

BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday 6th January 2014 at Hinton Parva Village Hall

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

1. Approved Apologies

Kate Griffiths.

The Chair welcomed Councillors and all members of the public in attendance to the meeting, and wished them a Happy New Year.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The Chair asked for a proposition that the minutes of the December meeting be accepted as a true record. The proposition was put forward by Cllr Crisp, and unanimously agreed. The minutes were then signed by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising

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

Reports from Ward Councillor – Septic tank, Hinton Parva

There had been no recent reports of activity; this item was on the agenda for discussion later in the meeting, in the Ward Councillor's report.

Permissive footpath

Cllr Stevens reported a constructive meeting with the landowner, who is reluctant for the Lengthman to take on the work of keeping the footpath clear; he is to seek a narrow topper to replace the stolen equipment. Cllr Stevens will talk to him again in the spring. Other members of his family stated that they were upset at the amount of bags of dog excrement being hung on trees. Councillors suggested it may be useful to have a dog bin close to the start of the permissive footpath.

Action: The Clerk is to contact Stratton St Margaret Parish Council. (Complete)

Action: The Clerk is to send the cost of installation for a dog bin to Councillors.

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

The 90 bus

The Chair closed the meeting at this point to include the parishioner attending.

Cllr Greenhalgh reported that a meeting of the Bus Steering Group had taken place before Christmas at short notice.

Action: Cllr Greenhalgh is to circulate the documentation from the meeting.

Cllr Greenhalgh reported that the Director of GoRide CIC had explained that there had been a high turnover of drivers plus a number of issues over capacity of the bus and time keeping. There were now two new drivers and two new 16 seater buses and he hoped this would resolve the problems, including occasional use of taxis. The 9:41 am service to Swindon is the most susceptible to overcrowding and it was suggested that users might be encouraged to use a later service if possible. GoRide CIC is looking at introducing later, improved, return services, but it will take two months at least to organise this with SBC.

Signed:

Date:

The parishioner present stated that if anyone got on with a pram it would reduce the seating capacity by three, and that the doors on the new bus do not appear to close. The Parish Council was unanimous in the view that the 90 service was better than having no bus service at all, but GoRide CIC should be held accountable. It was hoped that the larger buses would help.

Action: The Chair will write an article for the Parish Times once more detail is available. (Pending)

The Chair re-opened the meeting.

The following action was carried forward: A Councillor asked for publicity for the X47 Wantage bus service to be improved, including posting the timetables at all bus stops on the route. Cllr Greenhalgh had printed timetables from the Thames Travel website and had placed them on the website with a news article.

Action: Cllr Griffiths is to try to contact Thames Travel to ask them to post timetables at all bus stops.

5. **Public Question Time**

The Chair closed the meeting and this item was brought forward as Ms Emma Lindsay, Head Teacher, Bishopstone School, Mr Mike Welsh, in his capacity as a parishioner with a child at the school, and one other member of the public were in attendance. However, it has been left in this part of the minutes for continuity. Ms Lindsay stated that she had attended the meeting to introduce herself to Councillors and also to talk about issues of funding which may affect the school in future years.

Discussion with Head of Bishopstone School

Pond and Island Management Plan. The Chair stated that the Pond and Island Management Plan had been discussed with Ms Lindsay at their recent meeting and it was to be reviewed later in the meeting. Ms Lindsay stated that she was happy with the Plan and would like to carry on with the School's use of the Island as it was a wonderful resource for the children. Kim Steele had been using the Island for the past six weeks working on the Forest School project; there will be no activity for six weeks. A programme of works to be carried out is currently being collated. The School had been featured in the Swindon Advertiser before Christmas and photographs were taken on the Island. Kim Steele is still trying to get hold of Jonathan Wilshaw of SBC, but this may be irrelevant now.

Parking around the school had been discussed at several Parish Council meetings and a flyer had now been developed by SBC and the Police. The flyers were reviewed and approved by Councillors and Ms Lindsay. Ms Lindsay stated that various mails had been sent to parents during November and December with regard to parking and she has since set up some "travel ambassadors" at the school in the hope that the children will be able to talk to their parents about the problems caused by irresponsible parking. The school is taking advice from the Police, who would try to increase their presence. The flyers were handed to Councillors and Ms Lindsay for their use.

Funding. Ms Lindsay and Mr Welsh stated that they thought that the future of the school may be in danger; funding of the school is provided through the Local Authority and the consultation process goes through the Schools Forum, Head Teachers (SAPH) and the Governors. The School is currently under-subscribed with 39 children but numbers are expected to reach 49 by September 2014. (Capacity is 50).

