

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Sonning Parish Council held in the Pavilion, King George's Field, Sonning, on Tuesday 14 December 2009 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT.

Mr J S Chapman (Chairman), Mr P J Doyle (Vice Chairman), Mr A Barker, Mr A E Farnese, Mr M Green, Mr C McCulloch, Mr K Peters, M/S S Robinson, Mr I Runnalls. Mrs L A Bates (Clerk).

APOLOGIES/WELCOME TO VISITORS.

The Chairman welcomed everyone.

7572: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

Min. 7562 e line 2 S105 was changed to S106. The Minutes, having been amended and circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

7573: DECLARATION OF INTEREST.

Mr Doyle said he would have an interest under Highways, Thames Street Pinch Point if discussed, but it was agreed that this was not prejudicial. On planning application discussions, since Cllr. Chapman was a member of the Borough Council's Planning Committee, his views were expressed on the limited information before him only. He would reserve judgement and the independence to make up his own mind on each separate proposal as and when it came before the Borough's Planning Committee and heard all the relevant information. He would not in any way commit himself as to how he or others might vote when the committee came to consider a proposal.

7574: CORRESPONDENCE.

Beech Lodge. Mr Pascall had asked if Beech Lodge could be used for the Rotary Christmas drinks, which would be provided free of charge. Following discussion it was agreed that no alcohol should be sold, however a small amount of alcohol could be served free of charge on occasions such as the Scouts AGM and on this occasion by Rotary. Future applications should be decided on their merits and the Council's permission should be sought.

Prospective Councillor. A resident had shown an interest in joining the Council if a vacancy appeared. The Chairman would ask for a short briefing document.

WBC Children's Services. WBC had recently received adverse publicity over its Children's Services, having been identified as one of 9 failing Authorities. The Chairman said it was unfortunate that the report was based on nine-month-old information. WBC had made huge strides to rectify the situation under Susan Law and David Lee and work was still in progress. Mr McCulloch said that it was a pity that the Sustainable Community Strategy consultation document did not contain sufficient information to enable SPC comment on those items.

7575: PLANNING.

- a) Planning List. Mr Doyle said that, in spite of buildings being erected without planning permission in the Conservation Area no decision had been made and no enforcement action taken at Weir Cottage. The conversion of offices to two dwellings at The Great House had been approved. A roadway had also been built. School Cottage had been refused. Mr McCulloch said it had been neglected, however this was the owner's responsibility. The Planning Committee would discuss this at their next meeting. The following had also been approved: extensions to the Sixth Form Centre at RBCS: loft

7575: PLANNING (Cont'd).

conversion at 47 Old Bath Road: advertisement consent for signs at RC&HC. Mr Doyle had spoken to the Enforcement Officer regarding Model Farm Barn but there were no plans to take immediate action.

The following new applications had been received: Hill Cottage Thames Street (F/2009/2422) Erection of first floor rear extension to dwelling: 5 South Drive Sonning (F/2009/2463) Two storey rear extension to dwelling and detached garage plus conversion of existing garage to habitable accommodation with changes to the single storey front roof plus front and rear dormer extensions to create habitable accommodation in loft: Sonning Court Thames Street (F/2009/2471) Two storey side extension to dwelling

The following applications were ongoing: 45 Old Bath Road (F/2008/1303): Wimbourne 47 West Drive (F/2008/1544): Unit 4 The Old Forge C/2008/1793: Land adj. 7 South Drive Sonning (C/2008/2365): Bishops Close Sonning Lane (C/2008/2617): The Green Cottage (C/2009/1144): Weir House (F/2009/1099): 45 Old Bath Road (C/2009/1600).

The following applications had been Refused: Model Farm Barn (F/2009/1371). 1 Garde Road (F/2009/1937): School Cottage Thames Street (F/2009/1693):

The following applications had been approved: The Great House At Sonning (F/2009/1419): Holme Park (F/2009/2049): 47 Old Bath Road. (F/2009/1915): RC&HC (A/2009/2055)

The following application had been withdrawn. None had been withdrawn.

#### 7576: QUESTIONS FOR BOROUGH COUNCILLOR

Mr Farnese said that, as a WBC Council house tenant, he had received a letter concerning the possibility of the WBC housing stock being transferred to a housing association. The Chairman agreed to look into this. Unfortunately WBC only received 50% of the rents, which was insufficient to cover maintenance, while the government took the other 50%.

#### 7577: PUBLIC QUESTION TIME.

There were no questions from the public.

#### 7578: FINANCE.

- a) Report. A report was circulated and noted.
- b) Payment of Accounts. Mr McCulloch proposed making the following payments, Mr Peters seconded and this was unanimously approved.

#### NOVEMBER

WBC Rates Admin: 6.60: SLTC: 6.60: Pavilion 19.80	33.00
Mr K Trimmings – Litter Oct. + part Nov.	177.08
Mazars – External Audit	483.00
Alpha Windows – Pavilion repairs	1810.00
Sonning Landscapes Mowing – wharf 52.00: Playground 25.00.	77.00
Sonning Landscapes – Cut Pound Lane Hedge	50.00
Quadron – Mowing April – October	1563.54
Quadron – Mowing Pond Area.	<u>212.75</u>
	4406.37

- c) Annual Audit This had been completed.
- d) Sue Ryder Request. Following discussion Mr Farnese proposed and Mr Barker seconded that a donation of £100 be made. This was unanimously approved.

