

Minutes of the Meeting of the Strategy Committee Held in the Community Office at 8pm on Tuesday 28th June 2011

Present:

Councillors:

David Tindale
Tony Williamson
Robert Barber
Ted Backhouse
Barry Adby
Nick Greaves
Nick Hancock
Roger Beattie
Rhian Woods
Tim Horton

Officer:

Kristina Tynan

Members of the Public:

1

It was agreed that David Tindale presided over the meeting until Election of Chairman.

53/11 Apologies for absence

Ian Hill, Charles Rowton-Lee, Di Tolan, Harvey Batten.

54/11 Election of Chairman

Tony Williamson proposed David Tindale and this was seconded by Roger Beattie. There were no other nominations.

Resolved: That David Tindale be elected as Chairman.

55/11 Election of Vice-Chairman

Resolved: That this item be deferred to the July Strategy meeting.

56/11 Chairman's Remarks

David Tindale stated that it was good to see everyone. He mentioned that when Councillors are giving written papers it can be easier to assimilate if bullet points are used.

57/11 Minutes of the Strategy Meeting held on 24th May 2011 received by Council 14/6/2011 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.

58/11 Declaration of Interests

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.

There were none.

59/11 Matters Arising

Election Review (Minute 49/11 refers)

Robert Barber reported that he met with Tim Revell, the Election Reviewer with 3 other Councils, Henley, Thame and Didcot. The paper that we gave to him had 25 items for his consideration. The other Towns had similar problems to the ones experienced in Watlington and they added more information on timings etc. Mr Revell was grilled by all 4 Councils on himself, his role and his position with the review. He explained that SOCA, which is a national body, submitted 5 CV's of possible reviewers to David Buckle who then chose one to carry out the review. He stated that he had never met anyone previously from SODC. Mr Revell is qualified Returning Officer who has previously worked in Hackney and Salisbury and was very knowledgeable and he raised quite a few issues in the meeting. He has a copy of our paper. He will be seeing all people who worked on the Election. He will be making Recommendations to both the Scrutiny Committee of SODC and the Vale of the White Horse.

Robert Barber was thanked for attending this meeting as the Parish's representative.

Mr Horton stated that he has sent in a letter to Mr Revell in an individual capacity and that he is concerned over a number of issues:-

1. Terms of Reference
2. That one joint Scrutiny Committee of SODC and the Vale of the White Horse will be looking at the Recommendations which could be procedurally suspect as he was appointed separately.
3. That he is receiving information from a limited body of people, he should be engaging with a wider audience.

Robert Barber said that he will be investigating Royal Mail, the Printers etc to see where failures can be identified. There are very many people who were very upset over the whole election process.

60/11 Short Discussion Items

1. Traffic Issues

a. Shirburn Road/Love Lane

The Parish Council were going to consult with residents on the points below after seeking views from OCC:

1. *To remove all parking outside 20-26 Shirburn Street (opposite the Fox and Hounds)*
2. *To shorten the parking bay outside 46 Shirburn Street by one car parking space on the Shirburn side. (These measures will remove the chicane and mean that there is only 1 switch in the side of the road used for parking)*
3. *Extend the double yellow lines down Love Lane by 15metres.*

OCC have stated that due to the current budget restrictions (2011 – 2012 financial year) they are only able to order emergency works, therefore on this basis OCC would be unable to progress requests for changes in waiting restrictions that do not represent a significant safety hazard.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That we put on hold this consultation, until a time that OCC may have funding in place if the decision is to make these changes is agreed and that a note on this is put in the Watlington Times.

White line by Town Hall – It was noted that OCC have put in an order for this marking to be removed (blacked out).

b. Cuxham Road

During the last few year it was noted that letters have been sent to some residents asking them to cut hedges in this area to aid visibility. It was noted that this issue was brought up at the meeting with OCC Area Steward, Keith Stenning and he was asked for more signage and a mirror in this location to aid visibility.

It was noted that OCC have sent a letter to be sent to the occupier of 'Bulrushes' asking

for the vegetation to be cut back to the highway boundary, which should improve the vision for pedestrians exiting the footway. A price will also be given for the 'pedestrians crossing'. OCC do not consider that a mirror in this location will meet the criteria needed. It was agreed that this information be put in the Watlington Times.

c. 20mph limits in the Town

A request has been received from Caroline Lye that the Council look again at his issue, further to the article in the Telegraph by their Transport Editor, David Millward, stating that the Department of Transport is going to remove the red tape around installing speed limit signs. At the moment if a council wants to put up a 20mph sign or paint the limit on the road it must gain government approval, while none is required for speed humps. Under changes announced by Norman Baker, the transport minister, councils will no longer need Whitehall approval every time they want to install signs, either by the side of the road or on the carriageway. Motoring organizations have welcomed this initiative and many hope it will be the end of speed humps. Of further interest is the fact that, apparently, speed humps cost around £450 each, whereas a signpost costs only £175 and a limit on the road £45.

