

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Sonning Parish Council held in the Pavilion, Pound Lane, Sonning, on Tuesday 11 March 2014 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT.

Mr P J Doyle, (Chairman), Mr A Evans, Mr T Fisher, Mr J Hargrave, Mr S D Liddiard, Mrs P Pownall, Ms V Reeve, Mr I Runnalls. Mrs L A Bates (Clerk). 2 visitors.

APOLOGIES/WELCOME TO VISITORS.

Apologies were received from Mr A E Farnese. Cllr M Haines (WBC) had sent his apologies. The Chairman welcomed all those present.

8427: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The Minutes, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

8428: DECLARATION OF INTEREST.

Mr Liddiard and Mr Runnalls declared a personal interest in item 5.

8429: CORRESPONDENCE.

Neighbourhood Planning. Mr Hart had e-mailed the Chairman to remind the Chairman about his letter regarding a Neighbourhood Plan. The Chairman said that the Conservation Area Plan needed to be completed first but Neighbourhood Plans were about developing the area and there was very little opportunity for this in Sonning.

Request for Internal Auditors contact details. The Clerk had received a request for the contact details and had obtained the external auditors permission before passing these on.

Invoice from Berkshire Sports. Berkshire Sports had completed the repairs to Gunners Lane and had submitted an invoice for the Council's £100 contribution. The Clerk understood that Berkshire Sports were also asking the other four adjoining landowners to make a contribution of £100 per annum. One of the landowners was likely to refuse as his deeds did not commit him to this and there was no legal basis to the arrangement. Following discussion it was agreed to pay the £100 but to inform Berkshire Sports that rather than pass the £100 over to Berkshire Sports on an annual basis the money would remain in the Council's account ready to contribute the appropriate amount to any agreed repairs as necessary.

8430: LETTERS FROM MR *****.

The Chairman said that further to Mr ***** letter dated 12 January 2014 seeking answers to 19 questions regarding the funding for the Bridge Safety Lighting project he had had written again on 4 March 2014 asking that the Council conduct a formal review of its decision to withhold the names of those who had made a contribution to the funding and the amounts they had each contributed.

The Chairman referred to the letter dated 4 January, a Sunday. Mr ***** was a previously co-opted member of Sonning Parish Council but was not elected in May 2011 and a critic of the bridge lights, which The RT Hon Theresa May PM had said was a huge benefit to people. The Chairman said that ten copies (one addressed to the Clerk and nine addressed to individual Councillors) had been hand delivered to the Clerks home address during the evening of 12 January. In addition copies of the letter had been e-mailed to the council's, the Chairman's and the Clerks e-mail addresses. The Clerk had found this harassing particularly as Mr ***** knew where the Council office was in Pearson Road. The Council's reply had answered eighteen of the questions but the answer to question twelve,

8430: LETTERS FROM MR ***** (Cont'd).

which was for SPC to supply the names and amounts contributed the private individuals who had contributed to the fundraising, had been that the Council could not supply these details due to data protection. This advice had been received from WBC. Another question had asked about the S106 money, and stated that the money had not been given specifically for the Bridge lights. This was incorrect, WBC had provided the highways allocation specifically for the Bridge lighting and was based on the submission to WBC by the Clerk, of the lighting project quotes. Failure to carry out the lighting would have resulted in SPC having to return the S106 money to WBC.

The second letter dated 4 March 2014 had been hand delivered to the Clerk's home address and e-mailed copies had been sent to the Council, the Chairman and the Clerks e-mail address. The Chairman said that the address of the Council Office was public knowledge and again the Clerk was unhappy about receiving correspondence at her home address. The second request was for the Council to conduct an internal review of its decision to withhold the information on question twelve. The Chairman had discussed the matter with WBC and they had said that if the requests were persistent and repetitive the Council might want to check out the FOI advice on vexatious request. The Chairman said that the January request had compared the project to one of those that were often referred to as a '*vanity project, as they are often driven by a single individual who feels that they know best*'. Mr ***** had sought publicity by approaching the Henley Standard on the previous occasion referred to in the January request. The ICO listed a number of reasons that requests could be seen as vexatious and only one of these criteria had to be satisfied. Having considered the FOI check list, Councillors felt this request failed for several of the reasons (tone of the letter, burden on SPC's time, personal grudges etc.), and it was therefore vexatious. Mr Runnalls said the Council should respond, quoting the relevant FOI section and say that they had sought legal advice. Ms Reeve said there was a need to stop this process and the reply should be sent by recorded delivery. The Chairman said he had been given top level legal advice and proposed informing Mr ***** that the Council had considered his request and found that it was vexatious and that they would not correspond with him any further on this subject. Mr ***** would also be informed of the correct way to contact the Council. For clarity the Chairman asked Councillors for their view. Mr Fisher said that he couldn't understand what supplying the information would achieve. Mr Evans said that he supported the action, he would not have responded to the nineteen questions, but would have replied that the answers were in the minutes and residents should come to the Council meetings to question the Council. It was inappropriate to keep coming back for more information and Mr Evans supported anything that prevented any further hassle. Mr Hargrave said there was a need to say enough was enough. The Chairman said that he would ask WBC about any action that could be taken regarding the statement about the Council's 'probity'. Mr Runnalls said that Mr ***** was a group of one and seconded the Chairman proposal. This was unanimously approved.

