

Minutes of the South Hinksey Annual Parish Meeting

Monday 1st May 2012

Present: Sarah Balaam, Sandra Bingham, Sheridan Edward (Parish Clerk), Arash Fatemian (Cllr, OxonCC), Liz LeFevre, Louise Nahhas, Maggie Rawcliffe, Peter Rawcliffe, Jo Slater, Linda Slater.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Minutes of the 2011 APM

Read and agreed.

3. Report of the Parish Council

MR delivered the following report on behalf of the Parish Council:

Councillors

During the past year, Tom Barron and Elizabeth Halcro have stepped down as councillors. The Council wish to thank Tom and Elizabeth for all their contributions and hard work. We are pleased that Sandra Bingham has joined the Council. We will be recruiting for a replacement for Tom very shortly.

Grants

This year the Council has made grants to the Village Hall (£1000 towards general running costs) and Stepping Stones Pre-School (£100 towards new equipment).

Village Hall

The Council has now taken over ownership of the Village Hall from three trustees. This is to ensure it remains in the control of the local community. This will not affect the day-to-day running, which will stay with the Village Hall Management Committee.

Hinksey Hill

The Council, and esp. Cllr Liz LeFevre, have been addressing traffic and pedestrian safety issues along Hinksey Hill. A speed restriction for a derestricted stretch at the top of Hinksey Hill was put in place by the County Council earlier this year, and the Parish Council has also been working with County Councillor Arash Fatemian and Laura Hutchins from Oxfordshire Highways to investigate other traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures. Arash has applied for a Speed Indicator Device to be rotated around the parishes in his ward, Highways will be replacing the anti-skid surface at the top of Hinksey Hill during the next year and the Council has also applied to Highways to cut back vegetation along the paths by Hinksey Hill.

Community Woodland

The Council is sad to report the death of former Council Chair, Clive Briffett, earlier this year. Clive made a very valuable contribution to the community over many years, including establishing and managing a community woodland next to Chilswell Path. This is paid for by a grant from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment. The Council have taken on the running of the woodland with the help of Prof. Riki Therivel from Oxford Brookes. The Council is very thankful for the support it received from the community to help restake many of the trees last month. We are pleased to report that the woodland is thriving. The Council will continue to manage and develop the woodland with the financial support of the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment.

General Elliot Public House

Earlier this year, the Vale Brewery unsuccessfully appealed its rejected planning application to change the use of the General Elliot Public House to residential. Since then there has been little news on any developments, and a community group has been formed to discuss potential moves forward with the brewery.

Finance

The Council is pleased to report that it continues to remain in a strong financial position with a surplus of £2.5k for the 2011/12 year. This has meant that the Council has been able to reduce its precept by 50% for the coming year.

A34 safety

The Parish Council continues to lobby the Highways Agency for safety improvements to the A34. I represent SHPC on the Botley Traffic Advisory Committee. BTAC, Sarah Balaam and I held a combined meeting to discuss speed limits and crash barriers with our local MP, Nicola Blackwood. Nicola met us on Parker Rd. and toured the stretch of the A34. She wrote to the Highways Agency on our behalf. She has received the same response as we have before, that the crash barriers comply with the relevant guidelines, and that there is insufficient evidence that the road is dangerous enough to reduce the speed limit. However, because of her first-hand experience of the South Hinksey junction, she is going to take this higher.

PR noted the success of the speed limit and sound barrier at Botley and felt that timing could be crucial in the success of the proposals at South Hinksey.

Flooding

The anticipated opening up of the serious pinchpoint in Kennington, Munday's Bridge, has been delayed by the Olympics. The planned work includes pile-driving on the edge of the track and apparently an edict has gone out saying that nothing can be done which could conceivably delay trains travelling to the Olympics! The work, which should have begun by now, has to wait till September. SB noted that despite a very wet month there had been no flooding in the village and the Parish Council thanked PR and OFA for their hard work.

Burial Ground Wild Flowers.

The year has started well with more cowslips than ever before - twenty out at the weekend. Let's hope this bodes well for other flowers this year. Peter Rawcliffe will be raising more plants from seed: betony, agrimony, and ragged robin, to augment those already there; and, new, devil's bit scabious and hoary plantain. The new mowing contractors are doing a good job so far.

New Bridge over Railway line

The bridge over the railway is due to be replaced in the autumn because it has to be higher for forthcoming electrification. We want to see if we can get it replaced with a wheelchair/buggy/bike-friendly bridge. Our MP Nicola Blackwood MP has visited. We have armed her with our arguments, photographs, and a sketch kindly contributed by Matthew Balaam. Nicola Blackwood has written, presenting our case, to the Chief Executive of Network Rail.

