

**MINUTES OF DUCKLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1 MARCH 2023
in the Lilac Room, Village Hall commencing at 7.30 PM**

13.23 Members Present: David Duthie (Chair)
Matthew Barker (Vice Chair)
Peter Almgill
Joanna George
Paul Lishman
Sarah Varnom
John Dundson

In Attendance: Steve Smith (Clerk)
Cllr Ted Fenton (OCC County Councillor)

14.23 Members' Apologies and reasons for absence:

Richard Border (on holiday) and Stephen Townsend (personal reasons)

15.23 To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 1 February 2023:

Cllr Duthie proposed and Cllr Barker seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

16.23 County Council OCC / District Council WODC Matters:

Cllr Ben Woodruff (WODC) was unable to attend the meeting.

It was reported by the Clerk that Cllr Ben Woodruff has today tendered his resignation as a District Councillor to WODC. Cllr Duthie on behalf of the Council wished Ben all the best for the future.

Cllr Ted Fenton (OCC) reported that the County Council budget had been approved.

Cllr Ted Fenton updated members with progress on various ongoing issues including Oxford Traffic Filters and Low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs).

There was a general discussion on the impact of the 20 mph speed restrictions in Witney. Cllr Dundson asked Cllr Ted Fenton if he knew why the 20 mph limit did not apply to Ducklington Lane, which retained a 30 mph restriction. Cllr Ted Fenton responded that he did not know the specific reason and would try to find out and report back to the next Council meeting

Cllr Ted Fenton reminded members that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England is currently reviewing the electoral arrangements for Oxfordshire County Council. The review will decide how many councillors will serve the county council and which communities each councillor will serve. The changes will take effect from the May 2025 elections.

17.23 Parish Councillors – Disclosure of interests on agenda items:

Cllr George in respect of item 9) Sportsfield matters

18.23 PLANNING

- a) Application **22/00060/FUL** - Land at New Cross Lane, Ducklington Lane, Witney, Oxfordshire - Construction of ten light industrial units Class E and B8, MOT Centre, Class B2 and Car wash with access roads/vehicle and cycle parking and reprofiling of former landfill site

Councillors discussed this application and **RESOLVED** to instruct the Clerk to respond to the consultation by commenting that the proposed development will add to the volume of traffic on the roundabout and thereby increase the difficulty in exiting the village.

- b) **Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr Lishman reported that the working group were collecting evidence and ideas from local people about what they want to see in the neighbourhood plan and also actively seeking volunteers to assist in the formation of the neighbourhood plan.

The Clerk was instructed to submit a formal request to the District Council to designate a neighbourhood area to cover the Civil Parish of Ducklington accompanied by a OS Vector Map showing the proposed area edged in red.

19.23 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

- a) **Oxford Witney Hotel update**

Cllr Varnom reported on her attendance at the multi-agency meeting/s as representative of the parish council and advised members of initiatives undertaken to help integrate the families into the local community, such as an after-school club and a sewing group. She had also spoken to Marilyn Morris, the organiser of the community litter pick up event on 11 March, about the participation of the families, although, she stressed, not because they had significantly added to the littering problem. It is all about involving the families in the local community.

- b) **Lidl - Water Main and Traffic Sign**

Nothing further to report.

c) **Grass Cutting - Village**

Cllr Duthie reported he had written to McCracken & Sons Ltd requesting a meeting with the contractor to review the specification and standard of workmanship and a response is awaited.

d) **Village Hall**

Cllrs George and Varnom reported they had received various documents from the Ducklington and Hardwick Village Hall charity and that Cllr George would be attending a meeting later this month and will report back to the next meeting of the council.

e) **Environment Agency Flooding**

Cllr Barker reported he had met with Robert Courts MP on site at The Moors and the MP had promised him he would make representations to the Environment Agency (EA) on the council's behalf regarding the downgrading of the flood risk by the EA. Cllr Barker reported he had heard nothing further from the MP or EA to date and would follow this up.

f) **Cemetery - Burial Records etc**

Nothing further to report.