This issue was discussed by the Committee and it was noted that no matter how cheap measures are to introduce we still need a mechanism for doing an assessment on whether these things are justifiable.

d. Large Lorries in the Town

A request from a resident has asked us to get cameras set up on the corner by the chip shop and estate agents to video the lorries and get the registration numbers. He has also asked specifically about the Rowse lorries.

The issue was discussed and it was stated that the Parish Council takes the issue of weight limit violations very seriously, and receives valuable support from Thames Valley Police (TVP) and Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards (OCCTS) on this matter. At various times, each organisation has operated roadside checkpoints on roads surrounding the town. As this monitoring cannot cover all locations or times, forms are available in the Parish Office for concerned residents to note vehicle details, time, date and location for onward transmission to OCCTS to investigate possible breaches of the weight limit. Via this route, OCCTS has secured a number of prosecutions on details submitted, and have issued warning notices to firms where it was felt that this was a more effective measure for a first infringement.

Regarding the specific issue of Rowse Honey it was noted that although based in Wallingford, their distribution is handled by H & H Distribution Services Ltd. who are based on Watlington Industrial Estate. Lorries can therefore legitimately travel to and from their premises through the town.

It was noted that Trading Standards have not recently done any checks in Watlington and it was agreed that we ask, through PC Ian Kent that they do one soon. The idea of cameras was discussed and Rhian Woods stated that when she was involved with this issue with Ian Kent this idea was considered and the system required a number of cameras which are triggered only when tall vehicles go past them. It was noted that there are systems which could identify lorries going through the town.

Tim Horton stated that he has spoken to the Police about people being sited in specific areas who would then take down registration numbers of lorries, time etc and they would find this an acceptable idea, which would need to be co-ordinated with the Police and Trading Standards.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That the Clerk speak to the Police and Trading Standards regarding the issue of the community doing lorry checks and if they are happy with it that we organise them. this be organised by the Operations Committee.

A letter to the resident to be sent keeping them informed of our progress.

2. Red Kites – Feeding

The Parish Council have received a number of emails relating to this issue and it was noted that the Council believes that the introduction of kites into the Chilterns over the last thirty years has added to the identity of the Chilterns and extended attraction. However it was noted that following reports from local residents regarding swooping and scratching by the kites that Tim Horton had received information from the RSPB and Chilterns Conservation Board and had the proposed a 3 point motion on this. After much discussion it was:

RESOLVED:

1. That Council put out publicity on Not Feeding The Kites by putting posters around the Town on this and that a piece be put in the Watlington Times (to ask Nigel Snell to do this)
2. That Tim Horton and Robert Barber explore the idea of monitoring of the natural dispersal of birds from the Watlington area following the strong cautions now offered and assurances that the Society will maintain and monitor reports where the actual or near harm to individuals take place

3. Support for Library

The Friends of Watlington Library have asked for the Parish Council's support in organising a public meeting to which OCC Councillors should be invited to explain their proposals for the library service.

RESOLVED: That the Council agrees to calling a public meeting jointly with FOWL to which appropriate County Councillors will be invited and given the opportunity to explain their proposals for the library service in general and for Watlington Library in particular. Ian Hill will attend as the Watlington Parish Council representative.

4. 101/106 Buses – update on Bus Meeting 22/6/2011- Tim Horton

The good news from the meeting is that the company will alter the route of the 106 on most non-peak shopping journeys. The effect of this would be (for Watlington) that services from 9.45 until 14.45 (6 buses) will take the Cowley Road through Littlemore and find the Temple Cowley and John Allen Centres before taking a left turn towards the Iffley Road at Iffley Turn. In reverse, buses leaving St Aldates from 9.50 to 14.50 (6 buses) will access Cowley Centre before taking back to the new 106 route at Littlemore. The effect of this will be to reintroduce shopping at these vibrant centres for much of the day - ending - a little early perhaps - at around 3.00. All other 106 buses will remain on the Iffley Road. John made it clear that the reason for this is an obligation towards the Science Park peak time customers . One consequence will be that any actual or potential employee at these centres would not be helped further - but see note on 101 below.

The Company also responded positively to the request from Garsington especially to move the 6.42 a.m. to a very slightly earlier time in order to allow better integration with key 8.00 start jobs in Oxford and the Oxford railway station. This is a subsidised service (via OCC) and others on the route (much lower users) felt this to be entirely acceptable.

Slightly more in the balance for the moment is the Company's preparedness to alter the 7.40 (weekdays) to an earlier time. Garsington is an especially large user of this bus (in fact it doubles up to serve the numbers involved). The parishes agreed to do some 'on the bus' research next Tuesday to test all this with present customers and will report on the findings at Strategy Committee.

