

FULBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: 14th March 2024

7.00pm

Venue The Parish Church of St James

Present: Councillors

Dr Peter Burns PB
Mr Malcolm Allsop
Mr Robert Warner RW
WODC Councillor Hugo Ashton HA

Parish Clerk Mrs Sarah Ebeling

Parishioners attending: 8 Parishioners.

Apologies:

OCC Councillor Mr N Field-Johnson NFJ

For convenience the following abbreviations may be used in some instances in these Minutes.

FPC	Fulbrook Parish Council
OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
POF	Parishioners Open Forum
WODC	West Oxfordshire District Council
OALC	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
NALC	National Association of Local Councils
CHA	Cottsway Housing Association
TVP	Thames Valley Police

1 Public Participation

No public participation

2 Declaration of Interests

Nothing new to declare.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on the 25th March 2024

Minutes of the last meeting were signed by the acting Chairman.

4 Casual Vacancy for Fulbrook Parish Council**4.1 Co-opt new Councillor**

Richard Marsh put himself forward to be co-opted in as a new Councillor and gave a short introduction. He has lived in Fulbrook since 2012 and has extensive business and governance experience over the last 25 years. He is part of a four-person management team of a business listed on the London Stock Exchange and also has been a director on many company boards.

All Councillors agreed to co-opt Richard onto the Parish Council.

4.2 Election of a new Chair

Peter Burns proposed Malcolm Allsop for the position of Chairman, he has previous experience as a Chair from his last Parish.

All Councillors agreed with Malcolm becoming Chair.

5 Matters arising**5.1 Local Plan - Development**

WODC have confirmed that no other sites in Fulbrook have been put forward other than the two that had previously been discussed.

Next Steps:

- 1) To finalise the criteria for assessment: This is close to being finalized, there has been a discussion with the policy team and the hope is that there is a revised 'method' statement in the next few days. This will then be shared with colleagues in the assigned Development Management Team before it is then finalized.
- 2) Consult with Town/Parishes (this was due to be March/April): WODC will be looking to send a copy of the method statement along with a schedule/map of the sites to affected Towns/Parish Councils in the next couple of weeks inviting written comments on any sites in their Parish. It is thought they would have 6-8 weeks to respond.
- 3) Decisions on whether to include sites in the draft plan – presumably after the housing needs assessment has been produced: This will flow from the site assessment work and be determined to a large extent by the housing needs assessment which has just been commissioned and should be completed in around 5 weeks' time.

PB asked Hugo whether a Housing Survey commissioned by the Parish Council (as previously suggested and rejected) would be beneficial to potentially stop large scale developments.

Hugo's response: The housing need survey for the district is going to be done at a high level and will be assigned into categories of need; first time buyers, social housing etc. Population forecasts will also drive the housing needs. Information at specific level (Fulbrook) however would give valuable information if used correctly. The most important factors with regards to the proposed developments would be that it is an AONB, traffic congestion, lack of amenities etc therefore the housing survey may not be beneficial at the present time.

5.2) To consider a communication strategy for Fulbrook Parish Council
Malcolm would like to expand the Councils online presence and improve their communication to the Parish. Malcolm has suggested using a service such as 'Mail Chimp'

MA and Clerk to discuss this further and make a communication strategy plan

5.3) To consider the frequency of Council meetings in the light of the current development

MA suggested having monthly meetings going forward while the current development decisions are going forward. BW was against the idea of monthly meetings and suggested a Sub Committee was put together. This way you would benefit from getting Parishioners with different backgrounds and expertise who are willing to assist and contribute towards the Parishes response.

Due to a discussion not being agreed it was decided that this would be looked into again later on once the Parish is more informed from WODC regarding a timeline of next steps.

6 Reports from County and District Councillors

Reports from County and District Councillors are at the end of these minutes.

7 Finance

7.1) Financial Statement for January/February/March

Clerk explained that all funds relating to the Play Park upgrade have now cleared from the account and the money from both NS&I accounts has now been received. We are also due a VAT refund which will be submitted online after the year end which is the 31st of March 24.

7.2) The transfer of funds from both NS&I accounts has now been completed and the accounts are now closed. PB will use the TSB online banking to add MA and RM as signatories.

8 Amenities

The plant sale will be taking place on Saturday the 11th of May between 10am and 12pm at the Carpenters Arms.

No other events are currently planned

9 Planning and Estates

A planning application has been submitted by High Meadow, Westhall Hill. BW has asked for Councillors to submit their comments by Sunday the 17th of March.

BW to finalise the comments and Clerk will add these onto the WODC website

10 **Road Safety**

PB has handed over all his previous correspondence relating to the plans for Burford Bridge and the suggested ideas to make it safer for pedestrians when crossing. This also includes the plan for new signage which should be going ahead shortly. PB has also handed over information relating to his highways contact at OCC and the proposed plans of Dragons Teeth when entering the village and looking into the possibility of a 20MPH limit through Fulbrook.

11 **Play Park**

Unfortunately, there has been some damage on the new equipment at the Play Park, a Parishioner has taken steps to make it safe for the children to still play on.

BW to assess the play park and speak to Sovereign Play about replacing the broken part of equipment.

12 **Future Meeting Dates**

The next meeting date to be confirmed...

REPORT FROM HUGO ASHTON (DISTRICT COUNCILLOR) MARCH 14TH 2024

The WODC budget has been passed with a projected small (£5,000) surplus:

- Council tax increasing by the maximum allowed £5 on a Band D property (2.99%)
- Green bin charges up £5 to £50 (an average of £54 over 10 neighboring Councils)
- Planning fees rising by 25% (35% for major applications) – set by Government

While I was away the Local Plan Working Group met and the following is an extract of some of the information provided...

