

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Sonning Parish Council held in the Pavilion, King George's Field, Sonning, on Tuesday 10 March 2009 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT.

Mr J S Chapman (Chairman), Mrs P Byrne (Vice Chairman), Mr P J Doyle, Mr A E Farnese, Mrs P Glasspool, Mr K Peters, M/S S Robinson, Mr I Runnalls. Mrs L A Bates (Clerk), Mr N Christo (WBC) and Mandy Dorman (WBC) by invitation. 33 Visitors.

APOLOGIES/WELCOME TO VISITORS.

Apologies were accepted from Mr A Barker. The Chairman welcomed everyone including 33 visitors, Nick Christo the WBC Area Manager whose responsibilities included Sonning, and Mandy Dorman, the WBC Dog Warden. Ian Runnalls, the newly co-opted member, was also warmly welcomed. The Chairman asked for mobile phones to be switched off and if anyone wished to speak on any agenda item. Two visitors wished to speak against the 6 Glebe Lane proposal and 2 on the Dog proposal. The Chairman said that Mr Doyle would briefly outline the proposals for 6 Glebe Lane, following which the meeting would be adjourned in order to hear visitor's views. Once the meeting had been reconvened he would not take any further comments from the public. Public questions on the Dog issue would be heard during Public Question Time. No further public comments would be heard under item 10

7425: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

Min. 7408, 5th line Stare was changed to State and, in the following paragraph, thought was changed to through. Min. 7413, 7th line was changed to junior club not clubs. Min. 7414, 2nd line, youth was changed to junior. Min. 7416 Pound Lane was added to Little Glebe/Glebe Lane footway. Min. 7416, last paragraph, line 1 was changed to read '40 or 50 cars parked regularly and coaches travelling to TV Park and back'. The Minutes, having been amended and circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

7426: NEW COUNCILLORS DECLARATION OF OFFICE AND TO ABIDE BY THE CODE OF CONDUCT.

Mr Runnalls had signed the Declaration of Office and Declaration to Abide by the Code of Conduct, which the Clerk had witnessed. Mr Runnalls had completed his Model Code of Conduct, Register of Members Interests, which the Clerk would copy to WBC. Mr Runnalls had shown an interest in becoming a member of the Planning Committee and this was unanimously agreed.

7427: DECLARATION OF INTEREST.

The following was noted. 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

7428: CORRESPONDENCE.

Town and Parish Standard. This was available for Councillors to read on request.

Determination of Rurality of Charvil. Charvil had now been declared rural by the Thames Valley Primary Care Agency.

New Water Charges. Theresa May (MP) had copied the reply from DEFRA regarding the proposed charge for surface water drainage from public buildings. Although supporting the principle the government were against certain categories (faith buildings, community sports clubs and scout huts etc) having to face huge increases in water charges. Guidance had been given to Ofwat (water industry regulator) on this. Any disproportionate increase in water chares should be initially raised with the water provider or failing this to the Consumer Council for Water.

Town and Parish News. Councillors would be able to attend the WBC draft Core Strategy during the official two-week examination in public, commencing on 17 March.

WBC Community Conference. The Chairman would be attending this on 20 March.

Mayors Civic Reception. Following disapproval from Borough Councillors, over the expenditure in the curen financial climate, this had been cancelled.

London Marathon. John Matthews (WBC Landscape Officer) would run in this event in support of MacMillan Cancer Support.

Personal and Prejudicial Interest. Following Mr Doyle's allegations that the Chairman and Mrs Glasspool had a prejudicial interest in the Old Dairy application, due to their involvement in a similar Backland development for the old Fire Station, the Chairman had taken advice from Mary Severin (Senior Solicitor WBC). M/S Severin had said that the developments were separate and distinct so unless the Chairman or Mrs Glasspool had other interests in the Old Dairy they could not be seen to have an interest just because they were both Backland developments. The Chairman and Mrs Glasspool had, correctly, already declared a personal interest in the Fire Brigade development. Mary Severin would be happy to speak to Mr Doyle if he was still concerned. The Chairman said that Mr Doyle should be very careful that he did not fetter himself in regard to the potential Fire Station development due to pre-determination. For the benefit of all councillors he read paras 8.3.5 and 8.3.5.2 from the Constitution of the Borough Council covering fettering. Mrs Glasspool said that she was concerned that this was an effort by Mr Doyle to bring Councillors into disrepute. Mr Doyle said that he had not fettered himself and would not do so. He had expressed a genuine concern.

