

BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday 2 September 2013 at Hinton Parva Village Hall

Those Present: Ian Thompson (Vice Chair), Lesley Drewett (Clerk), Douglas Stevens, Nigel Crisp, Stuart McGuigan, Ian Thomas, Andy Greenhalgh, Cllr. Andrew Bennett.

1. CCE Services – Broadband

The Chair welcomed David Clay and a large number of parishioners to the meeting. He then handed the floor to David Clay who explained that CCE services were a local company which provides network services including consumer broadband. He noted that people have struggled with Broadband speeds particularly in the rural areas. The larger companies are not prepared to make investments unless there are real benefits for them.

David Clay has partnered with a company called UK Broadband who have a new service available. This has come off the back of a joint venture with SBC. SBC are looking for an alternative communication method, primarily for their cameras and traffic light systems. SBC and UK Broadband have jointly put the investment in and established an infrastructure. This was specified by UK Broadband so that they could offer the same service to the outlying areas of Swindon.

The product is called 4GLT and is an internet data service offered through mobile phones. The same technology has been taken up by UK Broadband and has provided a fixed based system. There are 8 base stations around the centre of Swindon. The nearest one to the parish is in Park South. Speeds between 30-35 mbs have been received in Bishopstone owing to the differing topology within the parish. David clay had brought along a map showing the coverage area. It is a very reliable service with no drop out. An article has been placed in the Parish Magazine. As the editor was unsure whether this was a permanent entry, Cllr Greenhalgh asked for a confirmation email.

Action: Cllr Greenhalgh is to scan the map provided for Councillors information.

Councillors asked questions regarding planning requirements in relation to the domestic aerials and it was considered that there were none.

Ian thanked Mr. Clay for attending the meeting and offered his appreciation to Cllr Greenhalgh for facilitating the project.

2. Approved Apologies

The Chair brought items 2 & 3 forward and asked the Clerk to include these at the start of future meetings.

Action: The Clerk is to keep items 2 & 3 at the start of all future agendas. (Complete)

Simon Jenkins (Chair), Julian Cooke.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

The Chair asked for a proposition that the minutes of the August meeting be accepted as a true record. Cllr Thomas asked that the first sentence in item 7.2 be changed from *Cllr Bennett informed Councillors that Neighbourhood Plans by Blunsdon & Highworth have been adopted.* To: *Cllr Bennett informed Councillors that Blunsdon & Highworth have agreed to embark on the Neighbourhood Planning Process.* With this amendment, the proposition was put forward by Cllr Stevens, and unanimously agreed. The minutes were then signed by the Chair.

Signed:

Date:

5. **Matters Arising**

All actions from the previous meeting had been completed except for the following:

Kim Steele – Forest School Leader

As Cllr Bennett was not in attendance this action was carried forward.

Action: Cllr Bennett is to arrange a meeting for Kim Steele with Jonathan Wilshaw.

Community Speed Watch

As Cllr Bennett was not in attendance this action was carried forward:

Cllr Bennett agreed to liaise with Tracey to see if training could be arranged within the Parish as he is Chair of the South Locality.

Action: Cllr Bennett is to liaise with Tracey Scott.

Reports from Borough Councillor

Septic Tank

As Cllr Bennett was not in attendance this action was carried forward.

Action: Cllr Bennett is to notify Liz Smith-Gibbons (Conservation Officer) to ensure she has been involved with regard to conservation and archaeological issues.

Local Plan

As Cllr Jenkins was not in attendance, this action was carried forward:

It was suggested that the Chair talk to his counterparts to discover whether the WVV Consortium have established an EIP working party. Cllrs Crisp and Thomas would be happy to attend any meetings.

Action: The Chair is to contact the Clerk of Bourton Parish Council.

