

**BRIGHTWELL-CUM-SOTWELL PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting duly convened and held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at 7.30pm in the Church Room, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell**

**Present:** Cllrs D. Fox(Chair), C. Collett, A. McGivan, J. Debney, S. Robson H. Baines, S. Jackson and R. Nielsen.

**In attendance:** L. Dalby (Clerk) and two members of the public.

1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies were received from Cllr S. Booth and County Cllr L. Atkins.
2.	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2016</b> The minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed by the Chairman.
3.	<b>Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.</b> There were none.
4.	<b>Public Participation</b> Alison Quantrell committee member of Allsorts Pre-School reported on the planned renovation work being carried out to the pre-school garden. With the help of Tony Lascelles the committee have raised half of their target and the ground work will be completed over the Easter Holidays. Other elements of the plans will be added on a modular basis as funds allow. The pre-school also require £175 for waterproofs so all children can benefit from the garden in all weathers. The Committee have applied for other grants and are looking into applying for a WREN grant which will require 10% match funding from another source. In the future it is hoped the pre-school can be used for wrap around care for the school and holiday play schemes.  Mark Brock who is organising Brightfest 2016 requested support for the event. He confirmed that a separate bank account had been opened. The event will raise funds for the pre-school and Save the Children.
5.	<b>Reports</b> a) County Councillor's Report  1. As I reported in an email to all councillors on 17th February, on Monday 15th February I withdrew from the Conservative Independent Alliance (which I had joined in May 2013 to ensure a stable administration for the County rather than minority Conservative-led control). What I said to the leader of the Alliance on 15th February was that:  <i>In my judgement the budget put forward by the opposition will meet the needs of residents across Oxfordshire and in my Division far, far better than the one you have proposed. In particular, it will save the Health and Wellbeing Centre and will delay the closure of the Children's Centre in Wallingford for long enough for a local alternative to be put in place if we can secure local agreement. Both of those facilities, like others across the County, provide hugely important services for many people living in a wide area. The opposition budget will also offer at least some hope of a continued bus service for residents in Long Wittenham who will otherwise be marooned in a village with no access to health services, shops, libraries or any other of the many basic services they rely on. They are far from the only people across the County who are in that situation.</i>  2. Following my resignation from the Alliance on Monday 15th, on Tuesday 16th, the day of the

Budget debate the Conservatives agreed to discuss the budget with the opposition parties. Following some negotiations and very protracted discussions in the Council chamber the following changes were agreed:

- A total of £2m of savings relating to Early Intervention hubs and children's centres will now not take place. An original £6m saving on Early Intervention Hubs and Children's Centres - agreed by the council at its annual budget meeting in February 2015 - will still take place. No decisions have been taken at this stage on how this £2m will be spent.
- A total of £3m of savings relating to day centres (including transport to day centres) will now not take place. Instead they will be replaced by a saving of £1m from 2017/18 resulting from a full review of all day services for older people.
- There will be a further £300,000 contribution to the budget from reserves.

3. The net result of this is that the council will be able to set a balanced budget in 2016/17 but over the medium term now has £15.2m of unidentified savings to make as opposed to the previous figure of £11.2m. The new £4m of unidentified savings all fall in 2017/18.

**In addition:**

4. A cross party board of county councillors will be created to consider maximum benefit of use of the £4m of temporary funds awarded by central Government on February 11.
  - The council will commit to a full review relating to a workplace parking levy looking at implications and with a view to implementation as early as feasible. This may result in some reinstatement of bus subsidies, but that is my reading of the situation, not part of the formal outcome
  - There will be a review of the number of cabinet members
  - There was a free vote for all councillors on the subject of a full and timetabled consultation relating to unitary government – to discuss this issue on a cross party basis with district, town and parish councils with the clear aim of bringing it to fruition. This was overwhelmingly supported, and pre-dates the decision by District Councils across Oxfordshire to propose a specific model of unitary status for the County.
5. This is a considerably better outcome for the County than the budget which was being put forward by the Conservatives when they thought they had the majority needed to push it through, so I am very pleased with it as I hope you will be. There are still considerable hurdles to overcome but we are in a better place than we would have been.