Cllr Duthie reported that the Rector had discussed with him an application she had received to perform an interment of ashes ceremony. He explained the family circumstances and informed members that there would be an inscribed ledger stone. Cllr Duthie proposed and Cllr George seconded and the council unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the application and authorise Cllr Duthie to inform the Rector of the council's approval.

g) **Village Sign on A415/Aston Road junction**

Cllr Duthie reported that the grant from the Community Priority Fund had now been received in the council's account.

The Clerk reported that Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) had given him details of another supplier, a reputable sign manufacturer that OCC recommended and have used themselves, and given him permission to utilise the designs/drawing and location details in order to obtain an alternative quote. The council **RESOLVED** to instruct the Clerk to contact the alternative manufacturer to obtain a quote for the work.

h) Additional CCTV Camera

Cllr George reported that the additional CCTV camera overlooking the MUGA had been installed on 27 February and was in full working order. The council **RESOLVED** to thank Edward Todd, the secretary of the Sports Club, for his assistance in bringing this to fruition.

Cllr Duthie reported that there had been an incident involving unauthorised use of the floodlights at the MUGA. Cllr Duthie has spoken to the individual concerned and the matter has been resolved. Cllr Dunsdon proposed and Cllr Varnom seconded and the council **RESOLVED** to instruct the Clerk to write to the individual expressing its concern at his actions.

i) Finance Committee

Nothing further to report.

j) Rewilding Bartholomew Close

Cllr George reported that the 4 bird boxes had been put up. There was some discussion as to whether the trees were protected under a Tree Protection Order (TPO). The general consensus was that this was not the case.

k) School Cup

Cllr Almgill reported he had offered his support to the headteacher of the primary school in respect of the acquisition of a suitable laser printer.

l) Hexagon Bench

Councillor Barker, in his capacity as chair of the Ducklington King's Coronation Committee, reported he had received a suitable quote for the bench and would be proceeding with the order.

m) OCC Tree Planting

The Clerk reported that a location in the village for the planting of a new cherry tree had been selected by OCC Tree Service, which they believed was on land deemed to be part of the highway maintainable at public expense (HMPE). However, it transpires it is not HMPE, but in fact private land. The landowner has written to OCC Tree Service stating they have no objection in principle to the proposed planting on their land (situate in Fielden Close close to the school entrance), but requesting the

details held by OCC in respect of the land be updated. It is not clear whether the planting will proceed at this location or an alternative site be found.

n) Gigaclear

Cllr Almgill reported that Gigaclear will be installing 900mb full fibre broadband in the Village Hall on 24 April 2023.

o) Village Cemetery Gates

Cllr Duthie reported he was still awaiting written quotes for the work.

p) Water Damaged Ceiling at Pavilion

Cllr Duthie reported he had received one quote for the ceiling remedial works, but a second quote was awaited.

q) Code of Conduct Issues

These issues are ongoing. Nothing further to report.

r) Appointment of Clerk

Cllr Almgill advised councillors that a date for interview will be arranged now that the applicant has returned from holiday.

s) Make Arrangements for Annual Inspection of Playgrounds

Deferred to the next meeting

t) Make arrangements for Retest of fixed wiring at Sports Pavilion

Deferred to the next meeting

20.23 New Business

a) **Annual Risk Assessment**

Deferred to the next meeting.

b) **Annual Review of Internal Controls**

Deferred to the next meeting

c) **Application from St Bartholomew's Church towards Warm Space**

Deferred to the next meeting.

d) **Signs - Glebelands and Bartholomews Close**

Cllr George reported that she had received a quote of £255 plus VAT for two new signs at Glebelands and Bartholomews Close. Cllr George proposed and Cllr Lishman seconded and the council **RESOLVED** to accept the quote and proceed with the work.

