

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Sonning Parish Council held in the Pavilion, Pound Lane, Sonning, on Tuesday 10 March 2020 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT. Mr A E Farnese (Chairman), Mr T Fisher, Mrs J Harvey, Mr P Morrison.

By invitation Cllr M Firmager (WBC) and Mr Martin Heath (WBC Highways). 1 visitor.
Mrs L A Bates (Clerk).

10489: APOLOGIES/WELCOME TO VISITORS. Apologies were received from Mrs J Fielder (holiday).

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

10490: DECLARATION OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations.

10491: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

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

10492: HIGHWAYS PRESENTATION – MARTIN HEATH.

Mr Fisher introduced Mr Heath and said that he and Mr Heath had met up on two occasions to discuss various highway issues in Sonning, the last occasion had been on 27 February when both Pound Lane and Charvil Lane issues had been discussed. Mr Fisher said that on looking back the problems in Pound Lane had been on the SPC agenda as long ago as 1995 and had been mentioned constantly since he had joined the Council. The Parish Council would like to know what the possibilities were. The site lines from the existing crossing, when crossing from the east was limited due to the bend and vehicles from the Pearson Road direction had increased their speed by the time the crossing came into view. Speeds of 70mph had been recorded at night with one vehicle travelling at 65mph at 9.15pm. There had been several unsolicited complaints from residents recently about nasty near misses when trying to use the crossing, one had been able to take a photo of the offending vehicle with the registration number visible. Residents were all clear that they wanted a puffin crossing as they felt unsafe using the existing crossing. A survey of residents living in Pound Lane had been undertaken at the request of Sara Allman in 2017 with 80% of responses in favour of upgrading the crossing and support for extending the 20mph zone back to the A4. There had also been support for removing the speed hump. Mr Fisher said that he had tried to get a price for the crossing from Sara Allman and had been told £15,000 not including traffic management and SPC had allocated £20,000 towards the work. Having been told that there was money in the WBC budget in 2017 SPC were then told that there wasn't any money in the budget. Mr Heath said that, in order to reduce the Highway budget, WBC had withdrawn funding for 'Lollipop Ladies', however the social advantage had not been taken into consideration at the time. Since then WBC Highways had been merged into the Highways Alliance and a new contract with Volker was to be put in place from April, 2020. WBC had made three new appointments Mr Heath and two others responsible for long terms plans for traffic. Ms Allman had been an agency worker. There were many demands on the WBC Highways budget, so Mr Heath wanted to meet all the parishes in order to understand their overall highway concerns.

Referring to the extension of the 20mph zone to the A4 Mr Heath said that a TRO would be required to obtain this. There was also the question of how to enforce compliance and Mr Heath said there had been an instance of someone being killed in a 20mph zone in another parish. WBC would pursue the proposal and would tell the police that they were happy to progress the extension, but the police might not be happy and feel that it was unsafe to enforce. If that were

10492: HIGHWAYS PRESENTATION – MARTIN HEATH (Cont'd)

the case WBC could not commit resources. Mr Fisher asked if gates/speed bumps were needed and Mr Heath said he felt that something would be required.

Moving on to the proposal to upgrade the crossing Mr Heath said that safety might be an issue, there was an argument that the existing crossing was safer, if vehicles stopped quickly due to traffic lights, they might collide with each other. On average zebra's performed better but how it was used had to be factored into the equation. In some cases, pedestrians might cross if the lights didn't change quickly enough for them, whereas they could cross immediately using a zebra. which was itself, a potential danger. The police were urging people to report concerns. Mr Heath was asked about the speed bumps in Burchetts Green. Mr Heath said these were a different standard, which depended upon the height of the pavement compared with the road. In Pound Lane the pavement was relatively low compared with the pavement in Burchetts Green. Mr Fisher asked what Mr Heath would install instead of a Pelican crossing. Mr Heath said he would consider the speeds and where it would be safe to change to 20mph. Mrs Harvey said that children often had to wait at the crossing due to speeding vehicles and had to cross the road several time a day. Mrs Harvey also said that she had seen vehicles going through the red lights on the A4 crossing. Mr Morrison asked if the police were happy with the proposed Pelican crossing, what the timescale would be, and Mr Heath replied about three months. However, there would need to be consultation with residents but the designs could be processed at the same time. Implementation would be late 2020 early 2021. Mr Fisher said a lot of work had already been undertaken, Mr Heath agreed but said the TRO process was a statutory time process. Mr Heath said that some work could be processed immediately, for instance the 20mph. Mr Fisher said that he hadn't understood the different thinking on the two types of crossing. Mr Heath said that there was a cost implication. Making the cosmetic changes to the existing crossing would cost in the region of £15,000, to have lights, but no control, about £40,000 to 45,000. Mr Fisher said that SPC would want more than cosmetic changes to the existing crossing and Mr Heath said this would depend on budgets. The poor sightlines created by the curve in the road from the Pearson Road direction did present problems and in order to upgrade the crossing it might be necessary to push the crossing further towards the A4. Asked about the parking outside the school Mr Heath said that this did slow vehicle speeds but Mrs Harvey said that vehicles would drive onto the pavement in frustration at the parked cars and she had stood on the pavement in Pound Lane to prevent this. Mr Heath suggested that some measures would make the Pound Lane route less attractive to drivers, additional signs and markings might help as would speed surveys.