**b) District Councillors' Report**

The thing foremost in our minds is the terrible event at Didcot Power Station. All of us have those hurt or lost and their families in our thoughts and prays at this time. Anything that we can do to help will be done.

This month has seen a number of important events, all of which affect our residents one way or another.

**Council Tax**

Firstly, when Council met on the 18th February it approved the budget for 2016/2017, which means that, whilst OCC have increased their bill by 3.99% and with a 1.99% rise for the Police and Crime Commissioner, SODC has kept it's element of the Council Tax frozen. This has been achieved without cuts to any of our services, which will be maintained at or above their present standards.

### **Corporate Services Project**

This financial 'win' is due, in no small part, to the pioneering work done by SODC in linking with the Vale of the White Horse in commissioning the original outsourcing of services some years ago. Without the experience gained, it would not have been possible for SODC to come to agreement with the four other councils now to sign up to the new Corporate Services Agreement. For SODC there is a saving of around £1 Million for each year of the new contract. Now that all parties have formally agreed, the work of recruiting the Contract Manager has begun. By now you will have probably heard that our Chief Executive, David Buckle, has decided that this is a good time for him to take retirement. David has worked hard to make SODC the success story it is today, and will be very active in recruiting our new Chief Executive as well before he leaves us.

### **Oxfordshire Vision**

The third announcement is that the five district councils in Oxfordshire - including Oxford City Council - have announced their bid for devolution by the formation of three unitary authorities. This would mean the abolition of Oxfordshire County Council. If agreed, for us this will mean that SODC will merge with the Vale of the White Horse, taking on many responsibilities presently with the County Council and gaining new powers from Westminster. At the same time, we will manage others such as transport planning and waste disposal, through a combined authority formed by the new unitary councils. Crucially, and possibly uniquely in the country, the plan proposes the transfer of adult social care to the NHS. The needs of rural and city communities are very different and the Oxfordshire Vision proposal will ensure that the new councils replacing the existing two tiers with one, are the best match for those needs. This proposal has cross-party support from all of the MPs within our county - including the Prime Minister - and we hope that everyone will join us in supporting this exciting evolution of local government. More information, and news as it developments can be found on our website <http://www.oxfordshire.vision/>

### **Team News**

Our Food and Safety Team won Team of the Year at an independent Employee of the Year Awards in Oxford. The awards are open to organisations from both the public and private sector, so it's a great prize to pick up. In addition to this the council's legal team has passed their annual Lexcel assessment. This is the Law Society's mark for excellence in management and customer care.

### **Planning and Development**

A public inquiry into **89 homes near Icknield Way** in Chinnor was held at Thame Town Hall. We refused permission for this development as the site is not in our development plan and in our view would be harmful to the local area. It was heard at a public inquiry due to the level of interest in the case and because of the similarities with two other cases which we are challenging in the High Court this May. The council's Officers and witnesses and Chinnor's Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Team put up a strong defence of the Council's position. We must now wait for the Inspector's decision later this year.

This year, one of our housing associations, Soha Housing is celebrating the building of its 2,000th home.

### **Didcot Gateway Update**

The Planning Committee unanimously approved outline plans to develop the 'Didcot Gateway' area opposite the station.

This is big news as it means we can move forward with exciting plans to breathe new life into this important area of the town. We'll keep you up to date with progress as it occurs.

### **Rubbish And Waste**

We're holding a focus group with residents to help us improve our waste collection service. It is happening on Wednesday 23 March.

If you know of any residents who might want to take part, ask them to email [haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk) with a brief note telling us why they want to get involved. Everyone who attends the group will receive £20 to cover travel and any other expenses.

