



MINUTES
of the
SUNNINGWELL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
held on
MONDAY 29 MARCH 2021
via Zoom

Present:

Councillors

Colin Weyer (Chairman), Oliver Isaacs, Elizabeth Bennett, Paul Wooldridge, Mike Wykes, Paul Darby, and James Greenman.

In attendance:

County Councillor Bob Johnston.
District Cllr Emily Smith
11 members of the public
Brian Rixon – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

35/21 Questions and comments from visiting councillors and members of the public

County Councillor Bob Johnston commented that the County Council is currently clarifying the arrangements needed to create any new 20mph zones and will email the clerk when the matter is concluded.

Alex Reynold from Bayworth considers the 30mph signs to be in the wrong place and would like to see them moved. Cllr James Greenman said that, whilst the Parish Council is supportive of measures to improve road safety, the signs are in the correct legal place.

Alex also raised a concern about the footpath and style in the area off Bayworth where new deer fencing is being erected. Tom Alden, who was also at the meeting, said that they are aware that it is not a footpath but are actively trying to give parishioners access and will be speaking further with St John's College and with Mr and Mrs Wilcox who own the adjacent land.

Mike Woodward asked to follow up on his previous point about communication by saying that the latest minutes and agenda are not on the website. The clerk, when asked by the chairman to comment, said that the documents were certainly uploaded and are visible when editing the website but there is an unexplained technical issue in having them presented when the website is viewed externally. The website is in the process of being rewritten.

Mike also reminded the council of his formal complaint, raised by email, regarding social distancing and numbers of people at the recent meeting at the Quarry footpath. The Council commented that it was a private meeting between OCC and the Parish Council and Mike had not been invited to attend. The Parish Council understands Mike has reported the matter to the police and therefore the council has made no further comment.

John Miller thinks the changes to the Lodge Hill exchange on the A34 will have a devastating effect on traffic in relation to Sunningwell Parish. Cllr Paul Wooldridge suggested the Parish Council's report from 2016 could be made available.

District Councillor Emily Smith reported that it looks as though there could be a brief shortage of covid vaccine in April. Community testing is going well.

Emily mentioned the joint local plan between The Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils.

36/21	Apologies for absence None
37/21	Declarations of members' interests in respect of any item. Cllr Mike Wykes if the village hall is discussed in relation to a book exchange.
38/21	To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council held on 22 February 2021. The minutes were approved unanimously.
39/21	Footpaths – update on the Quarry footpath Following a meeting with Oxfordshire County Council on site to discuss the re-opening of the footpath, the Parish Council now awaits an update on proposed action by Oxfordshire County Council.
40/21	Bayworth road safety Cllr Paul Darby commented that the road drainage seems inadequate in parts of Bayworth and there appears to be more water on the roads than in the drains. He contacted Oxfordshire County Council who could not immediately say when the drains were last cleared. Paul sent them 18 photographs. The Parish Council agreed the clerk should write to OCC, and asked Paul to forward his communications to the clerk for reference. Action: Clerk
41/21	St Leonard's Church grass cutting In February St Leonard's Church asked if the Parish Council could pay this year's annual cost of £1144 for grass cutting at the Church. Following some discussion on the powers that a Parish Council might have in such a situation, it was agreed unanimously that the payment should be made. The clerk reminded the council that there still is uncertainty as to whether such a course of action is legally valid. He referred to the ongoing debate as to whether the Local Government Act 1894 (which prohibits involvement in the affairs of the church) is overridden by the Local Government Act 1972.
42/21	Sunningwell Prevention of Excess Water Prior to the council meeting, Hilary Lynam-Smith sent the council a presentation explaining that the old Sunningwell Flood Group has reformed and is now called the Sunningwell Prevention of Excess Water (SPEW). Drainage problems are occurring with water run off from the fields and the main sewer seemingly lacking capacity to accommodate heavy rainfall. SPEW aim to commission a land surveyor to advise on current problems and are seeking financial support from the Parish Council. Unfortunately, Hilary was one of several people unable to gain access to the Zoom based Parish Council meeting, even though they were trying to use the same zoom access code that had admitted the 20 people who successfully joined the meeting. In Hilary's absence Andrew Hoare spoke about the application and it was discussed. The Council agreed in principal that it was supportive of the SPEW aims and would consider a financial donation supported by invoices. The Parish Council could support the survey but would first need to approve the brief given to the surveyor and would require a copy of any surveyor's report subsequently issued. If Hilary could supply further relevant information to the council, it would then ask the clerk to write to Thames Water.