8431: PLANNING.

The Chairman said that the application for a Certificate of Lawfulness at the Farmhouse had been refused. Star Court was to be let. 19 Old Bath Road was in the process of being demolished prior to redevelopment. The Chairman said that the Planning Committee had considered the application for St. Andrews Church at the last meeting. There were three main elements, on balance policies allowed the site to be developed and the need for the development had been established. The question about parking remained. New rules about traffic and parking had been introduced in the MDD and it was up to the developer to demonstrate how the proposed parking provision met the standards set out in the MDD and that the development retained the appropriate level of off-street parking. There were three

applications for the Fire Station, one had been approved. There was a new application at Little Court for changes to the basement.

8431: PLANNING.

The following applications were ongoing: 1 Sonning Gate (F/2012/1398); Land facing Duffield Road (F/2013/0634); 11 Hawthorn Way (F/2013/1549); 32 West Drive Sonning (F/2013/2523); Star Court Thames Street (F/2013/2455); 19 Old Bath Road (F/2014/3060); St. Andrews Church (F/2014/0049); Elm Gables Parkway Drive (F/2014/0144); Former Fire Station and Land to Rear (NMT/2014/0175).

The following applications had been approved: Model Farm Barns Bath Road (F/2013/2526); West Drive (F/2013/2296); 35 Old Bath Road (F/2013/2546); Sonning Cottage Pound Lane (F/2013/2190).

The following applications had been refused: Farmhouse Charvil Lane (CLP/2013/2498)

The following new applications had been received. 7 Old Bath Road (VAR/2014/0192) Vary condition 2 of planning consent F/2011/2151 to change drawings no's 8195 BR-03 04 05 06 07 08 09 & 10 to 8195-BR-04c 05 06c 07c & 09c: Former Fire Station (VAR/2014/0327) Application for the removal/variation of conditions 8 11 19 & 27 of planning consent F/2013/0149 for the demolition of redundant store levelling and infilling of air raid shelter conversion and extension of former fire station to create 1 x 3 bedroom dwelling with garage plus erection of 1 x 4 bedroom dwelling with garage on adjoining land with new vehicular access. Condition 8 to be varied to enable new access to be provided later in the development (prior to occupation rather than commencement of development) and condition 19 (no gates) to be varied to refer to two accesses rather than one. Conditions 11 and 27 to be removed. Former Fire Station (C/2014/0408) Submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consent F/2013/0149:3. Samples and details of materials4. Hard and soft landscaping5a) Arboricultural Works Scheme7. Secure bicycle parking8. School warning signs9. Vehicular access gradient11. Existing vehicular access13. Asbestos Survey14. Ground levels15. Boundary treatments20. Surface Water Drainage Scheme21. Bat Survey22. Reptile Contingency Plan24. Air Raid Shelter26. Site Management Plan27. Relocation of school signs28. Stag Beetle Mitigation Plan.

The Managing Development Delivery plan had been launched and could be seen on the WBC web site.

A copy of the TRO for Sonning Bridge had been received, it showed the absolute weight limit to be 7.5t.

8432: CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT.

Mr O'Callaghan and Mr Hart had confirmed that the document would be ready by the end of March. It would then have to be pulled together, possibly by a professional. Mr Evans said that Mr Hulley had asked if the Traffic WG would continue. It was agreed that this was unlikely.

8433: QUESTIONS FOR BOROUGH COUNCILLOR.

In the absence of Cllr Haines there were no questions.

8434: PARISHIONERS QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

8435: DEFIBRILLATOR.

Ms Reeve said that she had checked the defibrillator and was waiting to hear about the training sessions. Everyone seemed very happy with it. The Chairman said that he had some additional signs which he would put in the Mill Theatre and the Great House, he

understood that a man had died at the Great House, following a heart attack at the end of February. Following discussion Ms Reeve agreed to officially open the defibrillator and would arrange a suitable date.

8436: WEB SITE.

Ms Reeve said that things were progressing and asked Mrs Hicks to show sample designs for the new logo. These would be circulated for Councillors to agree their preferred choice by 17 March at the latest. Mrs Hicks showed a mock-up of the front page on her tablet and said the format could be used on tablets, i-phones etc. They would need assistance to proof read all the information. The Chairman said it was a fantastic job, Mr Gilmore and his assistants were to be congratulated.

8437: FINANCE.