7429: NICK CHRISTO – WBC AREA MANAGER NORTH.

Mr Christo said that there were three Neighbourhood Managers each responsible for a different area of the Borough; his area was north of the M4 and included Sonning. The Council's vision was to improve and join up services by being more proactive and responding more quickly, when necessary, to neighbourhood issues. To achieve this the Area Managers would be working closely with local people to understand their priorities. It had become clear that parishes and organisations were working independently on the same issues and addressing them in different ways, resulting in some overlapping. He intended to speak to Councillors and key groups with the aim of linking services. Working together would produce better results while retaining good practices. The whole scheme was vast taking in all departments and service areas including children's services, youth teams, planning etc. Mr Christo worked from the Woodley Library every Tuesday where he would be available to speak to residents. He attended police tasking meetings so was aware, in advance, where resources were being allocated. Little money was available to the Area Managers but they did have influence and they were there to help. Mr Peters said that he

7429: NICK CHRISTO – WBC AREA MANAGER NORTH (Cont'd).

was on the Neighbourhood Action Group. There were some issues, which did not involve the Parish Council. Mr Christo said that he was happy to pick up any issues and aimed to point people in the right direction. The Chairman asked if the Area managers would sit on the Area Groups and Mr Christo confirmed that this was likely. The Chairman said that Sonning had a good relationship with the planners and highways but were uncomfortable about s106 money. With little development in Sonning the amount of s106 money available to the parish was small and therefore very valuable. There was a lack of transparency from WBC over allocation of s106 money and he would like to see Mr Christo get involved in this area. Mr Christo said that other parishes shared this concern. He understood how the system worked and would be getting involved on behalf of parishes. Mrs Glasspool said that Sonning would like to hear if there were any grants for sporting activities and would also be happy to take any trees on offer. Mrs Glasspool asked if the fact that Sonning was not in the northern planning area made any difference but Mr Christo said not as this was purely a method for allocating officers. In conclusion Mr Christo said that he would be happy to hear from residents and his contact details were on the leaflets, which had been distributed.

7430: PLANNING

- a) Planning List. Mr Doyle said that 45 Old Bath Road was virtually complete but planning permission had not been given. It was being built to a high specification. The new dwelling at 7 South Drive was almost finished and s106 money should be forthcoming. There had been detailed refurbishment at the Bull but the sign needed to be correct. The coat of arms had been identified. The fourth application for 24 West Drive was being progressed. Mr Doyle read out the reasons for objecting to the Old Dairy application. A TPO had been put on the Silver Birch tree in the adjoining garden protecting the tree and its roots. The bat survey had been supplied for Ivy Cottage. The Council had objected to an application to enlarge Model Farm Barn. Plans for 6 Glebe Lane had been received.

The following new applications had been received. 101a Pound Lane (F/2009/0117). Extension of loft at first floor level with the insertion of an additional front dormer window, creation of new front porch canopy and alteration to roof at front of dwelling from hipped to gable. Erection of a detached outbuilding at rear of dwelling: Uplands Sonning Lane (F/2009/0174). Erection of two-storey rear extension to dwelling: 101 Pound Lane (F/2009/0178). Erection of outbuilding in front garden area and conversion of integral garage to playroom: The Old Dairy Thames Street (F/2009/0204). Erection of 2 x 2 bedroom semi-detached dwellings and 1 x studio apartment plus alteration to front wall. Demolition of existing outbuildings: Ivy Cottage Pearson Road (F/2009/0243 & LB/2009/0244) Erection of first floor rear extension plus raising of roof: Model Farm Barn Bath Road (F/2009/0268) Erection of 2 storey rear extension to provide additional office space at ground and first floor level: Saxon House Pearson Road (F/2009/0247) erection of detached garden room to rear of garden: 100 Thames Valley Park Drive (A/2009/0302) Proposed installation of 5 internally illuminated box signs to replace existing car park information signs: 6 Glebe Lane (F/2009/0292) erection of a new dwelling with double car port, cycle shed and new private drive.

