
- That OCC's proposed lease back of the Library has been examined by WPC solicitor, who has suggested one amendment, which has been accepted by OCC.
- that OCC will draw up a freehold transfer document for WPC solicitor to check
- that OCC and WPC will need to make a joint application to the Charity Commission for a new Scheme to transfer the Custodian Trusteeship
- that OCC have stated that the Charlotte Coxe account, to be transferred on completion to WPC, now stands at £77,883.73

There will be a meeting of the Charlotte Cox Shadow Body this Friday. It will be important that the Shadow Body do as much as possible on getting quotes for remediation work and clarification of the options for the future of 33 before the transfer is made. The Library is part of this Transfer. The amendment suggested by our solicitor was that we needed to ensure that if the Library ceased to be a library then OCC could only use library building for local use. OCC have agreed to add a clause to the draft agreement that would ensure this is the case.

2. Children's Centre- SvP had attended a Children's Centre meeting prior to this meeting. She reported that they now have a signed Constitution; a bank account is being set up; discussions are being held with current staff; still awaiting a decision from OCC with regards to funding; Chalgrove School will be responsible for the building and the insurance.

The current services will be finishing a month earlier than OCC had said and the new service will start up after a break of one or two weeks.

07/17 Discussion Items

Main Discussion Items

1. Buses and New Bus Stops -email from David Bellchamber – OCC was attached to the agenda. IH said that the T1 service which changed in July 2016 now uses the Bus Stop at Shirburn Street and not the one at the High Street. Some buses do go down the High Street due to misinformation that children from ICC use them to go to Chalgrove, which they do not. A number of residents especially those from Old School Place have said they do not like walking to the stops at Shirburn Street and waiting there on the narrow pavement and busy road, and have asked for a bus stop which is closer. New bus stops at Brook Street have been looked at by OCC who agreed that this would be possible. However residents at Brook Street are against this idea for a number of reasons and if OCC were to go ahead and propose these there would need to be a Consultation. A suggestion was raised of having it further down Shirburn Street where the pavement is not so narrow but it was thought that the bus users would not want to walk any further. Bus stops have to be situated where there are no yellow lines. KT suggested using the existing one at Gorwell with the buses being able to turn around at the Fire Station which would address both the concerns of users and the residents of Brook Street. IH will raise this with OCC and the T1 operator.

It was noted that people parking illegally on the High Street are causing problems with some buses as the road is then not wide enough for the buses to go past. This caused a wait of 20 minutes to the bus which then resulted to a 40 minute delay on the return journey. Our PCSO has said that we can phone the 101 number if this happens. A poster in the Co-op highlighting this problem was discussed and it was agreed that we put up a poster when we have a good photograph highlighting this problem with a strap line of Is This You? which may bring this issue to the attention of people parking illegally and blocking the High Street.

2. Review of WPC Procedures and Policies

This procedures and policies were discussed and the following was agreed.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That Council accept the five following Policies and Procedures for 2016/2017.

1. Standing Orders
2. Grievance Procedure
3. Disciplinary Procedure
4. Social Media Policy until Council accepts the Communication Policy which would then include Social Media Policies.
5. Safeguarding and Children's Protection Policy

Risk Assessment – IH will circulate this prior to the Full Council February meeting for discussion and approval.

Complaints Procedure – It was agreed that this needs to be tightened up and then well be reviewed. IH/MR to do this.

Planning Procedure/Protocol - It was noted that the Planning Committee are discussing a Planning Procedure/Protocol Paper for the Planning Committee. It was agreed that this is an important policy to have.

Data Protection Policy- It was agreed that an audit needs to be done. IH and SvP will look into this to see that we are complying with the law.

3. Communications Policy – The draft policy for discussion was attached to the agenda. After discussion the committee agreed the following:

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That we adopt the Communications Policy for 2016/2017.

4. WPC Strategic Plan - Draft Paper from SvP was attached to the agenda.
Deferred to the next meeting.

08/17 Short Discussion items

1. OCC asking for the WPC position about re-instating Give Way lines outside the Co-op following the last lorry strike on the Bella Luca window.

(NB Dotted white lines were put in near Kingfisher Fish and Chip shop in Feb 2011 to reinforce the priority system and OCC asked for them to be removed in June 2011)

It was noted that it was not a WPC request to remove the lines -this was an OCC decision. It was noted that the lines led to a lot of confusion as some drivers thought it meant that they had to go down the High Street rather than along Couching Street. KT suggested that having the words Give Way would be useful rather than just a white line. It was agreed to ask OCC to attend a site meeting to discuss this issue.