Asked about the dangerous exit and entrance to August Field in Charvil Lane Mr Heath said that maintenance was all reactive now. It was possible to widen the footpaths in Charvil Lane by cutting back the undergrowth, the Borough could consider the management of HGV's, perhaps reducing the weight limits. WBC wanted to consider road issues across the Borough and all information received was put on a database. WBC wanted vehicles to take the right route for their journey and he would be happy to meet up with SPC on a quarterly basis to assist this. Mr Fisher thanked Mr Heath and said he would be welcome to make a return visit and he would ensure that relevant information was forwarded to Mr Heath. Mr Heath took his leave a 7.55pm.

10493: CO-OPTION – APPLICATION TO BE COPTED AS A COUNCILLOR JAMES HAY

The Chairman said that everyone had met Mr Hay as he had attended recent SPC meetings. Mrs Harvey asked Mr Hay about his reasons for joining the Parish Council. Mr Hay said that he wished to assist the elderly in Little Glebe and Glebe Gardens, which he already did unofficially. Mr Hay also had concerns about dogs on the recreation ground, potholes parking and other highway issues, he was also supportive of the clean up initiative. Mr Hay left the room and following discussion the Chairman proposed that the casual vacancy be filled by co-opting

10493: CO-OPTION – APPLICATION TO BE CO-OPTED AS A COUNCILLOR - JAMES HAY

Mr Hay, Mr Morrison seconded and this was unanimously approved. Mr Hay signed the acceptance of Office and the Clerk witnessed this. Mr Hay would complete and return his Declaration of Interests within the timescale.

10494: PARISHIONER QUESTIONS.

This item was brought forward. Mr Doyle said that the Bridge lights hadn't worked for six to eight months, why hadn't they been repaired. The Chairman reminded Mr Doyle that he was aware of the situation, SEC had not responded despite numerous phone calls. SEC had let the Council down, the lights, as installed, had not been fit for purpose in the first place. Any proposed changes would need to be agreed with the Conservation Officers in both Wokingham and Oxfordshire. There followed a short exchange of views between the Chairman and Mr Doyle. Mr Firmager said that he had chased the Coppa Club about lifebuoys. The safety of their guest, who could access the river via their open garden gate was at risk and Mr Firmager would continue to work on this. The Chairman said that the lifebuoys could be open to abuse from the public. There were a variety of designs, not all were round, and the Chairman agreed to check out what was used at the Mill. Mr Firmager said that he had made comments on the Neighbourhood Plan Consultation.

10495: CORRESPONDENCE.

Request from 3rd Loddon Rainbows'. Carrie Apps Unit Leader of the reformed Loddon Rainbow had written asking for funds for equipment as they were starting from scratch. Following value of £50 discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would ask if there was a specific piece of equipment that the Parish Council could purchase up to the value of £50.

The Fire Service Water Rescue. They had informed the Clerk that they now had their own key and thanked SPC for opening the gate over the last few months.

Rats in Compost Heap. Mr Driver had asked the Clerk if the Pest Control company could put a rat feed box in his compost heap and he had a rat infestation. Pest Control had been happy to oblige.

Meeting With SCC. Mr Murphy was now unable to attend the meeting on the agreed date. Following discussion, the only dates when all Councillors could attend in the foreseeable future were 30 March or 8 April at 6.00pm. The Clerk would inform Mr Murphy.

Charity Sports Day 14 March. Mr Fisher agreed to open-up and close the pavilion for this.

New Battery for Computer. The battery that had come with the SPC laptop was no longer charging and was closing the laptop while being used. The Chairman proposed spending up to £60 for a replacement battery, Mr Morrison seconded, and this was unanimously approved.

10496: PLANNING.

Report. The Chairman said that there was one new application new Little Gogs Holme Park Farm Lane (193344) and Chyreen Holmemoor Drive, 193391, had been approved. The application on Land to the West of The Range, Old Bath Road (200354). Full application for the proposed erection of 7no. detached residential dwellings with garages, widening of the existing access road, plus associated works on land currently comprising 'Red Lodge' and part of the garden of the adjacent property 'The Range', following demolition of 'Red Lodge' was discussed. Cllr Firmager was asked to list the application and the Clerk would copy comments on a previous application to him for information.

