

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Sonning Parish Council held via Skype, on Tuesday 10 November 2020 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT. Mr A E Farnese (Chairman), Mr T Fisher, Mr J Hay, Mr A Halliday. No Visitors
Mrs L A Bates (Clerk).

10589: APOLOGIES/WELCOME TO VISITORS. Apologies were received from Mrs Jan Fielder, Mrs J Harvey (leave of absence), Mr P Morrison (Holiday): Cllr M Firmager (WBC).
The Chairman welcomed all those present.

10590: DECLARATION OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest.

10591: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

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

10592: COUNCILLORS DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE, TO ABIDE WITH CODE AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:

Mr Halliday had previously signed the Declarations and the Clerk had witnessed this.

10593: NEW COUNCILLOR PORTFOLIO.

Mr Halliday confirmed that he would like to join the Traffic Working Group.

10594: CORRESPONDENCE.

Playground. The Chairman said that he had been dismayed at the tone of recent correspondence regarding the playground and litter on the Wharf.

Improvements to the Pound. Mr Driver had proposed restoring the copse in the Pound to its former glory as a woodland glade, This would include removing some self-seeded shrubs and keeping others, making a walkway through from the bus shelter to the steps the far end of the copse and planting some native bluebell and wild daffodil bulbs if SPC would fund this. Following discussion Mr Fisher proposed agreeing the improvements including spending up to £350 on native bubs, Mr Halliday seconded, and this was unanimously approved.

Travellers. WBC had reported that a large group of travellers had occupied private land in Lower Earley and were still in the area after being evicted by Bailiffs. Parishes were being warned to secure their property.

Filming on Riverbank. A small production company had asked for permission to film on the bridge and adjoining Riverbank as part of a small film showing part the journey of a modern-day pilgrim. It would be very low key with only 5 to 7 operatives involved plus the actor. Following discussion, it was agreed that there were no objections, but concerns were expressed about filming on the Bridge during peak traffic times. The Clerk would ask if they had carried out a Risk Assessment and if so if they could send a copy.

10595: PLANNING.

Report. The Chairman said that the following applications had been approved: Old Readingensians (201882): Pilgrims, Thames Street (202433). Unit 2 East Reading Retail Park Shepherds Hill, Woodley. (202464).

10595: PLANNING (Con't).

The following applications were ongoing). Land South of Old Bath Road (201833: Holme Park Farm, Holme Park Farm Lane: Sonning Place Pearson Road. (202337).

The following applications had been approved. See above

The following applications had been refused. No refusals.

The following applications had been withdrawn. No applications had been withdrawn.

The following appeal was ongoing: Linkside Duffield Road 19/24/38) APPEAL APP/X0360/W/20/3254803

Neighbourhood Plan. Mr Fisher said that the volunteers were being organised into groups considering different aspects (Finance and Grants: Historic Environment & Conservation Area: Landscape & Environment etc.) and this would include research and putting questions together for their section. There was a possibility that the questionnaire would be ready in time for delivery before Christmas.

The following new applications had been received. 17 Pound Lane (202613). Householder application for proposed erection of single storey side extension to garage with insertion of 1 no. roof light. 12/11/20: Little Court Charvil Lane (202620). Householder application for proposed installation of prefabricated timber outbuilding to the rear garden of existing dwelling. 12/11/20

10596: PARISHIONERS QUESTIONS.

There were no questions from parishioners.

10597: BOROUGH COUNCILLORS QUESTION TIME.

In the absence of Cllr Firmager there were no questions.

10598: FINANCE.

- a) Payment of Accounts. The Mr Morrison proposed, and Mr Fisher seconded making the following payments for October and this was unanimously approved.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS NOVEMBER (1-31 October '20)