2. Co-option Process – SvP has sent all Councillors a list of possible questions to be asked.

The co-option process used by WPC over the past few years has led to some very embarrassing and discouraging occasions. KT has spoken to other parish clerks, and on the basis of their approach we would like to propose replacing the current approach with the following.

- 1 The Clerk obtains approval to co-opt from SODC as usual
- 2 The vacancy is advertised for a period of 4 weeks
- 3 Any elector who would like to be considered should write to the Clerk giving their experience, why they would like to be a councillor and any interests they think will contribute to their role as Councillor
- 4 An interview date is allocated no later than 2 weeks after applications close, and all councillors are invited to attend the interviews
- 5 Each candidate will be interviewed in turn with no other candidates present

- 6 Following the final interview all councillors who attended the interviews will have an extraordinary meeting and agree by show of hands their preference. If there are more than two candidates, a series of votes will be held, eliminating the candidate with fewest votes on each occasion, until a single candidate has more than 50% of the votes cast.
- 7 The elected councillor will then be invited to next Full Council meeting as a Councillor.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That the process for co-option of a new councillor as described above be adopted with immediate effect.

3. **Youth Club** – *Deferred to the next meeting*

4. **Welcome Pack for new residents in Watlington** – *Deferred to the next meeting*

5. **Adoption of BT Red Telephone Box** – Do we wish to adopt the one at the bottom of Howe Road. After discussion the following was agreed:

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That Watlington Parish Council do not adopt this telephone box.

6. **Robin Wilson's Resignation – Response to questions from Tim Horton and letter from Peter Richardson** (attached)

This issue was discussed and it was agreed that this was an unfortunate event and that we need to ensure that this does not happen in the future. Our complaints procedure is being reviewed and the Planning Committee are putting into place a Protocol/Procedure. It was noted that this event took place outside of a meeting and Councillors should refrain from having heated discussions after the meeting on an issue that was on an Agenda. Councillors should at all times abide by the Code of Conduct.

KT and IH had drafted responses to both letters which were discussed and it was:

Resolved: To send the responses below to Tim Horton and Peter Richardson.

Text for response to Tim Horton's letter - to be signed by the Clerk

Tim Horton's Questions – Draft Response

'1. In the light of resignation of Councillor Robin Wilson in a letter dated 4th December, would council deplore at all times any language or behaviour expressed towards or between parish councillors that might be described as 'haranguing'?

Watlington Parish Council would of course deplore any behaviour that is against the Code of Conduct that all Councillors are signed up to.

2. Will the Council collectively express its deepest concern on learning of matters as expressed by Councillor Wilson and invite him to withdraw his resignation whilst, at the same time, instigate some inquiry into the further background of the Planning Committee meeting this month and later events?

Robin Wilson was asked if he wished to withdraw his resignation and he stated that he did not under any circumstances. He also requested that no further action be taken. We therefore do not propose to investigate this issue. However we are in the process of drafting a protocol for planning meetings.

3. Will the Council make immediate reference of events on 4 December to the Monitoring Officer of the District Council so that she may report upon, and take appropriate action?

As Robin Wilson has refused to name the Councillors involved it is not possible to report this to the Monitoring Officer and indeed would be up to Robin Wilson to report.

4. Will the Council recognise that its membership might benefit from sessions of training and awareness on good practice in relation to a) the practice of chairmanship b) the observance of 'interest' and, c) the role of officers (fulltime and others) regarding meetings and work between meetings?

All Councillors were invited to a bespoke training course after the Election in 2015 and most Councillors did attend. Watlington Parish Council encourage all Councillors to attend training course but of course this is voluntary and not compulsory. Two Councillors this year are to attend the Social Media Course and the Finance Course. The Clerk had circulated advice on Declaration of Interest paper from OALC. Regarding your point c) Not sure what is meant here.'

Text for response to Peter Richardson's letter - to be signed by Ian Hill

'Thank you for your letter dated 14th December 2016 which was discussed last night at our Strategy Committee.

I am a bit confused about what you want. Robin mentioned your name and application in his resignation letter with no comment, positive or negative, on the merits of your application and with no criticism of your behaviour at the meeting or after the meeting. On the contrary, his criticism was directed at the Parish Council and in particular at the Planning Committee and some unnamed members of that committee.