10496: PLANNING (Cont'd)

The following applications were on going. 20 West Drive (192050). Full application for the proposed erection of one 5no. bedroom dwelling with detached double garage, following demolition of existing dwelling:

The following applications had been approved. Chyreen Holmemoor Drive (193391).

The following applications had been refused. No refusals.

The following applications had been withdrawn. None.

The following new applications had been received. Little Gogs Holme Park Farm Lane (193344). Full application for the proposed telecommunications upgrade. Proposed 35 metre CF31 MBNL Tower on 7.8 metre concrete base, plus associated works.

Neighbourhood Plan. This was ongoing.

10497: QUESTIONS FOR BOROUGH COUNCILLOR.

There were no further questions for Cllr Firmager

10498: FINANCE.

- a) Report. The Clerk had circulated a report, which was noted.
- b) Payment of Accounts. Mr Morrison proposed and Mr Fisher seconded making the following payments and this was unanimously approved.

SPC PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS MARCH (1 to 29 Feb '20)

Date	Chq	Name	Service Item	Gross	VAT	Net	Committee	Sub-com
10/02/20	664	Mr P Doyle	Exercise sign= netball	384.00	0.00	384.00	REC	Exercise Equip.
10/02/20	665	Mrs Fielder	Allot seat	275.00	0.00	275.00	ENVIRON	Allot Mtnce
22/02/20	666	Sonning Litter	Aug 19-Jan 20 6x 150	900.40	0.00	900.00	HIGHWAY	Litter
22/02/20	667	Henley Land	Cut Pond Hedge	256.50	0.00	256.50	REC	Pond
			TOTAL	1815.90	0.00	1815.50		

10499: HIGHWAYS

School Crossing. Mr Fisher said that there appeared to be problems with both types of crossing and there were problems with the crossing on the A4. The Chairman said that a child's life was at risk and he was disappointed that the School were not taking more interest. Mrs Harvey said that the parking in Little Glebe and Glebe Gardens was becoming impossible. Mr Fisher said that SPC could still say that they preferred the Pelican crossing and it was agreed that this was the preferred option. It was reported that there was a large pothole at the junction of Pound Lane with the A4 and Cllr Firmager would report it.

Speed Indicators (SID). Mr Fisher said that the readings in Pound Lane showed a vehicle travelling at 65mph when approaching the crossing at 9.15am. In Thames Street the figures revealed that there were 4,500 vehicles travelling through, which was fewer than he expected.

Lorry/Speed Watch. Mr Fisher said that he hoped to do a speed watch in Sonning soon. Lorry Watch had shown 3 Mould lorries going to the Atrium and a 44t lorry going over the Bridge.

10500: RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENT W.G.

- a) Safety Checks. Mrs Harvey said that everything was fine in the playground, but the padding needed to be replaced on the seat of the zipwire.

10500: RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENT W.G (Cont'd).

- b) Pavilion Fund Raising – Invitation to Tender. A letter had been received from HMRC regarding the VAT on the pavilion. There was little new information but HMRC confirmed that SPC could register to charge VAT on its business activities.
- c) ROSPA Report. Completed
- d) SLTC Main Gate, Water & Signs. The Chairman said that Henley Landscapes had quoted £3275 to remove the existing hedge between the tennis courts and the skatepark, dig out stumps, replace with a beech hedge at 60-80 cm in guards. It was agreed that this was a huge undertaking as the hedge was about 8ft high and 6ft deep. Following discussion, the Chairman proposed accepting the quote, Mr Fisher seconded, and this was unanimously approved. Mr Fisher said that having looked at the run of water from the cricket square to the tennis courts, it would be a shorter run if the supply were taken from the meter at the entrance to the tennis courts. The possibilities would need to be checked out
- e) Car Park Closure. The Chairman would give the key to the School.

10501: TECHNICAL SERVICES.

Safety Checks. The Chairman had carried out the safety checks on the Wharf.

Lights. No update of these.

VE Day 2020. Mr Doyle said that he and his independent group of parishioners had planned a lot of things for the 8 May. There would be a children's party in the Club garden from 12.30pm to 4.00pm, with activities including competitions and music and there would be a programme of variety in the Pearson Hall 7.00pm for 7.30pm start. No food was planned but there would be access to the Club for drinks and the programme would include war time reminiscences and songs followed by a grand finale to end by 10.30pm. Song sheets would be provided for the audience and the tickets would be £5. The British legion would do a presentation. Some banners would be displayed for a short period of time and there would be A4 posters and flyers to inform all residents.

10502: ALLOTMENTS.

There were no further updates.

10503: POLICE & SECURITY.

There were no further updates

10504: NEWSLETTER.

This had been successfully delivered to all households in Sonning.

10505: WEB SITE.

There was no update.

10506: ACTION LIST.

This was held over to the next meeting.

10507: DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 14 April 2020 at 7.00pm.

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