e) **Request for Funding and Road Closure for King's Coronation**

Cllr Duthie proposed and Cllr Varnom seconded and the council **RESOLVED** to make a donation of £300 to Ducklington King's Coronation Committee. The council instructed the Clerk to apply to the district council for a temporary road closure and to inform neighbours affected

f) **Community First Oxfordshire Membership**

The council **RESOLVED** to allow its membership to lapse as it was not clear the council derived much benefit from membership of this organisation.

g) **Clean Slate Donation Request**

The council **RESOLVED** to wish Clean Slate well, but to decline the invitation to make a donation on this occasion

h) OCC Footpath Application

The Clerk reported that on 21 November 2022 Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) received an application to modify its Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way to record a Footpath from Witney Road, alongside the Lakeside Allotments to Footpath No. 16 in the Parish of Ducklington on the Definitive Map and Statement for Oxfordshire . The application is supported by letters from seven members of the public. OCC have investigated the evidence and are recommending that the application be rejected on the basis there is insufficient evidence to support the application. Furthermore, in January 2023 the applicant confirmed she would not be pursuing the application for the following two reasons: (i) many of those who submitted letters did not want to fill in the standard witness user evidence forms as they are intimidated by the possibility of being cross-examined, and (ii) an application to build houses in the adjoining field had been approved and two new footpaths were to be constructed, which could be used instead of the allotment road [the claimed route]. The council **RESOLVED** not to make any comments on the draft report prepared by OCC.

i) Annual Parish Meeting

The Clerk informed councillors that the annual parish meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 25 May 2023 in the Village Hall.

Cllr Duthie advised members that he was disinclined to invite any guest speakers to the meeting this year because so few members of the public have attended meetings in previous years.

The council **RESOLVED** to advertise the annual parish meeting in the village newsletter, on the parish council's website and on village noticeboards.

j) Annual Inspection of Parish Assets

Deferred to next meeting

k) Annual Investment Policy Review

Deferred to next meeting

21.23 Playgrounds, Sports Field, Open Spaces, Sports Club and Allotments

a) Pavilion lease renewal

Councillors **RESOLVED** to appoint a chartered surveyor to act on behalf of the council in connection with the lease renewal.

b) MUGA - Light Fittings, Light Switch, Fencing, Signage

Cllr Duthie reported that HAGS had yet to complete all remedial works.

c) Matters arising from Monthly Inspection Reports

Nothing further to report.

d) Allotments - Lease Renewal

Nothing further to report

e) Allotment Rents

The Clerk reported that rent demands will be issued to all allotment holders in the near future.

Cllr Dundson reported that SSE had recently carried out site investigations. The Clerk reported he had not received any communication from SSE. The council **RESOLVED** to discuss further and respond appropriately if and when SSE consulted the parish council on its intentions.

22.23 FINANCE

a) Account Balances, Bank reconciliations and Debts due to Council

Councillors reviewed the bank balances and transactions provided in the Briefing Pack.

b) Invoices due for payment

Councillors considered the schedule of proposed payments set out in the briefing pack and **RESOLVED** that all be paid.

Cllr Barker and Cllr Almgill signed the cheques.

c) Grant to Church for Christmas Tree Lighting

Councillors instructed the Clerk to arrange to make the donation agreed at the previous meeting.

23.23 Other comments/Matters for next Agenda

- a) Cllr Duthie reported that the Chairman of the Sports Club had requested permission from the council to lay artificial grass over an area of the Sports Field that gets particularly muddy during wet conditions. Cllr Duthie proposed and Cllr Barker seconded and the council **RESOLVED** to agree to the proposal. All councillors present voted unanimously in support of the motion.
- b) Cllr George informed members that she would be attending a climate and nature event at WODC offices on 8 March and asked if councillors had any issues they would like her to raise on their behalf. After a discussion councillors suggested she raise the issue of the proposed new house building in the village and the potential for increased traffic volume that would generate.

24.23 Date of Next Meeting:

Monthly meeting of the Parish Council, 5th April 2023 - 7.30 pm, Lilac Room of the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.23 pm.

Signeddated.....

Chairman