### **Bin stickers**

We've started putting stickers on bins in Abingdon and Didcot to try and address the ongoing problem we're having with recycling being contaminated with food waste and nappies. This is a trial run, and the stickers have our recycling website address on. If people visit the site they'll see a short message explaining why we're doing it. It's worth having a quick read of the message yourself, so you can respond to any questions you get about the stickers - visit [www.morerecycling.co.uk](http://www.morerecycling.co.uk).

### **Grants**

The window for grants is still open, running until 1 April 2016 for decisions by 10 July 2016 and as previously reported, we have made changes to this process to make it easier to apply so we hope that our communities will make full use of this opportunity. The Working Group's first recommendation regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme funding has been agreed by the Cabinet, so Town and Parish Council's should soon receive our letter explaining that a Grant is being made available to help support celebrations to mark our Queen's 90th Birthday. Plans for the remaining funds are still being worked on and we expect to announce these shortly.

### **Forum for community groups**

Our annual event to get local community and voluntary groups together so they can share ideas and advice is coming up soon.

The South and Vale Voluntary and Community Sector Forum will take place on Wednesday 23 March at Cornerstone from 9am to 4.30pm. Please invite community and voluntary groups in your area to come along.

For more details about the day's programme please see [OCVA's forum page](#). If you have any questions about the event please email OCVA or call them on 01865 251946.

### **Air quality consultation**

We want to know what everybody thinks of some ideas that could reduce harmful vehicle emissions in South Oxfordshire, in particular in Wallingford, Watlington and Henley.

We employed some air quality experts to look into the problem, and they've made some suggestions, including a couple of ideas that would make a big difference in Wallingford and Watlington.

You can find out more and comment on what the air quality experts have recommended at [www.southoxon.gov.uk/lowemissions](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/lowemissions) until 25 March.

### **PCSO report**

We part fund six PCSOs in South Oxfordshire. Between July and December 2015 the work they carried out included:

Providing support for 491 victims of crime, an under age test purchase operation in Wallingford, a drink and drug driving awareness event in Wheatley and a pre-Halloween awareness crime reduction event in Didcot.

For more about what our PCSOs have been up to see the [Q2 and Q3 neighbourhood policing report](#).

c) Clerk's Report

The Clerk has withdrawn the Insurance claim for the kissing gate at the Millennium Wood as the cost of replacing just the gate is less than the excess.

d) Planning Report

Ref	Description	PC Rec	Decision
P16/S0160/HH	Two storey rear extension. 10 Kings Meadow	NSV	Approve
P16/S0454/HH	Addition of 2 bay garage with room over. Alterations to main house including porch, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor accommodation and replacement of uPVC windows with traditional joinery. North Barn, Bakers Lane	NSV	
P16/S0030/A	Freestanding directional sign x 2. Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary	Approve	

e) Neighbourhood Plan Report

A public consultation meeting has taken place and it has become clear that residents don't understand what a Neighbourhood Plan is. It was therefore agreed to insert a leaflet in The Villager to inform and engage with residents about the plan.

Cllr Debney also reported that the Steering Group would like to engage a professional planner in order to speed up the process. The Clerk will investigate applying for a grant from Locality to cover the cost.

f) Play Area Update

Cllrs Baines and Robson reported that they had met with parents of children and also had responses from children regarding what play equipment is needed in the Parish. Roundabouts and zip wires are popular requests. They will now obtain three quotes for improvements to the play areas and hope to have proposals ready for May.

g) Speed Limits

Cllrs Baines and McGivan have marked a map with all the roundalls and repeaters for OCC Highways. It will cost £4700 inc VAT to rub out the roundalls on the High Road unless OCC has other projects in the area to share costs with.

It was agreed to propose at the Annual Parish Meeting 20mph limits in the village with the High Road remaining at 30mph to avoid the cost of removing the roundalls.

