



MINUTES
of the
SUNNINGWELL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
held on
Thursday 23 February 2023
In Sunningwell Village Hall

Present:

Councillors

Paul Wooldridge, Mike Wykes, Gina Bale, and Paul Darby.

In attendance:

Brian Rixon – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
2 Parishioners

14/23

Questions and comments from visiting councillors and members of the public

The resident of a property adjacent to the village hall car park attended the meeting and expressed her concern that a third vehicle incident had occurred in the car park, and that another accident might occur and result in someone in the adjacent properties being involved. Legally the occurrence is the responsibility of the vehicle driver and although the Parish Council is not liable for the way people drive on the car park, it was agreed that the council has a general Duty of Care towards parishioners. The matter was subsequently discussed in more detail later in the meeting.

County Councillor Bob Johnston sent his apologies, along with the following report:

1. There is no firm date for the Lodge Hill planning application to go to the County Planning and Regulation Committee.
2. Officers and consultants of the County are proceeding with the detailed proposals and consultations in respect of the relevant traffic calming measures for the various Parishes to mitigate the effects of the completed slips.
3. At a full County Council on Tuesday the 14th of February the increase in the Council Tax of 4.99% was agreed with significant increases in the budgets for both Adult and Children's Social Services.

15/23

Apologies for absence.

Apology: County Councillor Bob Johnston
District Councillors Emily Smith and Debby Hallett
Parish Councillors Colin Weyer and John Simms

Absent: Parish Councillor James Greenman

16/23

Declarations of members' interests in respect of any item.

No declaration was made.

17/23

To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 26 January 2023.

The Council unanimously RESOLVED that the minutes from the council meeting on 26th January be accepted as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.

18/23 Planning applications

The following planning applications were considered: -

Reference	Location	Proposal	Parish Council response
P23/V0221/FUL	Land west of Sunningwell	Extend existing stable block	No objection or comment to be made
P23/V0138/HH	Orchard House	New front porch	No objection or comment to be made

Cllr Gina Bale suggested that new councillors could benefit from a parish council document outlining the key points to look for when reviewing a planning application. Cllr Wooldridge said he would draft and circulate a document. **Action: Cllr Paul Wooldridge**

Cllr Paul Wooldridge summarised the current Sunningwell Parish procedure: -
The parish clerk forwards each planning application to all councillors who should follow the email link to the District Council’s planning portal item on that application.
After reviewing the application and the associated documents, all councillors should prepare comments and recommendations and email them to the Sunningwell Councillor who has been allocated the lead role for this specific application.
The lead councillor then uses the comments received to prepare a formal, collated response for the District Council and forwards this to the parish clerk as a parish record, and for uploading to the District’s Planning portal.

19/23 Village Hall car park.

The possible installation of traffic barriers was discussed following a request from a resident of one of the adjacent houses.

Three accidents have now involved vehicles crashing into the fences.
The resident of the adjacent house attended the meeting and presented her case that another accident might occur and possible injure someone in the garden of an adjacent property.

Legally the responsibility lies with the vehicle driver and although the Parish Council is not liable for the way people drive on the car park, it was agreed that the council has a general Duty of Care towards parishioners. Particularly to those who might be at direct risk from something that could happen on council owned property, which, although having no legal weight, is a responsibility that the parish council will accept.

Several styles of barrier were discussed, including the Arco continuous type and discrete bollards at an appropriate spacing to preclude cars passing between. Concern was expressed about the Arco style based on the aesthetics in such a rural location (and the fact that the car park forms part of the Oxford Green Belt Way).

Ultimately it decided that substantial wooden bollards (nominally with a 150mm square cross section, 1500mm total length, and embedded 600mm in the ground in concrete) would tick all the boxes.

The decision covers the provision of the barriers both to the Pond Cottage boundary and the Church View boundary.

It was resolved that Cllr Mike Wykes should seek advice and costings to provide safety barriers to stop vehicles which overrun the kerbs before the vehicles impact the boundary fences.

Action: Cllr Mike Wykes

It was acknowledged that the budget and the precept have already been confirmed for the next financial year and there are no spare funds to access. It was agreed that budget or reserve items would have to be adjusted to accommodate the extra cost.

Cllr Paul Wooldridge asked for a summary of S106 expenditure as part of the process for considering non-budgeted expenditure on the car park.