The DfE allows local authorities to introduce a "sparsity factor" which permits small rural schools to be properly funded; Bishopstone and South Marston are the only schools in the SBC area which might be affected, where the nearest alternative school is too far and / or too dangerous to walk to. Were a sparsity factor to be introduced for these schools, it would be at the expense of other schools. This was discussed by all head teachers (SAPH) at their monthly meeting and the vote was in favour by a majority of 6; it has since been approved at the Schools Forum meeting and will be raised again on 21 January. A small number of secondary school head teachers have voiced their concerns about the introduction of a sparsity factor.

The Chair asked how the Parish Council could help and was told that currently this had been brought forward to keep Councillors informed of a possible problem in the future. Ms Lindsay said that she will be in a better position to know whether the sparsity factor has been introduced after the meeting on the 21st January; if the decision from the meeting is negative, a political decision at member level will be made and support may be needed at this stage. Councillors felt the Swindon Advertiser could be helpful if popular support was needed.

The Chair said that the Parish Council will give their support wherever they can; he asked that Ms Lindsay contact the Clerk or himself at any time.

6. Planning

No planning applications had been received.

Late Receipt of Planning Notifications

No late planning applications had been received.

GRANTED

The following granted schedules had been received:

- **S/LDP/13/1550/EDSN** – Certificate of Lawful Development (Proposed) for the erection of a home office, for use incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house – Gales Cottage, High Street, Bishopstone
- **S/13/1607/SASM** – Erection of single storey front and rear extensions – The Warren, Russley Park, Baydon

The above schedule arrived after the agenda had been issued.

REFUSAL

The following refusal schedules had been received:

- **S/LDE/13/1453/HECO** – Certificate of Lawfulness (Existing) for the erection of a car port – Summer Cottage, 2 West End Lane, Bishopstone

7. Reports from Ward Councillor

The Chair informed Cllr Bennett of the attendance of Ms Emma Lindsay and Mr Mike Welsh, who had attended to advise the Parish Council of possible future funding problem associated with the introduction by DfE of sparsity funding. Cllr Bennett felt the Children and Young Peoples scrutiny committee may be able to help with an inappropriate action of this kind.

Action: Cllr Bennett is to follow up on this with Cllr Fionula Foley –Lead Member for Children’s Services.

After note: An explanatory note was received in confidence from Cllr Bennett on 10 January; this states that Sparsity Funding was an option to be considered but was not being pursued.

The following were also discussed with Cllr Bennett:

True Heart

Cllr Bennett informed Councillors of the renewed interest by the owner in developing the True Heart. He has advised the owner that his agent had been told that the viability of the True Heart as a pub had not been addressed and should be; he should also enter into a dialogue with the Parish Council.

Signed:

Date:

Sewage in Bishopstone

Thames Water (Huw Thomas) state that they have inspected the area and that the problem has been resolved.

Action: The Chair is to check with the parishioner concerned that she is satisfied.

Action: Cllr Bennett is to get a definitive statement from Huw Thomas.

Flooding

The Chair and Cllr Bennett had asked Councillors to report any instances of property in the Parish being flooded during the recent heavy rains; there were no reports. Thames Water has a form for reporting flooding; this will be made available on the Parish Council website.

Action: The Clerk was asked to add the Flood Plan to the February agenda. (Complete)

Action: The Chair is to put an article into the Parish Times. (Complete)

Action: The Clerk is to locate the Thames Water flooding form and arrange for it to be loaded up to the Parish Council website. (Complete)

South Marston Development - Rowborough

A Councillor asked whether any comments had been received on the South Marston development. Cllr Bennett said that a large number of comments have been received with regard to the proposed roundabout with 6 accesses; this has since been withdrawn.

The Chair reminded councillors of the meeting in Oxford which was to take place on 7 January, including SBC, Oxford CC, VWHDC and Bob Hindhaugh, to discuss traffic issues.

In the Core Strategy, Swindon had produced a water cycle study and it had been noted that the only water cycle study was an old one clearly out of date and did not reflect current numbers; therefore an updated version should be included in the Local Plan. Cllr Bennett asked Councillors to mention this as it should be addressed.

SBC Budget

The Borough is still £7.85million short for next year.

8. Reports from Sub Committees

Pond & Island Management Plan

The management plan was brought to the meeting for its annual review; there were no comments and it was approved for a further year. A Councillor reminded the meeting that work will be needed on the willows surrounding the pond. The Clerk was asked to send the 2009 Tree Report from SBC to Councillors; this advises of works to be carried out annually.

