



## Minutes of the Meeting of the Strategy Committee Held in the Community Office At 8pm on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016

**Present:**

**Councillors:**

Matt Reid (MR) – Chairman  
Rachel Huckvale (RH) – Vice-Chairman  
Tom Bindoff (TB)  
Ian Hill (IH)  
Roger Beattie (RB)  
Tony Williamson (TW)  
Jane Bryant (JBt)

**Officer:**

Denise Allnut

13/16 Apologies for absence

Jo Read, Robin Wilson, Terry Jackson, John Lorimer,

14/16 Chairman's Remarks

MR stated that it has been a year since the Council Election and that he would like to reflect on the previous year during this meeting.

15/16 Minutes of the Strategy Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015 were received by Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016 to be signed as a correct record

**Resolved:** That these minutes were a correct record of this meeting and that they be signed by the Chairman.

16/16 Declaration of Interests

There were none declared.

17/16 Matters Arising

There were none other than agenda items.

18/16 Update on on-going issues

1. **Subsidised Travel Review/Buses** – there was an update from Stephen Harrod attached to the agenda.

IH stated that there is a new idea which we will need to decide upon for action after the 24<sup>th</sup> May when it will be discussed by the OCC Cabinet. There are a fleet of mini-buses available in between their scheduled runs to special schools etc and OCC would like use made of them and are looking for bids to use them. The rate would be about £36 a trip (a trip to Thame and back for example). We would need to compile a proposal but would need to ensure that a number of people would definitely pay to use the service. We could contact other villages to ask if they would be prepared to join the same scheme. We need to leaflet and ask bus users for their views.

TW stated that Age Concern need buses for days out on a Thursday once a quarter. We have earmarked £1000 in our budget towards support for buses. This would need to be a Section 137 expenditure. RH said that we should agree tonight our view on this issue. IH said that at present most people who use the buses are pensioners who have bus passes but we would need to have some paying passengers.

**Resolved:** IH and TW to prepare information for the future of subsidised bus service/s and the options for market day services to Thame and/or Watlington for the May Full Council meeting.

## 2. Safeguarding Children

The policy has been agreed by Council. TW said that no further action is needed on our part at this time.

**Resolved:** That we notify the Youth Club and any other clubs for children that use our buildings to ensure that they have their own safeguarding of children policy in place and that we hold a copy of their policies.

## 3. 33 High Street

TW stated that the Trustees have decided to obtain quotes to put the building back in order. Mike Young and TW will bring this information back to Council when they have received it.

## 4. Christmas Common Community Asset

MR said that there is nothing to report on this as yet.

## 5. Office Broadband

Nothing to report.

## 6. Consultation on Children's Centre

There is funding for this until March 2017. There will be a meeting on this issue on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and IH and RH will attend it.

### 19/16 Discussion Items

#### Main Discussion Items

1. **Communications Policy** – This was discussed under Agenda Item 9.1.

2. **Oxfordshire Together**- email and paper from Cllr Rodney Rose was attached to the agenda. This has already been actioned.

### 20/16 Consultations

1. **Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP)** – refresh of their Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire – Public Consultation on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April and ends Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Leaflets being distributed and have asked that we distribute to local businesses and anywhere with public access. Does WPC wish to comment: website [www.oxfordshirelep.com](http://www.oxfordshirelep.com)

TB stated that he thinks we should comment on this as it is one of the things that is pushing the need for more housing and is based on false economic figures.

**Resolved:** That TB draft a response to this and circulate it to members for comment before it is sent.

2. **Local Government Reform in Oxfordshire** – see attached paper. Asking for our views on the proposed criteria for assessing the options in our study, which are:

- Improving local service delivery and outcomes, particularly for the most vulnerable
- Delivering significant cost savings, value for money and financial sustainability
- Providing stronger and more accountable strategic and local leadership
- Driving economic growth and meet the infrastructure challenge
- Engaging with communities and empowering local areas

**Resolved:** That this paper is noted

**1. Method of reviewing the Parish Council's performance during the last year and how to prepare a plan for the next year including a set of criteria by which to judge our performance.**

MR passed round a few notes on a communications policy and suggested that we take the communications policy (min19/16) as part of the general review of our performance. TB suggested doing a review of the whole year. Each councillor present was asked to give their view of the council's performance over the past year.

MR said that he did not think we communicate well and that we need to improve how we communicate between ourselves and also the wider community.

TB said that he feels he has been fairly ineffective despite the number of hours he has invested in things and that we need to have a plan for the year so that we are proactive rather than reactive. Nothing has happened regarding traffic and environment and he thinks a lot of time is wasted reviewing minutes line by line for example.

RH said she has enjoyed working on the projects she is leading on but the amount of paperwork that is sent is very hard to keep up with.

JBt said that she feels out of the loop and does not always feel that she knows what is going on and would like some project to work on. She also feels that there are too many emails and paperwork.

TW said that he is ambivalent about emails and thinks it is hard for Council to plan ahead.

RB said that there is a lack of people who know Watlington well and times are very different these days. Agendas are repetitive because things are not done.

IH stated that in the past Ted and Barry both gave a lot of time to the office during weekdays and helped Kristina get things done. Council is also missing experienced Councillors who understood the working of the Council and knew a lot of background history of the town. IH said that he agreed that there are too many emails and they should only be used for giving information. Debates should not be carried out by email, unless there is an urgent reason why an issue cannot wait for a meeting. A plan for the year is a good idea and with a limited number of achievable objectives. Council has achieved a number of things during the year which included launching the NP forum and resolving long standing problems with the pavilion. All councillors need to get more involved with the work of the council and take responsibility for actions as too often things are left to himself and the Clerk.

**Action**

1. Need to work out a system for sharing work amongst Councillors depending on their interests and talents. *MR will work on this.*

MR said that the individual's views on the performance of the council had been useful but that it had not really covered all aspects of communication between ourselves. We need to return to the communication issue at another meeting. This discussion should cover the three topics:

- a) How we communicate amongst ourselves –**
- b) How we communicate with others**
- c) How the outside world communicates with the Parish Council**

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

***Resolved: That the meeting be allowed to continue until 10.20pm at the latest.***

**2. Third Thames Bridge** – Article from HS was attached to the agenda –RB stated that he thought that a third bridge would cause another rat-run which will increase traffic through South Oxfordshire. This bridge has not yet got approval and RB will keep his eye on this issue.

**3. Flag Flying at the Town Hall** – Could a Councillor be responsible for letting the office know when the flag needs to fly? It was suggested that the person who complained that the flag was not flying first thing in the morning of the Queen's birthday be asked to take this role on.

IH will contact him.

**[Post Minute Note-** The flag was put up by 9.30am on the Queen's birthday]

22/16 Correspondence

1. **Zurich** – Insurance Renewal – RH and MR will go through this.
2. **SODC** – John Cotton – A better deal for Oxfordshire – This has been actioned.

23/16 Items for Future Meetings

1. **Icknield Community College Link** – JBt

**2. South Oxfordshire Low Emission Strategy Consultation** – when appropriate

24/16 Any Other Business to note – Items to be notified to the Clerk in advance of the meeting.

**Defibrillator in the town** – It was noted that there is a plan to put one outside the pavilion and TW asked if we should be considering putting one outside the Town Hall as well. There is a charity who fund defibrillators and TW will find out more information on this.

**THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 10.20PM**