DRAFT PLAN OBJECTIVES – FEEDBACK

- Generally well supported in terms of overall coverage and broad intent;
- Particular support for climate change, public transport, walking and cycling, water quality, infrastructure, brownfield land, high quality design, biodiversity and nature recovery, jobs and skills and affordable homes;
- However, some respondents felt there were too many objectives, some overlap and/or lack precision and some potentially conflict with each other;
- Officers to further consider with a view to refining, improving and clarifying.

PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT – FEEDBACK

- General support for: Scenarios 1 (Hierarchical approach), 2 (Main Service Centre focus), 4 (Carterton focus) and 8 (Public Transport focus)
- Moderate dislike for Scenarios 5 (Dispersed Growth), 6 (Village Clusters) and 7 (New Settlement)

CALL FOR SITES & IDEAS – FEEDBACK

- An open invitation for sites and ideas including new housing, employment, infrastructure, community use, green space, nature recovery and renewable energy;
- 127 specific site suggestions put forward
- Mostly housing and employment sites
- Potential suitability to be assessed through update of SHELAA
- Some other ideas also put forward eg renewable energy, leisure, tourism
- A range of other more general suggestions also made

Chris Hargraves also reported on two other areas which will have an impact on the future Local Plan

- **SALT CROSS AAP LEGAL CHALLENGE** – The Inspector did not allow WODC’s Policy 2 – Net Zero Carbon Development, but this has now been overturned by the high court
- **PLANNING RULES FOR SHORT-TERM LETS** – A new planning ‘use class’ will be created for short-term lets that are not used as a sole or main home. Existing dedicated short-term lets will automatically be reclassified into the new use class and will not require a planning application but planning permission will be needed for future short-term let properties. This could apply from ‘this summer’.

REPORT TO FULBROOK PARISH COUNCIL - FEBRUARY 2024

FROM CLLR NICHOLAS FIELD-JOHNSON

GENERAL OCC REPORT

COUNCILS SECURE £600M ADDITIONAL FUNDING PACKAGE

Communities Secretary Michael Gove last month announced a total of £600m of additional funding for local authorities in England – including a £500m addition to the social care grant, and a £100m increase in core spending power. OCC is expected to benefit to an amount of approximately £5m.

BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2024/25

This unexpected development noted above means that the Liberal Democrat/Green administration and opposition groups are having to rework their Budget proposals. As previously reported, the minority administration cannot pass a Budget without support of the opposition parties. A meeting of Full Council on Tuesday 20th February will vote on the options, however intense negotiations between the parties are expected in advance of this once the proposals have been published.

JUMP IN PROFITS MADE KEEPING CHILDREN IN CARE

The Times reported last month that Children's groups have accused private sector-backed firms of making "obscene" profits, charging councils up to £280,000 per year to care for young people. An investigation reveals the average cost of residential care for a child is £5,400 per week, exceeding £10,000 in some cases. Councils pay 25% more than two years ago, and the income of the top 20 independent care operators reached £1.63bn last year, with 19% as profit - up six points from the year before. The House Magazine survey shows the average annual cost of residential placement is £281,000, six times the cost of keeping an adult in prison. The highest annual average was £373,000 in the London borough of Sutton. The Children's Home Association argued: "There is a huge difference between 'profit' and 'profiteering'. The cost increase between public and private provision has been comparable for several years."

FIXMYSTREET APP IMPROVEMENTS FOR QUICKER AND MORE EFFICIENT RESPONSE

Oxfordshire's FixMyStreet app, which allows residents to report potholes, faulty streetlights and a host of other street defects and queries, has been updated. The number of categories has been streamlined but they have now been split up into sub-categories to make it easier for people to find the section they are looking for. In some cases, more information and illustrations have been provided to help users choose the most appropriate category. The changes are aimed at reducing the number of reports sent to the wrong department or council, which can delay the problem being resolved. The updated version also includes an aerial map of the

county, as well as a regular map, to help people pinpoint the location of the problem. The changes will be monitored over the next three months to see what impact they have, and the views of users will be sought. More than 1,000 reports are regularly made to Fix My Street every week, with users encouraged to include photographs of the defect to help the inspectors.

PROPOSAL TO MOVE COUNTY COUNCIL OFFICES TO NEW OFFICES TO PROGRESS

After extensive and independent evaluation, and consideration by a cross-party cabinet advisory group on city centre accommodation, it's proposed that the council moves its Oxford headquarters from County Hall to a reimagined Speedwell House campus. The sale or lease of County Hall is expected to meet the refurbishment costs of Speedwell House, which is already owned by OCC.

[OCC Cllr Nicholas Field-Johnson, Burford & Carterton North](#)

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Full details of the final budget are available on the council website. These show that the Budget will result in extra borrowing of £23.45m. The Budget continued to focus on Oxford-centric matters, including Oxford parking zones, Oxford ANPR cameras, Oxford congestion, Oxford 'Mini-Holland' project (at a capital cost of £2m per year) and an Oxford 'Citizens' Assembly' (at a cost of £150,000).

Despite repeated resident surveys and feedback from Councillors which show that roads and drains are near the top of the list of resident concerns, they still fail to get a mention and are not a budget priority. It is likely satisfaction with the council will continue to decline. (The latest 'Residents Survey' shows that 'Maintenance of roads' was rated by 67% of residents as one of their four most important council services, but just 19% were very or fairly satisfied.) I will continue to campaign for more funds to be spent on fixing the potholes and mending the sharp road verges which continue to cause tyre damage.

**[OCC Cllr Nicholas Field-Johnson, Burford & Carterton
North](#)**

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