Date	Chq	Name	Service Item	Gross	VAT	Net	Comm	Sub-committee
01/10/20	731	Fulford Dobson	Tree Hazard Survey	1140.00	190.00	950.00	REC	Tree Care
01/10/20	732	Turfleet	Equip for Rec. M'tnce	1272.00	212.00	1060.00	REC	Weed/Feed/Seed
09/10/20	733	TIVOLI	Dog Bins April- Sept	993.60	165.60	828.00	ENVIRON	Dog Bin Empty
09/10/20	734	Mancey	Pagoda Repairs	1000.00	0.00	1000.00	REC.	Play Equip
09/10/20	735	Environ Agency	Wharf Licence	61.20	0.00	61.20	ENVIRON	Wharf Licence
09/10/20	736	Henley Land	Main Mowing	260.00	0.00	260.00	REC	Main Mow
30/10/20	737	Avoncrop	Renovation Mix	2622.00	437.05	2184.95	REC.	Weed/Feed etc
30/10/20	738	Steelmakers	Repairs to SLTC Gate	600.00	100.00	500.00	SPORT	SLTC Utilities
30/10/20	739	TIVOLI	Dog Bins Oct	165.60	27.60	138.00	ENVIRON	Dog Bin Empty
30/10/20	740	Castle Water	Allotment Water	70.96	0.00	70.96	ENVIRON	Allot. Water
30/10/20	741	Castle Water	Square Water	128.72	0.00	128.72	SPORT	Square Water
30/09/20	742	Castle Water	Pav. Water	428.07	0.00	428.07	SPORT	Pav. Utilities
			TOTAL	8742.15	1132.25	7609.90		

- b) Report. The Clerk had circulated a report, which was noted. The Clerk said a draft budget would be circulated for discussion at the December meeting.

10599: HIGHWAYS

Speed Indicators (SID). Mr Fisher said that vehicles numbers were down in Thames Street by 20% on the previous years figures and Pearson Road had been down by a third. Worryingly a vehicle had been recorded doing 60 mph in Pound Lane at 4.10 pm on a Friday afternoon, when children were likely to have still been around. This was something Mr Fisher wanted to take up with Mr Heath and he also wanted to introduce him to Mr Gilmore, who was becoming more and more concerned about speeding and wanted more action. Thanks to Mr Runnalls assistance the SID in Charvil Lane had now been turned to face east and would provide information about traffic leaving Sonning and heading towards to A4 and as it was inside the 20 mph zone should record the speed in the zone. The maximum speed recorded when the SID had been facing Sonning Village had been 45 mph. The manufacturers had said that the camera only recorded the first speed it first recorded. Several members of the Society were becoming concerned about the speed in Sonning and unfortunately the police were not interested in enforcing the 20 mph limit. Mr Halliday asked how this this was known. Mr Fisher explained that he attended the NAG meetings, which the police attended, the Inspector had said that 20 mph zones were self-enforcing, but he hoped that Mr Heath would be more responsive. Mr Heath had already suggested alternative ways of traffic calming. Mr Halliday asked if speed humps had been considered and Mr Fisher said that responses to the traffic questionnaire had been mixed, approximately 50/50, but everything was for discussion. Mr Hulley (Society) had suggested speed cameras in order to get prosecutions, which could help reduce speeding. Mr Halliday asked if the Local Authority were checking speeds, but Mr Fisher said they only carried out random checks due to staffing restrictions Mr Fisher also explained that SPC had agreed a £20,000 contribution for improvements to the existing crossing, but indications were that the cost was likely to be £50,000, the existing crossing was not ideal. Mr Halliday mentioned the recent head-on collision on the Bridge, in which the brickwork had been damaged. Mr Fisher said a driver had jumped the lights in an earlier collision and this was also the cause of this latest crash.

10600: RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENT W.G

- a) Safety Checks. The Chairman said that the playground was locked due to corona restrictions and the exercise machines were on his list to do..
- b) Single Storey Pavilion – Architect’s fee and Updates. The Parish Council already had planning permission for the two-storey pavilion but, due an inconclusive reply form HMRC to the accountant’s letter seeking a clear yes or no answer, insufficient funds and the Covid-19 situation progress had stalled. SCC had requested a meeting, which had been agreed but, having received very detailed plans and engineers working drawings, in advance of the meeting, it had been decided that the full Council needed to consider them, particularly as these had been prepared without instruction form SPC and a fee of £1,000 was being proposed. In order to submit a planning application based on the single storey pavilion the Architect had quoted, £750 to £1,000 to prepare the plans for planning, completing the application forms etc. the WBC planning fee approximately £693, and a bat survey at £350 to £500, all plus VAT. The Chairman said that, including the £1,000 now being asked, SPC had paid out £6,800, and no further forward to building a new pavilion. The VAT position was still unclear. With the current situation there was a lot of uncertainty about the future and meetings were being undertaken via Skype which was less than satisfactory. The Chairman’s preference was to wait until it was possible to meet face to face in order to discuss all aspects and agree a way forward. Mr Fisher said that the asset funding had been opened but no money was currently available for pavilions, their priority was providing funds to clubs that had suffered financially during the lockdown and needed assistance to begin playing again. There was no point in applying, however Mr Fisher said that he would be happy to look for other sources of funding. Following discussion. it was agreed not to spend any further money until it was possible to complete the project. And