#### 7578: FINANCE.

- e) Draft Budget 20010/11. The Chairman recommended a precept of £30,855 an increase of £758 +2.52% on the current year. This translated into a Band D rate of £38.73 v £37.68, an increase per household of 2.8%. Following discussion Mr Green proposed setting the precept at £30,855, Mr Runnalls seconded and this was unanimously approved.
- f) Adopt a Telephone Kiosk. Correspondence from WBC on the issue had been circulated. Following discussion Mr Barker proposed buying the telephone kiosk outside the Pearson Hall for £1. Mr Farnese seconded and this was unanimously approved.

#### 7579: HIGHWAYS.

Report. Mr Peters had circulated a report, which was noted.

7.5t Environmental Limit. A survey had been carried out on 26 November between 10.00 and 14.00. To comply with the requirements of Oxfordshire Trading Standards reporting standards, volunteers were positioned mid-way between the French Horn and the bridge. A TS officer had attended the survey for part of the time and had checked all the approach 7.5t signs, including the A4, to ensure compliance. Three vehicles were clearly over the limit and 4 witness report forms (one vehicle had crossed over the bridge twice), supported with photographic evidence, were submitted to Oxon Trading Standards who were processing investigations with the DVLA etc. The Chairman said this had been a good effort and a successful prosecution would be helpful. Once the process had been approved by Oxon TS the media would be approached.

Parking Outside RBCS. No update available.

Top 3 Priorities.

Sonning Lane/A4 Junction and Pearson Road/High Street Junction. No update, but these were being closely monitored.

Thames Street Pavement Pinch Point. WBC had now said that a new footway had to be at least 1.5 metres wide and, as there was no accident record, this was low priority. However, if the property owner applied for planning permission and repositioned his wall to provide a 1.5 metre space WBC might consider adopting it as part of the public footway. Mr Doyle asked what would happen if he obtained planning permission to move the wall back and then left an area, which could be used as a footway, however less than 1.5 metres. This could be done at less cost using local labour and materials. Mr Peters said this could be discussed at the next Highways meeting.

Highways Working Group The next WG meeting would be held on Saturday 9 January 09.00 to 12.00. in the pavilion. The aim would be to initiate plans for a Highways strategy for the future of Sonning. The Chairman said that Sarah Barrow would be prepared to act as a facilitator but would find a substitute if she were unavailable. Several Councillors indicated their availability.

TiF Update. The Chairman said that WBC were not sure that OCC's 'in principle' decision, to become a category 2 partner, would be acceptable to the DfT. Being a category 2 partner would also allow OCC to have a say on the siting of 'Park and Ride' facilities in the area. Mark Moon was still waiting for answers from RBC before he could brief WBC in order for them to make a decision.

SOTIG. Mr Woodward chaired this group, which was made up of the seven parishes most affected by the Reading TiF bid. Their latest newsletter contained inaccuracies regarding WBC's position; Keith Baker had contacted them regarding correction.

Mrs T May (MP) had confirmed that a Conservative government would remove the community charge requirement from TiF's.

#### 7580: PLAYBUILDER PROJECT.

The Chairman had circulated details of two schemes, one including several large pieces of equipment and one including smaller pieces, forming a 'trail'. The main users of the field had

been informed and the Scouts had been consulted; the Scouts preferred the large equipment. A gazebo would need to be sourced separately as the two companies on the short list could not supply a suitable design. Following discussion the Chairman proposed the scheme with the large equipment, including the stone tower, Mr Green seconded and this was unanimously approved. The Chairman would inform residents in an article in the January Parish Magazine.

#### 7581: RECREATION & ENVIRONMENT W. G.

Update. Mr Green said that the replacement windows had been installed and new keys had been provided to all users. There had been no response from the contractors regarding the woodworm despite e-mails and a letter from the Clerk (which had also been copied by e-mail). This would be discussed at the next WG meeting. SCC had sent an e-mail detailing several requests earlier in the day, one for a contribution towards mowing the field in April. This had not been approved at the time and as the information had been provided at such short notice and had not been seen by the majority Councillors it was agreed that no decisions could be made.

Mr Green said that 39 trees had been planted on King George's Field on Saturday 5 December, between 11.00am and 12 noon, as part of the Tree O'clock record attempt. There had been some good publicity and some more whips would be planted to complete the new hedge.

Safety Checks. These were all up to date and the Chairman had provided copies to the Clerk for her records.

#### 7582: TECHNICAL SERVICES.

Mr Farnese said that the Wharf path was in need of urgent attention; Mr Green had agreed to investigate potential materials. Mr Farnese would chase up information on supplies of replacement tiles for the damaged bus shelter in Pearson Road.

Mr Farnese and Mr Doyle would provide designs and costings for new noticeboards.

Safety Checks. These were all up to date and Mr Farnese had provided copies to the Clerk for her records.

#### 7583: POLICE AND SECURITY.

Mr Green said there was no update.

Mr Farnese said that a racing bicycle had been stolen from a property in Glebe Gardens; two other stolen bicycles (of lesser quality) had been left in its place.

The Chairman said that the lights in West Drive had not caused a nuisance so far.

#### 7584: WEB SITE.

M/S Robinson said that photographs of new Councillors were needed. The Clerk would provide up to date minutes.

#### 7585: NOMINATIONS FOR REP. ON BOROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP.

Mr McCulloch said that he had looked through the information and there was a lot of work involved for anyone prepared to volunteer for this. The Chairman thanked Mr McCulloch and it was agreed that Sonning would not propose anyone for the position.

#### 7586: PARISH ACTION PLAN.

This would be on the January agenda for discussion.

#### 7587: ACTION LIST.

This was reviewed and updated.

7588: DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.

The Next Meeting would be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 12 January.

Signed..... Dated.....