Confirmed costs of the 20mph limits will also be needed for the APM.

h) March's Payments for approval

Payee and reason	£ detail	£ VAT	£ total
OPFA Subscription	40.00		40.00
OALC Subscription	230.99	46.20	277.19
L. Dalby – Clerks Salary and Expenses	511.18		511.18
Post Office Ltd – PAYE	72.60		72.60
OALC – Employment Training	65.00	13.00	78.00
SODC – emptying dog bins	83.72	16.74	100.46

6. **Matters for Discussion/Decision**

a) Donation Review

Cllr Neilsen will provide a proposal for the next meeting.

	<p>b) Donation Requests 2016 The request from the preschool was discussed and it was agreed to donate £175 from this year's s106 budget for the waterproofs and to offer to provide the 10% match funding required for a WREN application from next year's budget. If the preschool decide not to apply to WREN the Council will consider a further application.</p> <p>It was agreed to donate £500 towards the staging for Brightfest and to offer underwrite up to £500 if a loss is made on the day due to the weather.</p> <p>c) Queen's Birthday Celebrations It was agreed to apply to SODC for the grant to Celebrate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday. The grant would then be offered to groups organising events. It was agreed the Parish Council would top up this grant to the events as necessary.</p> <p>d) A – Z It was agreed to wait until after the May meeting to publish the A-Z.</p> <p>e) Bias The guide on Bias distributed by SODC was noted.</p> <p>f) Annual Parish Meeting Village Hall is booked for 24<sup>th</sup> May. It was agreed to invite the school, new Vicar, Village Hall Committee and Pre-School to provide updates and explain their long term plans. Cllr Fox will give a brief review of the year and present a report on the speed limit review. Cllrs Baines and Robson will report on the play areas.</p>
7.	<p><b>Matters for report and inclusion on March's Agenda</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A request to use the recreation field for parking for the Open Garden event has been received – it was agreed to refuse the request.</li> <li>- Mr Rodda has asked if the Council have given any further thought to solar panels – to be included on the June's Agenda</li> <li>- Shillingford Hill Residents are concerned about the possible loss of the bus service. The Clerk will try to find out more information</li> <li>- Cllr Nielsen reported that the inspector has asked OCC for more information regarding the gravel strategy.</li> <li>- The Plymouth Brethren have offered to clean road signs in the village and complete a litter pick. It was agreed that the Council is encouraging of the initiative but permission must be obtained from OCC regarding the signs.</li> <li>- There was a spate of vandalism on Friday night with damage to cars, signs and the allotments. There has also been a break in at the farm.</li> <li>- Cllr Fox reported he does not wish to stand as Chairman in May.</li> </ul>

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Council would take place on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 7.30pm

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 9.30 pm.

## Action List

Reference	Action	Who	Status
2015-10-04	Kings Meadow – Concrete Pad	Clerk	Agreed
2015-10-05	Tennis Court Fence	Clerk	Agreed
2015-10-06	Bike Racks	Clerk	Agreed
2015-10-09	OCC Partnership Working	Clerk	Awaiting information
2015-10-11	Bank Signatures	RN/SR/SB	Ongoing
2015-10-12	Asset Register	Clerk	No progress
2015-10-13	File Weeding	Clerk/DF/CC	No progress
2015-10-14	Recreation field Rabbits	Clerk	Top soil delivered CC has spoken to Angus Dart about moving the composting grass
2015-10-15	Notice Boards	Clerk	New board to be erected.
2015-10-16	Paint Slide	Clerk	Bob has paint
2015-10-18	Playdale Platform	Clerk	Bob to complete
2015-10-19	Gate catches Kings Meadow	Clerk	Bob to complete
2015-11-03	Village Water Courses	JD	
2015-11-06	A-Z	RN/ Clerk	
2015-12-06	Review Donations Procedure	RN	
2016-01-03	Queen's Birthday	SJ	Ongoing
2016-02-01	Millennium Wood Gate	Clerk	
2016-03-01	N.P. Grant	Clerk	
2016-03-02	Queen's Birthday Grant	Clerk	
2016-03-03	APM Invitations	Clerk	
2016-03-04	APM Poster	HB	
2016-03-05	Bus Service	Clerk	
2016-03-06	Solar Panels		