- a) Report. The Clerk had prepared a report which was noted.
- b) Allotment Rents. It was agreed that there was a need to increase the rents as they did not currently cover the cost of the water rates. Following discussion Ms Reeve proposed increasing the rent for a whole allotment to £15 per annum and £7.50 for OAP's, Mr Farnese seconded and this was unanimously approved. It was also agreed that the condition of several of the allotments should be monitored. The Clerk would advise all allotment holders of this and that the condition would be reviewed again in the summer.
- c) New Signatories for Investment Accounts. Following discussion the Chairman proposed that Mr Liddiard, Mrs Pownall and Mr Runnalls should all be signatories, Mr Fisher seconded and this was unanimously approved.
- d) Payment of Accounts. The Chairman proposed making the following payments Ms Reeve seconded and these were unanimously approved.

February

Street Furnishings – Lock & Chain	52.88
Inland Revenue – Tax	166.65
Inland Revenue - NIC	99.91
Nat. Savings – Transfer of Investment	(50,000.00)
P J Doyle – Defibrillator Support material	283.82
OALC _ Chairman Training	78.00
GHK Electrical Defibrillator connection	45.00
A R Hulley – Litter Jan	<u>145.83</u>
	872.09

8438: PROPOSALS FOR QUEENS JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS.

Mr Fisher and Mr Hargrave were actively seeking additional funding.

8439: HIGHWAYS.

Mr Evans said that he had been working with Ms Reeve and Mrs Hicks on the Neighbourhood Watch insertion for the web site, in particular this was to promote the Speed

Watch campaign. The Chairman asked Ms Elder (Twyford Advertiser) if Oxon CC had provided any information about the closure of the Playhatch Road but Ms Elder said no. Mr Evans said that he understood that Oxon were considering their options, the barriers they had installed had been moved by

8439: HIGHWAYS.

drivers to allow traffic through. The road closure through Sonning was on local radio every day. People had lost confidence in Oxfordshire and there had been a large article in the Henley Standard. Mr Hargrave said that the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership were concerned as were a lot of Reading residents, who could not drive out of their homes after 3.30pm due to traffic grid lock. The road closure was affecting businesses in Reading and Henley was also badly affected. Ms Reeve said that there was talk about getting the army in. Mr Runnalls said that once the road was repaired the traffic would still impact on a small single lane crossing. Mr Fisher said that Oxon CC had inspected the damage, there was a large crack. Mr Hargrave said that business productivity was being affected, employees could not get to work on time and there was a real danger that businesses in the Thames Valley would pull out of the area. The Chairman said that it was taking people 1.5 hours to cross from Eldon Square to Queen Anne's school.

Mr Liddiard said that he had experimented with chevrons on the bollards outside Turpins and they did seem to make a difference. Mr Liddiard would try to perfect the chevrons and suggested that the Clerk write to WBC asking for the white lines to be repainted and if an additional bollard could be installed. Mr Runnalls said that chevrons did work, those outside his property were a good example.

8440: RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENT W.G.

- a) Safety Checks. Mr Farnese had carried these out.
- b) Report. Mrs Pownall said that she and Mr Liddiard had inspected the field there was some damage to a fence in the compound, the Clerk would ask Mr Collier to take a look. The zip wire was overlapping itself at one end, the Clerk would report this to the manufacturers. Branches on several trees at the top of the field were overhanging the field making it difficult to walk or mow underneath. A small amount of crown lifting was required. Mr Liddiard would let the Clerk have details in order for her to check if this could be carried out without a full application to WBC There was some moss underneath some of the equipment, Mr Farnese would be asked to clean this away. Mr Runnalls said that the handle was missing on one piece of equipment. Mrs Pownall would check this out and would also look at the condition of the Silver Birch along the playground side of the field.
- c) Field Condition/Maintenance. One of the contractors would look at the condition at the end of March. James Hearn (CFC) had asked to be present during the inspection.
- d) SCC Request. Mrs Pownall said that the photograph SCC had provided to show an example of the store they wished to install on the field had been incorrect. A drawing was being prepared ready for the April meeting.

8441: TECHNICAL SERVICES.

In the absence of Mr Farnese there was no report.

Great House Request. The new owners wanted to make some improvements to the boundary between the hotel garden and the Wharf. They wanted to cut the hedge down to 5ft to tidy it up and to introduce an entrance from the hotel garden onto the Wharf with a lockable gate. They would be removing the tennis fencing and trimming the conifers on their side. Following discussion it was agreed that the hedge could be levelled to 5ft. Although not

against the idea in principle, more information was required about the size of the proposed opening and the design of the gate.

8442: WW1 CELEBRATIONS.

The Chairman said that the poppy planting would take place imminently, 3,000.000 seeds would be planted.

8443: NEWSLETTER.

Mrs Pownall said that she would send the copy to the printers once she had the final changes.

8444: ACTION LIST.

This was reviewed and updated.

8445: DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting would be held on Tuesday 8 April 2014 at 7.30pm.

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