Action: The Clerk is to send the tree report to Councillors. (Complete)

9. Precept

Cllr Crisp explained how last year's precept of £12,670 was worked out and the reasoning behind it. For 2014/15, SBC have agreed to pass on at least 50% of the Council Tax Support Grant received from Government; this would amount to £409. The three options being put forward for the 2014/15 year were:

Option 1- request the same precept of £12,670, increase the council tax by £1 (2.5%) and put c£400 into the reserves.

Option 2 – reduce the precept to £12,356, to keep the council tax the same and put £90 into the reserves.

Option 3 – reduce the precept to £12,261, fill the gap with the CTSG and maintain reserves as they are.

He said that the Finance sub- committee had recommended option 3, but now it was up to the full Council to make a decision. Cllr Bennett informed Councillors that he had just come from a budget meeting where the refund of £409 had been confirmed.

A Councillor asked how secure the CTSG was and was told that it was secure for the foreseeable future, or at least 3 years.

Cllr Crisp put forward a proposition to accept option 3- a precept of £12,261; this was seconded by Cllr Greenhalgh and unanimously agreed.

Action: The Clerk is to send the precept figure to SBC. – No longer relevant.

[**Post meeting note:** SBC have confirmed that they will passport 100% of the CTSG Support grant to parishes in 2014/15 and it has therefore been agreed by Councillors that this item will be brought back to the February Parish Council meeting.]

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

10. Main Points

Septic Tank

Cllr Bennett understood that a date had been arranged for a site meeting with the contractors but this had not taken place. A Councillor, as a parishioner, had received a letter from the Legal Department of SBC and therefore presumed that other parishioners have also received these.

Action: Cllr Cooke is to talk to Mr Richard Cooke.

Football Pitch Revival

Cllr Thomas advised that the Eastbrook Farm contact had not been in touch and without his commitment they could not take the matter any further.

Action: Cllrs Thomas and Greenhalgh are to try to progress this in time for the next meeting.

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

The parishioner present agreed to help with the revival. He explained that a line marker was available.

Village Information Boards

Work has started but no meeting had taken place owing to illness. This item will be carried forward to the next meeting.

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

Village Footpaths

The project to improve FP 11 (From the Royal Oak to the stream in the Dingle) should be commencing early this year. SBC is currently trying to negotiate with the landlord of the Royal Oak to use the car park for equipment.

Village Footpaths

Cllr Thomas then went on to inform Councillors about two anomalies on the map received from SBC. The first being FP 13 from Cues Lane to the Wyncies, which appears to stop some way short of the Wyncies; the reason is that the Wyncies end of the footpath is adopted and will therefore not be shown on the definitive footpath map. Secondly, FP 11 appears to stop 10 yards short of the junction with FP 10. This has been acknowledged as a drafting error by Michael Enright of SBC, who will amend the definitive map.

Action: Cllr Thomas is to forward the documentation on to Councillors for their information. (Complete)

11. Accounts to be Paid

The following cheques were presented for approval:

- L D Drewett £4.99

The above expenses were proposed for payment by Cllr Greenhalgh, seconded by Cllr Cooke and agreed unanimously by those present.

12. Correspondence

The Chair asked whether anyone wished to see any items of correspondence, none did.

Signed:

Date:

13. Parishioners Feedback/Complaints

Road Signs at the Western Gate

A councillor advised that the road signs at the Western Gateway to Bishopstone need tightening.

Action: The Clerk is to contact Highways. (Complete)

Cllr Bennett reminded councillors to request any Streetsmart hours needed. Councillors are to notify the Clerk of any works they would like carried out.

Action: The Clerk is to check the last email sent. (Complete)

Parking at the Wyncies

The Clerk had received a call from a parishioner reporting a problem with parking at the Wyncies; Cllr Bennett has put a message through to SBC (Gerry O'Connor).

Action: The Clerk was requested to seek more details of those concerned. (Complete)

Action: The Chair is to visit the parishioners.

Blocked Drain at City Corner, Hinton Parva

A Councillor reported that the drain at City Corner is blocked with silt.

Action: The Clerk is to contact SBC. (Complete)

Fly Tipping at White Hill

A councillor reported fly tipping at White Hill.

Action: The Clerk is to contact Streetsmart and notify them that Cllr Cooke will meet them for a site visit if necessary. (Complete)

Chair standing down

The Chair advised councillors that he will be standing down after presenting his Annual Report at the Parish Assembly in March. The vacancy would be advertised as soon as this was permitted by SBC.

Action: The Clerk is to advertise the vacancy as soon as possible. (April)

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Monday 3rd February 2014 at Bishopstone Village Hall. It will start at 19:30.

Action: Apologies to the Clerk before the meeting.