Brambling Cottage

Cllr Thomas felt too much weight was put on the letter to the previous occupants. He felt the occupant's deeds would show the centre line of the hedge as their boundary. The hedge has been cut back, but not enough. Cutting it back more would help with visibility and provide a wide enough space for parishioners to walk down. It was felt that the Parish Council should write to ask the new occupants to cut the hedge back to the legal boundary on the grounds of public safety, especially to protect young children and dogs.

Action: Cllr Thomas and Cllr Greenhalgh are to draft a letter and forward it to the Clerk for onward circulation and agreement by Councillors.

Football

Cllr Thomas informed those present that a small but positive response has been received. He felt a meeting with those interested should be arranged. The Chair asked that Councillors gather proper costs for the initial works at the meeting. The Parish Council can then agree funding at a future meeting. A suggestion was made that the new head teacher should be contacted.

Late Urgent Items

The Chair informed Councillors that there was no protocol for late, urgent items, which were currently being added to Public Question Time. He felt a paragraph should be added to the standing orders and agree at the next meeting. This should appear on the agenda after Matters Arising. Councillors agreed that this was necessary.

Action: The Clerk is to add this item to the next agenda. (Complete)

6. **Public Question Time**

There were several members of the public in attendance. The Chair stopped the meeting and brought this item forward, but it has been left in this part of the minutes for continuity.

The Chair opened the floor to the parishioners who had attended so that they might express their concerns regarding the cancellation of the Number 47 Bus Service in October. A parishioner had kindly carried out a leaflet drop to notify parishioners and invite them to the meeting.

The Chair explained that he had spoken with SBC earlier that day because the only documentation the Parish Council had seen so far was a draft decision note for a member of the Council Cabinet to take a decision under the delegated powers. This decision, if taken, would effectively cease the 47 service with effect from the end of October.

The decision is now going to be taken by the Cabinet at their meeting on 11th September 2013 where it will be debated. The substantive recommendation from the officers is still for the 47 service be ceased. SBC are cutting the subsidy they currently provide for all bus services from £445K to £245K. Thamesdown Transport in turn has said that if SBC are cutting their subsidy then some services will have to cease including the 47.

The chair went on to explain that the Parish Council will be able to make representation by asking questions in Public Question Time at the Cabinet meeting. The Ward Councillor, Andrew Bennett, will also be able to make representation on behalf of his constituents.

The 46/48 service that comes via Wanborough and stops at the Calley Arms would continue in its current form. The Chair felt that one option was that the Parish Council should be asking for this service to be extended to encompass the Parish. Subsidies towards the 47 service are currently paid by Oxfordshire and West Berkshire County Councils and amount to £30K. But this only subsidises the service to go beyond the Borough boundary. A Councillor noted that the 47X service from Ashbury to Wantage will continue on a Saturday (but this is not provided by Thamesdown Transport).

Parishioners then expressed their concerns at no longer being able to visit Newbury. The older members of the community that do not drive use the service to get into Swindon to visit the doctor, hospital, chiropodist, dentist and also to do their shopping. Youngsters within the village use the service to get to college. A parishioner noted that the Government is encouraging people to use bus services on environmental grounds; cessation of the service would therefore be contrary to national policy. A long discussion took place.

Parishioners suggested:

- a smaller bus might make the service more viable.
- the number of buses could be reduced during the day.
- The 46/48 service could be extended with some flexibility on times being introduced.

It was agreed that the important factor was that a bus was provided into the parish. However, it was noted that it was also important for the needs of residents within other parishes to be met.

Everyone agreed that a campaign to fight and try to overturn the decision should be organised.

It was also agreed that Wanborough, Ashbury and Lambourn should be encouraged to make representations.

When the Parish Council makes its representation at the Cabinet meeting, one point will be that there has not been adequate consultation and the process is therefore essentially flawed. Parishioners were encouraged to attend the Cabinet meeting as it was felt that the more people that attend the more influence there would be.

It was stressed that any Parish Council representation would only carry the weight of a single representation by any other resident.