Strategy's concern should be whether there is any need to review our procedures and whether there is any need to provide or reinforce guidance on our Code of Conduct.

Robin has not made it clear what his concerns are about the way your application was handled. I have no idea what Robin meant by "the role of the WPC to be objective and regarding that application, I don't believe that was the case" and I do not think there is much to be gained by stirring up the WPC response to your application again to investigate this, especially as WPC did not object and SODC decided against it. I cannot see how opinions of former councillors concerning a planning application that has been agreed by WPC can have any effect on the huge amount of voluntary work you are doing on the Neighbourhood Plan. They are different subjects and different people for the most part so I cannot see the connection. My only concern would be if Councillors took your voluntary work into consideration in assessing your planning application. That was clearly not the case, as those where the overlap of interests is most likely all abstained from voting on your application. That is as it should be if they felt there was a perceived conflict of interest'.

Due to Standing Order 3(w) and with the time being nearly 10pm it was:

Resolved: That the meeting be allowed to continue until 10.10pm at the latest.

7. Air Quality – Update -Response from Claire Spendley 15/12/2016 - *'We would be happy to meet with you in the New Year once us and the transport authority have had chance to review the report you have sent. I will be in contact in the New Year to arrange a meeting for February. Unfortunately as mentioned previously Ricardo-AEA have finished their work with us on this project and after having given us a lot of extra time for free initially, any further time will be costed. We have no funds to provide this, if WPC wish to pay for this we were previously given a quote for £350 for half a days' time should the consultant be in the area at the time, or more if travel costs would have to be covered'*

This response was noted.

8. Sports Club; insurances, running costs and long term strategy – MR said that the Sports Club are holding an AGM on Sunday 5th February 2017 and new officers will be elected.

09/17 Consultations

[Extending the remit of the Local government Ombudsman to larger parish and town councils](#) –

IH will send a note out on this

10/17 Discussion Items requested from Councillors/Referred from Committees

Referred from the Operation Committee – November 2016

Car Park – Possible Change in the number of 2 hours parking bays/Enforcement – *Deferred to next meeting.*

Tom Bindoff

Watlington Car Park

1. WPC should write to SODC to establish once and for all whether/if we transfer the ownership of the car park to an appropriate Charity Body, we can gain exemption of business rates and if so what conditions would apply.

2. In the anticipation of an agreement from SODC, Full Council should consider whether an existing Watlington charity would be suitable to use for the car park or whether a new one needs to be set up (possibly to hold all WPC property holdings not already included in a charity).

There was no discussion on the above items but it was:

Resolved: To set up a working group to look into the above car park issues and explore all options. TB will lead on this.

Chalgrove Solar Park

As you will know, Debbie Davies has drawn our attention to the purchase of the Chalgrove Solar Park by a major investment company. Therefore I think that Ian should update the Full Council, most of whose members were elected after the installation of the Solar Park, to the background of the offer of compensation to Watlington to mitigate the effects of the disruption that is still unpaid. The Council should decide whether to pursue the claim for compensation with the new owners in the hope of getting an ex gratia payment.

This issue was deferred to the next meeting.

Stephanie Van de Pette

Link with Icknield Community College School Council – It was agreed that MR and FP look into formalising a relationship with Governing Body, Headteacher and the School Council and report back to the next meeting.

11/17 Consultations

1. **SODC Consultation ‘Draft Statement of Community Involvement’** – Deadline 22/2/2017. Link to consultation www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/our-development-plan/community-involvement

Resolved: That Tony Williamson draft a response to this consultation which will then be sent to Planning Committee to approve the response.

12/17 Correspondence

1. Number of letters from residents on the Brook Street proposed new bus stops proposal. - **Discussed above.**
2. OCC – Unitary Councils – information on their website www.oneoxfordshire.org – **Noted.**
3. Richard Drew – letter re the HCA Meeting on the 13th December 2016 quoting HCA Minutes – IH to report. **IH stated that the minutes were inaccurate and they are being amended. A letter on this will be sent To Richard Drew.**

13/17 Items for Future Meetings

Review of Committee Structures – March 2017

Items in the above minutes which have been referred to the next meeting.

14/17 Any Other Business to note – Items to be notified to the Clerk in advance of the meeting.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 10.15 PM