The following applications had been Refused: Sonning Golf Club Duffield Road (F/2008/2716).

7430: PLANNING (Cont'd)

The following applications were ongoing: 1 Old Bath Road (F/2008/0339), The Bull Inn (LB/2008/1236), 24 Glebe Lane (F/2008/1259), 45 Old Bath Road (F/2008/1303), Wimbourne 47 West Drive (F/2008/1544, 45 Old Bath Road (C/2008/1660), Berks County Sports Club (C/2008/1652), Unit4 The Old Forge C/2008/1793, Land adj. 7 South Drive Sonning (C/2008/2365), Bishops Close Sonning Lane (C/2008/2617), Bull Inn (C/2009/0126), Shelton West Drive (F/2009/0049) 24 West Drive (F/2009/0082), Sonning House (F/2009/0095 & LB/2009/0098).

The following applications had been Refused: Sonning Golf Club Duffield Road (F/2008/2716).

The following applications had been approved: Berks County Sports Club (F/2008/2581), 14 South Drive (F/2008/2706).

- b) 6 Glebe Lane. The Chairman outlined the process and said that, if the officer was of a mind to approve it, the application could be listed for the WBC Planning Committee to determine.

Mr Doyle talked through the plans. The area was in a category B settlement and the access complied with regulations. The Chairman then adjourned the meeting to hear objections from residents.

Sundeep Chind. Objections – design out of character with area: result in cramped, overdevelopment of site: lack of privacy for adjoining dwellings: trees removed from site: errors on application form - only 6 Glebe Lane consulted: would become double track road resulting in 4 Glebe Lane sandwiched between two roads: drainage: wheelie bin service not operational in Glebe Lane.

Shaun Sheppard. Objections – poor design, out of character with the area: contrary to Parish Design Statement: 2 storey with shallow roof not 1.5 as stated: orphan piece of land (cannot be developed): will result in overlooking: size bulk and mass: work started, trees already removed: propose to use wheelie bins: application form errors: increased risk of flooding: would challenge correctness of site lines: access will be 2 way: potential access to further development: dwelling built across full width of site: The Chairman reconvened the meeting and said that the potential to develop the site further could not be considered, it was not part of the current application. He had discussed the on site trees with WBC but they considered them to be unworthy of preservation. Developers could begin work prior to obtaining planning permission but took a risk.

Mr Doyle had made a site visit and seen the tree stumps. The wheelie bin was not relevant and the correct certificate had been served. Issues were: contrary to WBC Design Guide, which stated that tandem development would not normally be allowed: although the government encouraged innovative design this was not one of them: development in category B settlements was limited infill and small windfall development: did not comply with siting scale and massing requirements: proposal was intrusive, overbearing and detrimental to privacy. Mr Farnese said that the existing infrastructure was already overstretched and drainage was a particular problem. Mr Doyle said new regulations required the use of permeable materials in drives. Mrs Glasspool was concerned about emergency access as Glebe Lane was very narrow making turning into the site difficult and about the impact on Paddick Close. Mr Doyle said the sight lines were correct in both directions. The Chairman said the construction of the new road would impact on the existing dwelling and properties in Paddick Close and was below 10 metres from existing dwellings. The design would be cramped and contrived. There would be a predominance of hard

landscaping. The proposal was contrary to WOS3 (character of the area), overbearing, intrusive and there was a potential for overlooking. M/S Robinson was concerned about the size, proximity to Paddick Close and constructing a road between two houses. Following discussion Mrs Glasspool proposed and M/S Robinson seconded, asking the Chairman to list the application on the following grounds: unacceptable tandem development: cramped and contrived: inappropriate in scale and character (contrary to WOS3): predominance of hard landscaping: overbearing, overlooking and intrusive to adjacent dwellings: design contrary toPPS7: access road would have a negative impact upon the amenity of adjacent properties: concern re. emergency/refuse vehicle access: concern over vision splays with proposed intensification of use. Objections to the development would be made on the same grounds.