A Councillor felt it would be worthwhile inviting Nigel Hale (the author of the SBC report) to a public meeting at Bishopstone Village hall to ask why he believes that the bus service does not represent best value in the rural areas. The facts and figures are not understood. However, it was felt that time was not on the PC's side.

The Swindon Advertiser has shown an interest in the agenda and it was agreed to contact them with regard to this problem.

Action: The Clerk is to send the contact from Swindon Advertiser to the Chair. (Complete)

Action: Cllr Thompson is to contact the Swindon Advertiser (complete).

Signed:

Date:

Councillors suggested that those present write to the Ward Councillor, copying in Robert Buckland M.P. The addresses were provided at the meeting. They were also encouraged to attend the Cabinet Meeting. A parishioner volunteered to letter-drop in Bishopstone giving clear instructions to other parishioners. The leaflet will be forwarded to the Clerk for onward circulation to the Chair and Cllr Greenhalgh for the website. Lifts will be made available to those without transport.

Action: The Clerk is to email the leaflet to the Chair and Cllr Greenhalgh (complete).
Action: The Chair is to forward to the Village Hall email list if he is able to access this (complete).

The Chair apologised on behalf of the Ward Councillor that he had not been able to attend the meeting owing to another important prior commitment.

After this debate one of the parishioners present told Council that they had applied for a Certificate of Lawfulness to erect a garden building. She had already contacted the planning department with regard to a temporary building and they had suggested she talk with the Parish Council. A company had provided her with a green solution, a metal frame with a temporary timber structure, which can be removed if the owner moves and can be put back to a garden. Councillors did not have any objections to the proposed temporary building. A Councillor felt planning was not necessary for this structure and agreed to send her some planning guidance. However, the parishioner decided to still apply for the Certificate.

Another parishioner asked whether there had been any further developments with regard to the True Heart as she understood there had been another application. Cllr Thomas informed those present that the architect and consultant had presented some draft proposals at a recent meeting and the Parish Council had given their comments on these. They had been sent away with Councillors' thoughts and had not yet replied.

The Chair thanked the public for attending and explained that he appreciated their involvement.

The Chair then started the meeting.

The Chair asked Councillors for their views as to what line should be taken or what outcome they should be seeking from the Borough, as he felt the number 47 service extended beyond Bishopstone will be a non runner.

It was felt that:

- The default position should be no change, but there are a number of compromises in terms a reduced schedule or smaller buses to reduce the costs on the existing route.
- The 46/48 service could be extended to Bishopstone on a schedule to reflect the community's requirements.
- The importance of the service to Oxon and West Berkshire should be established and they should be asked if they are prepared to increase their subsidy.
- The Parish should say "No" to the complete axing of the 47, but "Yes" to some detailed review and a consultation of services that makes savings and provides some of the services.
- The deadline should be extended for a formal consultation in order to get all the data on the table to have an extended, informative debate before the next Cabinet meeting.

Councillors could understand the Chair's reasoning for a compromise, but they also wanted to try to fight to retain the current service:

- Councillors felt it would be useful to get the data, as this is the basis of an informed consultation.
- Ask for Andrew Bennett's response to SBC. – **Action: - (Clerk) (Complete)**
- Speak at the Cabinet meeting. – **Action: - Clerk (Complete)**
- Contact Wanborough, Ashbury and Lambourn Parish Councils with regard to attending the meeting. – **Action: - Clerk (Complete)**
- Contact the Swindon Advertiser. – **Action – (Chair) – (Complete)**
- Invite Nigel Hale to a public meeting to discuss his proposal. – **Action: - (Chair)- (Complete)**

- Prepare a briefing note for Andrew Bennett asking for a deferral of the decision so that a proper consultation can be held and an appraisal of the various options made available. – **Action: - (Simon Jenkins & Gary Sumner) (Complete)**
- The Chair is to talk to Gary Sumner for his views. – **Action – (Chair) (Complete)**

7. Planning

No planning applications had been received.