Garsington is of course outside the ring for the 106 off peak. But they are willing to look into the idea that the 101 might go to central Oxford via Between Towns Road and Church Cowley Road - employing a similar principle to the 106 (ie the Iffley Road saves time - in usual circumstances - as compared to the Cowley Road). However the problem is the impending works on the Iffley Road .Two other matters were reviewed – Friday and Saturday night buses and Sundays. On the idea of Sunday buses they are positively looking at the idea of a programme of Sunday services. On evening services there was less progress. It is hoped the parishes will write in with one voice on this. Individual letters to Cllr Rose would also help and our County Councillor, Roger Belson will be asked to

help on this matter.

There was a strong view that a further meeting to gain some reporting feedback and now take on the issues of publicity and promotion. The next meeting is scheduled for 27/7/2011 at 4pm

The implementation of much of this – including of course the 106 off peak changes -is likely to be 5 September 2011.

Further good news- The access to the motorway for Stagecoach services seems to have been secured. From August there will be an Abingdon based company running the OCC-owned bus on a commercial basis using the same assumptions the current CIC service uses.

Tim Horton was thanked for his update and for attending the meeting.

Resolved: That Ian Hill and Tim Horton pursue all the above ideas on the issues of buses.

5. Olympic Torch and Diamond Jubilee 2012

Tim Horton had prepared a paper on this prior to the meeting on both issues which were discussed.

Diamond Jubilee

David Tindale reported that Lord Camoys had been in touch with Charles Rowton-Lee regarding this and he has asked Lord Camoys to contact the Clerk.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That the Council wishes to see the Town's respect and admiration for Her Majesty's reign of 60 years marked through local celebration in June 2012. The Council to arrange a meeting, open to all in the Town – but also with written invitations to key bodies to be held in the Town Hall in September 2011, under the initial chairmanship of Ian Hill. The meeting to make appropriate arrangements for the co-ordination of events of the Queen's Jubilee.

Olympic Torch

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

1. That Council writes to the 2012 organisers with a closely argued case for the Torch bearing progress to visit the historic communities of Benson, Ewelme and Watlington.
2. That Council invites other parishes and members and officers of senior councils to urge a decision for the Torch route to embrace these communities
3. That Council encourages other organisations, especially those for younger people and involving young people, to write in seeking the Olympic torch to come through our community.
4. That, in the event of a positive decision, the role of co-ordination for 10th July 2012 in Watlington should be charged to the same group that would be involved in the Jubilee celebrations. This group would be encouraged to work alongside other local parishes in order to finalise and fund a good quality programme.

6. Core Strategy – SODC's latest position on this issue was attached to the agenda David Tindale reported that this document is a point of order on regulations. The committee noted this report and would ask SODC for frequent and regular updates when necessary.

61/11 Main Topics for Discussion

1. Agreement between the Parish Council and Sports Club – draft was attached to agenda

Tony Williamson reported that this document is for discussion only not for a recommendation to Council. This has come out of the five year review of the Pavilion. This document will also be discussed by the Sports Club and Pavilion committees.

The aim of the Pavilion Committee is to produce a number of action before the football season begins such as this agreement, Business Plan etc. The document was discussed in detail and it was agreed that the draft agreement goes for discussion to the Sports Club and then to the Sports Field and Pavilion committee .

2. Car Park Financial Issues

Tony Williamson stated that the Parish Council cannot afford to pay ¼ of the costs of the car Park. It was noted that the Co-op have now paid the 2010-2011 payment and are willing to pay £5000 for this year on receipt of invoice. We are awaiting a response from the WBA who are discussing this issue with their members. It was noted that the car park is a great asset to the Co-op and it would be useful to also have an agreement for a number of years with them. It was mentioned that the amount going into the sinking fund should be increased.

Resolved: That a letter be sent to the Co-op asking for a contribution of £8,000 pa and asking for a meeting to take place.

This item to be an item for the Strategy meeting in July.

62/11 Correspondence

1. OCC Library Consultation – discussed above.
2. WBA – Website – noted
3. OCC – Bus Meeting notes 25/5/2011 – noted
4. Mrs Martin – Shirburn Street parking – The Clerk to respond to her letterl.

63/11 Items for Future Meetings

Refer to Forward Plan

July Issues

Car Park

Website issue

64/11 Any Other Business to note

33 High Street – Roger Belson had sent through a letter stating that if no use can be found for this property then the County Council will sell it.

It was noted that OCC have tried to see if it could be used by any local organisation but it has not been feasible for any of them to take it on. It was noted that there is an issue that any funds raised should be given 'to the people of Watlington' as was the building . There could be legal and financial issues . Tim Horton reported that he found out at 4pm today that the money would have to go into the 'Charlotte Coxe Trust'. This is a very important issue to Watlington.

Resolved: That this issue be an Agenda item for Full Council.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 10.07PM