10600: RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENT W.G

Mr Fisher would pass this on to SCC. Mr Fisher then proposed paying the Architects invoice of £1,0000, the Chairman seconded, and this was unanimously approved.

- c) Quotes for Tree Work. Mr Fisher said that he had gone through the Tree Survey and extracted the details for those trees where the recommended deadline was six months. This had been sent to 4 companies dealing with tree work. There were other trees, where the recommended deadline was 12 months, which would be included in the second phase. In the first phase one tree needed an aerial inspection, which would need a further quote, three needed to be felled and Mr Driver had made some suggestions. Mr Halliday asked about a Beech tree in the area next to the raised footway, Mr Fisher said that m Liddiard had planted that tree and he would speak to him
- d) Security Proposals. The Chairman, Mr Fisher and Mr Halliday would meet on site on 21st November at 11.00 am.
- e) SLTC Hedge. Mr Fisher had attended the remote SLTC AGM where the hedge had been discussed. A lot of members liked the hedge, which was a nice visual backdrop, and acted as a windbreak. There was a suggestion that the Club could maintain the hedge and their Chairman was to seek members views. Views about a fence were that it would be out of place, they liked the idea of a native hedge. Work to lower the hedge and reduce the width would be costly and the centre of the hedge was dead, as could be seen on Google. The hedge was unlikely to flourish once this work was done. Mr Collier had reduced the height and width three years previously at a cost of £2,000 and the same would need to be paid again. Henley Landscape had quoted £3275 to remove the existing hedge, dig out stumps, replace with a beech hedge at 60-80 cm in guards and install a net privacy net. Following discussion, it was agreed that the hedge would continue to be costly to maintain, Mr Fisher proposed accepting the quote, Mr Halliday seconded, and this was unanimously approved.
- f) Bus Shelter Quotes. Mr Fisher said that he had two quotes for the repairs, the first to repair the roof and sides was £1070, additionally the quote to repair 2 bus shelters in Pound lane and 1 in Sonning Lane was £1250. The second quote for the bus shelter next to the recreations ground was £600 and £530 for the three other bus shelters. As the weather was deteriorating it had been agreed to have the work done asap and Mr Fisher had accepted the second quote. The contractor had carried out an excellent job and Mr Fisher proposed paying for the work retrospectively, the Chairman seconded, and this was unanimously approved.

10601: TECHNICAL SERVICES.

Safety Checks. The Chairman said that there was nothing to report but he would return to inspect the benches on the Wharf.

10602: CLIMATE CHANGE.

The Chairman and Mr Fisher had attended a remote meeting of WDALC, there was an interesting agenda including Climate Change. WBC had produced a list of suggestions for reducing climate change, many of them aimed at larger councils. Planting trees was one that could be done, it was understood that WBC had grants for this, and changing the street lighting bulbs to more energy efficient ones which SPC had already carried out on 50% of the street lights under the WBC scheme. Mr Fisher explained the lighting scheme for Mr Halliday's benefit.

10603: POLICE & SECURITY.

In the absence of Mrs Fielder there were no figures, but Mr Fisher mentioned the head on crash on the bridge.

10604: ALLOTMENTS.

The Chairman said that renewing the existing fence would cost about £4,000 but the large heap of rubbish in the neighbour's garden was piled high against the hedge and would have to be removed first. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk should write to the neighbour and the Chairman would obtain a firm quote for the fence from Bearwood Fencing.

10606: ACTION LIST.

This was reviewed and updated.

10607: DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 8 December 2020 at 7.00 pm. It was hoped that this would be a meeting in the Pavilion for the traditional Christmas drinks and mince pies, which the Chairman would obtain. If government restrictions were still in place it would be via Skype.

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