Late Receipt of Planning Notifications

No late planning applications had been received.

GRANTED

The following granted schedule had been received:

- Certificate of Lawfulness (Proposed) for the erection of a summerhouse in rear Garden – Granary House, 12 Whatleys Orchard, Bishopstone

REFUSAL

No refusal schedules had been received.

8. Reports from Borough Councillor

The Ward Councillor was unable to attend as he had a prior commitment.

9. Reports from Sub Committees

Footpaths

Cllr Thomas reported that he would like contact details for the Lengthman as there are a lot of stinging nettles and ground growth at the top of the Wyncies that he felt needed spraying.

Action: The Clerk is to provide Cllr Thomas with contact details for the Lengthman. (Complete)

A Councillor asked whether a map of what should be maintained could be placed on the website. It was agreed that this would be OK.

Action: Cllr Greenhalgh is to add the maps to the website for parishioner’s information.

A Councillor asked if the permissive footpath could be cut.

Action: Cllr Stevens is to contact the owner of the permissive footpath.

10. Main Points

Septic Tank

The Chair had spoken to the representatives at SBC that day. They have the authority to go ahead with the expenditure and are finalising the specifications to go out to tender. There is a question about how much of the soil needs to be removed and they are trying to work out some of the issues around the sewage treatment plant. A further update will be needed in a month’s time.

Award of contract for Lengthman Duties

The Chair asked for this item to be added to the next agenda to see how work was progressing. To date no invoice had been received.

Action: The Clerk is to add this item to the next agenda. (Complete)

Co-option of Councillor

The Clerk had asked a proactive parishioner who had helped with the recent bus service problems if she was interested.

Action: A Councillor is to ask his wife to talk to the parishioner.

[Post meeting note: Since the meeting several parishioners have expressed an interest. CV’s will be requested.]

Signed:

Date:

Broadband Speed Improvement

This item had been discussed at item 1. Councillor Greenhalgh felt this item could be removed from the main agenda.

Village Clean up Day

Councillors agreed that this was a worthwhile project. It was agreed to arrange this for 20th October 2013.

Action: Cllr Greenhalgh is to provide an article for the newsletter and post it on the website. (Complete)

[Post meeting note: The Chair has provided the article.]

The Chair asked the Clerk to chase the litter bin at Charlbury Hill. The Locality Lead is to attend the October meeting.

Action: The Clerk is to remind Councillors to ask SBC for a solution at the meeting. (Complete)

Assets of Community Value

Cllr Crisp informed Councillors that the Parish Council could nominate a building as an asset of community value, which, if this is accepted by the Borough Council, enables the Parish Council to have the right to bid for the property when it is put up for sale. The owner would have to notify the Parish Council when the building goes up for sale and the Parish Council would have 6 months to bid.

Action: Cllr Thomas is to look into the process. (Complete)

11. Accounts to be Paid

The following cheques were presented for approval:

- L D Drewett £4.99

The above expenses were approved for payment by Cllr Crisp, seconded by Cllr McGuigan and agreed unanimously by those present.

The Chair queried the Lengthman's cheques and the Clerk explained that his last payments for June had not been received. She has cancelled these cheques at the bank and they have been reissued. Councillors were happy with the explanation.

12. Correspondence

The Chair asked if Councillors wished to view any of the other correspondence. None did.

13. Parishioners Feedback/Complaints

Parishioner feedback

The Chair asked the advice of Councillors with regard to complaints from parishioners who raise an issue against SBC. He felt that the parishioner should be advised to ring SBC rather than the Parish Council pick up this problem on their behalf. Councillors agreed wholeheartedly with this, but felt that if the problem has been brought to SBC's attention and not been actioned, then the Parish Council should escalate it on behalf of the parishioner.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting, will take place on Monday 7 October 2013 at Bishopstone Village Hall, starting at 19:30 pm.

Action: Apologies to the Clerk before the meeting.