7431: QUESTIONS FOR BOROUGH COUNCILLOR

Mrs Glasspool asked about conditions for Berkshire Sports and RC&HC. The Chairman agreed to follow this up.

Mrs Byrne asked about the hard standing for police cars in Sonning Lane and Mr Peters said this was included in the highway report.

7432: PUBLIC QUESTION TIME.

The Chairman agreed to meet a resident to discuss the sensitive subject of the failure within the various departments at WBC to prevent letters being sent out to deceased residents in spite of notification.

In answer to a question about the trees on the field being infected with a fungal disease Mrs Glasspool said that she understood that this was due to global warming and nothing could be done. However she understood that they should be able to resist the disease although they could be debilitated. Trees were constantly being planted so it was hoped that any impact would be limited.

7433: DOG FOULING ON KING GEORGE'S FIELD.

The Chairman said that dog fouling on the field had become an issue particularly as junior football was now being played regularly. There were three options 1. Do nothing 2. Ban dogs from KG Field 3. Agree measures to improve owner responsibility. WBC had a blanket ban on dog fouling across the Borough with £50 fixed penalties, which could in some circumstances be increased up to £1,000. If Sonning introduced their own measures the WBC ban would be extinguished and Sonning would have to introduce measures to cover this. A complete ban would require consultation with WBC and residents to ascertain if there were community support for dog orders. Mr Doyle said that since the notices had gone up there was a marked difference in the level of fouling on the field but Mrs Glasspool said that Councillors were now clearing the area. Mrs Glasspool said that the primary use of the field was for sport. She favoured educating the irresponsible dog owner's as dog measures would be hard to enforce. Generally offenders visited the field at the same, regular time, so a 12 hour 'watch' where leaflets could be handed out might target offenders. This would be a huge task and any help that residents could give would be appreciated. The Chairman adjourned the meeting to hear resident's views.

7433: DOG FOULING ON KING GEORGE'S FIELD (Cont'd).

The main issues were: a ban would affect all owners not just the irresponsible ones and fouling would continue. More notices providing information were required rather than leaflets. Responsible dog owners often cleared up after irresponsible ones. Banning dogs from the field would just move the problem to another location. Provide dog bags. Against a ban as children benefited from observing dogs as pets. Questions raised included whether the public could take photographs of offenders, could SPC provide dog bags and if an alternative area had to be provided for dog walking if dogs were banned.

Mandy Dorman said that her main job was to round up stray dogs and taking photographs would not help, as WBC did not take witness statements. However Mandy would visit Sonning if she were called out. Information to identify the offender, such as address, car registration number would help. A standard, warning, letter could be sent to the offender. Some parishes had authorised officers who patrolled the area. WBC would provide the training and equipment. There was a level of interest in this suggestion. The Chairman then reconvened the meeting.

The Chairman outlined the main points. Residents/ Councillors should not approach offenders or take photographs but if someone felt able to do so they could speak to offenders. It was important to have clear notices in several locations, new signs were on order, which included wording for dog controls, and other A4 size signs with fixing straps could be provided by Mandy. Option 3 (deterrents) had a high level of support. Mr Peters would be prepared to monitor the situation in order to ascertain progress levels. There was no support for providing dog bags on the grounds of expense. Mr Doyle said that the field would be closed if a child were infected so education was important. Mandy said there were only 43 cases per year countrywide. The Recreation Group would work out the details and bring recommendations to the April meeting.

7434: FINANCE.

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

FEBRUARY

Sonning Landscapes: Mow Wharf £26: Mow Playground £25	51.00
Inland Revenue Tax	221.40
Inland Revenue NIC's	257.76
Trevor May – Tennis Court resurfacing (deposit)	<u>7312.85</u>
	<u>7843.01</u>

- c) Revised Budget Figures. The Chairman had circulated a list of suggested savings to take into account the lower Precept figure and the projected income reduction. In February the NS Income Bond rate was 2.2% with an anticipated fall to 1.70%. The current rate was 1.45%. At 1.45% the Council could only expect a return of £1,370 on investments. £1,370, compared to the budget estimate of £4,000, would leave a deficit of £2,630. With a zero precept increase and the possibility of a small SCC licence increase SPC were still looking for cuts of at least £4,000. The rate could fall further but this action would put the Council on a firm footing. Following discussion changes were approved (see attached) which would allow a saving of £4,000 on the December budget figure.

