

**Minutes of the South Hinksey Parish Council
at South Hinksey Village Hall**

Monday 13th May 2013

Present: Sarah Balaam (Vice-Chair), Christine Chater, Sheridan Edward (Clerk), Matthew Frohn (absent for item 8), Liz LeFevre, Maggie Rawcliffe (Chair)

Parishioners: Richard King

1. Election of Chair

The Council reelected Maggie Rawcliffe as Chair.

2. Election of Vice-Chair

The Council reelected Sarah Balaam as Vice-Chair.

3. Apologies

Cllr Bob Johnston (OxonCC).

2. Declarations of interest

None.

5. Parishioners' comments

None.

6. Minutes of April 2013 meeting

Read and agreed.

7. Matters arising

General Elliot. SE reported that the brewery had agreed to improve the condition of the site, but had stated that a for sale sign was needed to deter squatters. It was noted that someone had removed the current sign and the Council agreed to erect a new sign. **Action: MF to arrange for new sign.**

Parker Road verge. SE reported that he had received a quote from BGG of £200 +VAT to carry out the work to cut back vegetation along the Parker Road footpath. The Council agreed to this. **Action: SE to inform BGG.**

Boundary Commission review. SE had received a reply from LGBCE stating that Sunningwell would be included in a ward with South Hinksey, North Hinksey and Wytham, and that the ward would be called 'Botley and Sunningwell'.

Trees at Bagley Croft. CC reported that she had chased Tim Stringer, Arboricultural Officer, who reported that the TPO assessment had been completed and submitted and that he was waiting to here back about a recommended order for the trees in Bagley Wood. However, progress on the TPO had been slow and in the meantime it had been noted that the trees at Bagley Croft were still at risk, with earth being piled up against many of them. **Action: CC to continue to chase.**

Cycling on Devil's Backbone. SE had received a reply from Lee Turner that day stating that they felt there was little they were able to do as they were not the landowner, and the path was also recommended as an off-road cycle route on the Oxford Cycle Routes map found on the Oxon CC website. The Council believed that the City Council may well be the landowner as they own the fields to either side of the path. The Council agreed that they should contact the City Council to request permission to erect signs asking cyclists to give way to pedestrians. **Action: SE to contact City Council.**

8. Finance – payments and receipts

Payments

Maggie Rawcliffe	April expenses	£10.80
BGG Garden and Tree Care	April maintenance and St Lawrence Road verge	£744.00
Came & Company	2013/14 insurance	£308.00

Receipts

HM Revenue and Customs	2012/13 VAT refund	£879.66
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9. Planning applications

None.

10. Correspondence

Bagley Wood Embankment. Kennington Parish Council contacted the Council to invite them to a meeting to discuss the progress of the repair of the road at Bagley Wood embankment. LLF attended the meeting and reported that the work was not expected to be completed until spring 2014 and the time scale would also depend on whether they were able to carry out the work without disrupting the fib optic cables,

Community governance review. VOWHDC wrote to the Council to inform them that they were carrying out a community governance review and asking for any proposals for changes of parish boundaries, number of parish councillors, etc. The Council did not feel that any changes were needed.

11. County Councillor's Report

None.

12. District Councillor's Report

None.

13. Project updates

A34 Issues. MR stated that there was nothing to report.

Hinksey Hill traffic issues. LLF and CC reported that traffic had been much calmer along the road since the closure at the top of Hinksey Hill. LLF reported that PCSO Adi Wright had said that the speed indicator devices had been received and staff were currently being trained. Once trained they would be carrying out speed checks, but that they could be at short notice. LLF noted that this might mean that volunteers might not be used, but replied to Adi Wright to reconfirm that she, CC and another parishioner were very keen to be involved in the Speed Watch scheme.

Community Woodland. SE reported that all necessary restaking had now been carried out and that it was unlikely that further restaking would be needed in future years. The Council had also received a request from Riki Therivel to use a corner of the woodland for the storage of a pile of wood fuel that Network Rail were making available to community groups. The Council had no objection in principle but asked that they receive assurances that the wood would only be there temporarily and that the necessary insurance was in place.

Action: SE to reply to Riki Therivel.

14. Finance report 2012/13

SE presented the end-of-year accounts to the Council and reported that the finances remained strong with the year ending with a deficit of c.£1,500, significantly ahead of the budgeted £4,000 deficit. This was due to both reduced overheads, especially a much cheaper maintenance contractor, and increased income, mainly from burials.

The Council also formally approved the accounting statements and annual governance statements in the 2012/13 Annual Return.

15. Footbridge over Railway

MR reported that Network Rail had lodged an appeal regarding the City Council's decision not to grant prior approval. There was also due to be a motion put to the VOWHDC at their next Council meeting supporting the campaign for ramp access.

16. Communication with local government officers

Following several incidents of poor communication from district and county council officers, CC carried out research to ascertain what obligations the councils and officers had to the Parish Council, and what avenues there were for improving communication and response time.

CC spoke to previous and current staff members at VOWHDC. CC had spoken with Anne Richardson in Corporate Strategy. AR reported that under the Local Government Act 1972, save for those matters when there was a statutory duty to consult with the parish council (e.g. planning), the district and county councils have no more responsibility to the a Parish Council than to any member of the public. However, the issue seemed to be widespread and as a result many district and county councils implemented a parish charter. VOWHDC had adopted a charter in the 1990s but it appeared that this has fallen out of use. VOWHDC had also held regular liaison meetings between senior officers and parish councils, but these had also stopped. Often a parish might have a district or county councillor on the parish council, which would help facilitate communication, but this wasn't the case with South Hinksey.

The Council agreed to write to the Leader of VOWHDC, Matthew Barber, to request a meeting to discuss further. **Action: SE to draft letter and circulate to Council.**

17. Parish Emergency Plan

MR and SE reported that they were awaiting a quote from Dave Cullen for the central sand / salt store. Once this had been received the Council could apply for a grant from VOWHDC. There had been no follow-up meeting yet on the emergency plan.

18. Council Insurance

SE had obtained three like-for-like quotes for the coming year's insurance and the Council agreed to a three-year long term agreement with the current supplier, Came & Company, at £308 per year. This was a reduction of c.£190 from the previous year.

19. Any Other Business

Manor Road wall dispute. Following the recent rebuilding of a wall between his property and Manor Road, the owner of 12 Manor Road, Tom Barron had been asked by Highways to remove the wall as it was encroaching onto the highway and also affected access to the street light and services. The Council recognised that the work had been carried out with the best intentions. This is a private dispute that needs to be settled between Tom Barron and Oxon CC. There is no professional advice that we can offer. **Action: SE to email Tom Barron.**

Lorries on St Lawrence Road. A resident had contacted the Council to highlight the issue of HGVs in the village. The resident believed that the lorries were using Parker Road as a lay-by overnight and then attempting to turn around on St Lawrence Road, causing noise early in the morning as well as their wheels running over her garden. She asked the Council to investigate the possibility of an 'unsuitable for HGVs' sign at the entrance of the village. **Action: SE to investigate with Lee Turner.**

20. Parishioners' feedback

None.

Dates of next meetings:

Monday 10th June at 7pm at Craigellachie, Hinksey Hill

Monday 22nd July at 7pm in South Hinksey Village Hall

Monday 2nd September at 7pm in South Hinksey Village Hall