The Council wish to thank Oxfordshire Council Councillor Arash Fatemian, District Councillor Ron Mansfield, Laura Hutchins and Tracey Morton from Highways, Linda Slater, Riki Therivel, and Peter Rawcliffe for their support throughout the year. I wish to thank especially our Clerk, Sheridan, for his excellent work, his continuing calm, and his always good-humoured support, help, and advice.

4. Report of the Village Hall Management Committee

PR reported that it had been a very successful year for the village hall, with an increase in bookings meaning that the hall was in a comfortable financial position. PR thanked the following for their hard work: Philip Saugman for his property management, Ann Allsworth for her work as treasurer, Maggie Rawcliffe for her work as booking secretary, Kevin Duma for caretaking and Linda Bloch for maintaining the flower tubs.

5. Report of the Parochial Church Council

SE read out a report from Fr James Wilkinson regarding St Lawrence Church, which was also posted on the new parish website. He reported that the building was in excellent repair. He also announced that a new memorial in memory of the previous incumbent, Fr John Davis, was to be installed on Saturday 9th June at 5pm and all were welcome to attend. He also mentioned that around the date of the patronal festival, 10th August, there would be a joint service with members of New Hinksey and afterwards a bring and share lunch on the vicarage lawn.

6. Report on the new parish website

SE read the following report from David Rawcliffe, the editor of the new parish website:

For the past few years the village website has been run by a number of people: Linda Slater has written content and paid for hosting, while Dave Markham has uploaded it online, using a web design from another parishioner. The Parish Council has run a separate website detailing its official business. Dave Markham moved away to the West Country earlier this year, so we needed a new editor. Having a little experience in building websites, I have agreed to take on that role. We've made a lot of changes already. First, we undertook a redesign from scratch, adopting a new style and system of navigation. We were able to update sections that had become out of date. The website still features village news, upcoming events, photo galleries and information about clubs and groups in the village. It includes a directory of local businesses recommended by residents. Second, with the help of the Parish Clerk, we incorporated the Parish Council website into the village website. The Village Hall also has a dedicated section now, which is important because it relies on the internet for a lot of bookings. Third, we managed to reduce costs from around £60 to less than £20 a year. The Parish Council is considering funding the new website (while leaving editorial control to the Village) and would welcome residents' views on that change. The new

website is now live at www.southhinksey.org so please do have a look. Very many thanks to all those who have contributed already. We need residents' help to keep it up to date so please send me any news, articles, upcoming events, photographs or suggestions. My contact details can be found on the website.

The Parish Council wished to thank Linda Slater and Dave Markham for all their work on the website over the past few years, and Linda's continuing work in keeping the parish informed via the SHInfo e-bulletin.

Linda stated that the website set up by FOSH, that the site had been designed and donated by a parishioner. She was responsible for the content, inherited from her role as secretary of FOSH.

PR pointed out that it was not reasonable for LS to continue to pay for the website. He proposed that the PC take on this payment. He felt that it was important that the website was independent. He proposed the operation of the website should be reviewed annually at the Annual Parish Meeting, and if necessary the webmaster and /or editor could be replaced by a majority vote. That this would occur should be minuted now, and advertised each year. If things demanded it, an extraordinary parish meeting could be called. It was felt that though such a situation was unlikely, it was necessary to have a mechanism agreed for dealing with an unsatisfactory webmaster or editor, whilst maintaining the independence of the website.

The content of the Parish Council part of the site would be determined by the Council. These arrangements were supported by those present and agreed. The PC would consider the financial arrangements at the PC Meeting to follow this APM.

7. Report on community land

LN attended the meeting to report that a group of parishioners had recently taken action to tidy up the community land for use for community events, including Miles Lamb who had strimmed the land. Some events had already been held there and she felt that there was a strong community drive to make use of the land, with the next large event being the party for the Queen's jubilee. SE had carried out a risk assessment on the site and had also sought to renew the license with the landowner. SE also reported that the land was now part of the maintenance contract and would be regularly maintained. Quotes for renewing the fencing at the front of the plot had also been obtained, and it was reported that the Council would consider the costs at the parish council meeting following the APM. The Council wished to thank Louise for her hard work in renovating the land.

PR and others stressed the need to ensure that remaining hazards were removed. He suggested weedkilling might be needed to enable a thorough inspection.

8. Questions from Parishioners

None.

Date of 2013 APM: To be confirmed