S106 funding, and the Community Infrastructure Levy, is a charge on developers collected by the Vale of White Horse District Council to provide additional funding towards the cost of infrastructure arising from new housing developments. In our case it relates to housing developments in Abingdon on land that was originally in Sunningwell parish.

A percentage is available to Parish Councils for the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure in the parish. Funds are only available for capital projects.

The total contribution available to, and received by, Sunningwell is £71,920.24 for the following capital projects over the last three years.

November 2020	Sunningwell Parish Village Green Wall restoration	3,790.50
March 2021	Village Hall car park refurbishment	38,850.00
April 2022	Village Hall car park – improved access pathway	1,489.00
May 2022	Radar speed signs (4) on Foxcombe Road, Boars Hill	8,291.70
	Sunningwell Pond de-silting	3,250.00
	Bayworth defibrillator installation	2,440.00
	Notice boards Long Furlong, Sunningwell, Bayworth & Boars Hill	5,408.00
January 2023	Bayworth car park improvements Total project £14,712	8,401.04

As of February 2023, the Amount currently available is zero.

A third and final tranche of £17,579, plus any index linking, should become available when the 499th house is occupied. As of February 2023, seventy-two houses are occupied and the rate is currently around ten houses a month.

When council budget was set in November it included an amount available to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles in May either by supporting an event in the parish or in an alternative way.

No organisation has come forward with an event proposal. The Parish Council therefore **RESOLVED** that a 1.8 metre bench, and hard surface anchor kit, would be purchased for a cost of £839. The bench is made from high quality teak and features a Union Jack and carving and will be installed on the village hall car park.

The Internal Auditor undertook a review in February involving the forwarding of a range of documents and a Zoom interview lasting one hour and twenty minutes. The conclusion of the audit will be after the financial year end at the end of March.

Meanwhile, the resulting internal auditor recommendations to date are: -

1. Civility and Respect policy

The Civility and Respect Pledge is being introduced because there is no place for bullying, harassment, and intimidation within local councils. Such behaviour is unacceptable whether by councillors, clerks, or members of the public both in person and online which includes fake news on social media platforms.

The council agreed the clerk should circulate more details to all councillors for formal consideration.

2. Risk Assessment scale of likelihood and occurrence

The annual risk assessment produced should be enhanced to include considering analysing risks by Likelihood and Occurrence.

The council agreed to consider this when the next annual risk assessment is prepared.

3. Grounds maintenance and other contracts.

The audit recommendation is that all contractors are assessed every three years.

The council considers the existing contracts to be a long-term success with local, well-known operators and is unlikely to change them.

4. Agenda links to documents

The suggestion is to provide links to documents on the agenda and minutes.

The council sees some merits for documents on the website but less so for those on our four notice boards. One councillor suggested QR codes might be useful.

5. Information Commissioners Office Freedom of Information

The audit advice is to consider the ICO's Freedom of Publication scheme.

The council agreed the clerk should circulate more details to all councillors for consideration.

6. Society of Local Council Clerks

The council agreed that the clerk should join the SLCC following the auditor's advice that it is a useful source for being up to date on policies and other information. The joining fee is £10 plus an annual subscription of £146.

7. Financial Control

The auditor recommended that a councillor be appointed to oversee financial controls and meet on site with the clerk every four months.

The council considers the existing checks and balances to be efficient and effective.

8. County Archives

It was suggested that the council's many annual minute books, currently held in the village hall safe and the clerk's home, should be taken to the County Archives store at Temple Cowley in Oxford.

The council has received initial information, from the Returning Officer, about the Parish Council election to be held on Thursday 4th May. Anyone living or working in the parish is invited to stand for election.

The **Notice of Election** will be provided by the District Council in the week commencing 13th March and will promptly be displayed in the parish no later than 20th March.

Nomination forms must be completed by candidates and delivered by hand to the district council's offices at Abbey House in Abingdon.

A comprehensive parish nomination pack and helpful guidance can be found on the Electoral Commission website.

The Sunningwell Parish Clerk can also provide information and a printed copy of the nomination pack.

The February financial statement was presented and approved.

This included the receipt of £8.08 bank interest and the following payments: -

Clerk	Salary, Office supplies. Microsoft annual subscription	738.85
HMRC	PAYE	137.80
Sage Payroll	Monthly subscription	8.40
Paul Copestake	Refurbishment of five village green benches	1,030.00

The next Parish Council Meetings will be on **Thursday 30 March 2023 at 7:30 p.m.
in Sunningwell Village Hall**

The Chairman closed the February meeting at 9:13 p.m.