43/21 Art Prize

Cllr Oliver Isaacs commented that he thought the council should do as much as possible to support the usage of local facilities. He suggested the Parish Council could engage with the Sunningwell School of Art and arrange an art competition, based on the theme relating to the parish, with a prize of art materials for each of three age groups. The judging panel would comprise one parish councillor and someone from the art school, and there would be an exhibition of all the art entered.

The council approved the idea with a budget of £200 and asked Oliver to consolidate the arrangements.
Action: Cllr Oliver Isaacs.

44/21 Telephone kiosk

Cllr Oliver Isaacs has had several telephone conversations with someone who has the skills to repair and repaint the telephone kiosk but to date no conclusion has been reached. Oliver will try again and report back to the next Council meeting. If that is unsuccessful then suggestions of alternative persons to do the work would be appreciated.
Action: Cllr Oliver Isaacs.

45/21 Sunningwell book exchange

The Village Hall Management Committee is, understandably, concerned about health and safety should a book exchange be situated in their main entrance, and has not agreed the proposal.

Meanwhile no-one has responded to the Council's invitation for someone to come forward and manage any book exchange location. The Parish Council can take no further practical action until that arrangement is agreed, although Cllr Oliver Isaacs will continue his efforts to identify and agree a potential new location.
Action: Cllr Oliver Isaacs.

46/21 Lodge Hill slip roads

The Parish Council expressed its concern that no action seems to have been taken by the County Council Highways to address the possible effects on Sunningwell Parish from the new slip roads at the A34 North Abingdon junction.

Cllr James Greenman will liaise with SPADE for any possible action. For example, a traffic survey in September or October. The Council could possibly survey parishioners for thought on traffic calming.
Action: Cllr James Greenman.

47/21 Annual Parish Meeting

The current legislation on virtual meetings is due to expire on 6th May and the Parish Council decided to take the precaution of booking physical meetings now from May onwards, rather than wait to see if there may be an extension to virtual meetings.

It was also agreed that all meetings should now be held in Sunningwell Village Hall, rather than Bayworth, to maximise social distancing in the meeting room. The clerk will seek permission from the Village Hall Management Committee and then make the arrangements.
Action: Clerk.

48/21 Data Retention Policy

The Council agreed to draft a data retention policy and, when approved, to add it to the council's website. The clerk will take the suggestions made by email and prepare the draft document.
Action: Clerk.

49/21 Frivolous, Vexatious, Abusive or Persistent Complaints policy

The Council agreed to draft such a complaints policy and, when approved, to add it to the council's website. The clerk will take the suggestions made by email and prepare the draft document.
Action: Clerk.

50/21	Payments due
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The following payments were authorised.

	Clerk	Salary, Office Expenditure. Four land registry enquiries	968.74
	HMRC	PAYE	271.14
	JKT builders	Heavy duty manhole lid and frame on village green	120.00
	Oxfordshire Assn of Local Councils	Annual subscription	185.98

51/21	The next Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 26 April 2021 using video conferencing
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The Chairman closed the March meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Please note that from May, Parish Council meetings will now be held in Sunningwell Village Hall on a Thursday evening on the following dates:

<i>Thursday 27 May</i>	<i>Thursday 24 June</i>	<i>Thursday 29 July</i>	<i>No meeting in August</i>
<i>Thursday 30 September</i>	<i>Thursday 28 October</i>	<i>Thursday 25 November</i>	<i>No meeting in December</i>