7435: HIGHWAYS.

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

Mr Peters and the Chairman had met Sgt. Mark Smith on 4 March to discuss ways to enforce the new limit. It was agreed that the TRO had helped to reduce HGV's passing through Sonning but a follow up would be necessary. Sgt. Smith was supportive of a local monitoring unit to determine the approximate number of violations but the police would not prosecute on SPC reports preferring to carry out enforcement measures themselves based on their results. Both parties would liaise closely with each other over setting up the monitoring units and to gain maximum media support. Mr Peters would set up the Monitoring Unit with fully briefed volunteers and agree dates and timings with the police who would give visible support on occasions.

There was no update on the Thames Street pinch point.

The High Street/Pearson Road Bollards were in place.

The Police had confirmed their support for the Police Patrol Vehicle Hard Standing Point in Sonning Lane and Mr Peters would discuss budget availability with WBC.

Mr Peters and the Chairman had met the head teacher at RBCS to discuss the potentially dangerous parking of 15/20 cars in Sonning Lane, outside the school entrance. The School were subsidising parking at the Reading Cricket & Hockey Club but some pupils would not sign up to this. It had been agreed to arrange an on site meeting with Nick Rose to discuss the options. Concerns were expressed regarding the effects any restrictions might have such as moving the problem to another part of Sonning Lane. The Council had already agreed to support a planning application to extend on site parking at RBCS.

The Planning officer had advised that the Park and Ride system operating out of the Rugby Club did not contravene planning. However there were concerns that this did have an impact on the A4/Sonning Lane junction.

Mr Peters was in the process of putting a list of roads and footways requiring maintenance and additional input was welcome.

7436: RECREATION & ENVIRONMENT W. G.

Report. A report had been circulated and was noted. Mrs Glasspool said that resurfacing the tennis courts was almost complete. There had been one or very two minor problems but the contractors had done an excellent job which would leave the courts in tip-top condition. As there were a high number of junior player there was a need to upgrade the tennis pavilion to include WC's (currently juniors had to be escorted by an adult to the SPC pavilion). A grant claim was being put together and it was hoped that the project would benefit from S106 money. Masons Fair had asked to come to Sonning over the weekend 26/27 September. With six junior football teams now playing on the field this would be difficult to accommodate and as sport was the priority use of the field Mrs Glasspool was recommending refusal.

Mrs Glasspool said that there were issues arising from the meeting to discuss the 2009 SCC Licence, if any Councillor were a Cricket Club Vice President they would have an interest in the discussion but none were. It was understood that a junior Charvil Football Club had played at Sonning during the 2008 season. No sub-letting was allowed under the terms of the licence but the Licence didn't make it clear that 40 days were in fact 40 matches. There was a need to agree the charge for any matches over 40 for the 2009 season. Mr Farnese said all additional matches should be £22 including juniors and Councillors agreed. Following discussion Mrs Glasspool proposed accepting the amendments to the SCC Licence (see attached), including a charge of £22 for each additional match, Mr Farnese seconded and this was unanimously agreed. It was further agreed that a meeting with SCC plus the Charvil junior football coach, Mr Ray should be arranged as soon as possible.

7437: SPRING CLEAN.

Mr Farnese said that details were in the newsletter and notices around the parish. There would be no skip but WBC were organising a lorry collection from pre-arranged points. Mr Farnese would contact the Wednesday walkers, who would collect rubbish on their walk. The Chairman would arrange collection from the riverbank. Mr Farnese and Mrs Glasspool would organise refreshments.

7438: POLICE AND SECURITY

Mrs Byrne proposed recommending Jackie Daniels for the Annual Police awards and this unanimously agreed.

7439: NEWSLETTER.

The Chairman said that one or two additional items were awaited. He was putting a Borough report together and a flyer giving details of the SLTC fund day would be distributed at the same time.

7440: WEB SITE.

M/S Robinson said that Mr Robinson had made the changes to the web site suggested by Mrs Glasspool.

7441: DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting would be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 14 April 2009.

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