

FULBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: 21st September 2023

7.00pm

Venue The Parish Church of St James

Present: Councillors Mr Malcolm Taylor (Chair) MT
Dr Filipa Hinton FH
Dr Peter Burns PB
Mr Toby Staveley
OCC Councillor Mr N Field-Johnson NFJ
WODC Councillor Hugo Ashton HA

Parish Clerk Mrs Sarah Ebeling

Parishioners attending: 2 Parishioners.

Apologies:

Mr Robert Warner RW

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 13th July 2023

Minutes of the last meeting were signed by the Chairman.

4 Matters arising

Nothing more to add please see Planning and Estates and Road Safety.

5 Reports from County and District Councillors

See reports from Nicholas Field-Johnson at the end of the minutes.

WODC Councillor Hugo Ashton

Hugo spoke about his visit to Burford Sewage works with Thames Water this month. Hugo passed around pictures to show the causes of the blockages they are dealing with. He also discussed that there is a certain bacteria that Thames Water have been struggling to clear however this does not pose as a hazard. The capacity on site is working well and meets licensed conditions and they have new reed beds to help with the filtration.

Hugo advised that the next WODC Executive meeting is due to take place at Warwick Hall in Burford on the 11th October with a 6pm start. They will be taking questions however these need to be submitted no later than 2.00pm two clear working days before the meeting (so for this meeting, the deadline would be 2.00pm on the Friday before (6 October). They will not be taking questions on the day however if you did submit and question early and they answer it you are allowed a supplementary question.

6 Finance

6.1) Nothing new to report

6.2) The financial statement was circulated around everyone present at the meeting. MT was asked about the percentage increase of the precept this year and explained that the increase was 10% which covers inflation with regards to the Clerks wages, grass cutting and Insurance.

The financial statement was agreed at the meeting.

6.3) The Audit for 2022/23 has now been completed and signed off by John Yeatman.

**6.4)
TSB**

MT has applied for online banking but has been told he does not hold the relevant authority to go forward with this.

PB and MT to work together to get this resolved.

NS&I

Clerk has spoken to NS&I and does not hold authority to speak to someone regarding the accounts the council hold with them.

Clerk and PB to work together to get this resolved.

7 **Amenities**

Toby Staveley introduced himself as the lead councilor for the village amenities. Toby has been in the village for 15 years and lives with his wife Lucy and their four children. He has a passion to connect people in the village and would like to start looking at which demographics of people are not currently being catered for when it comes to village events. He has noted that there are four main events that take place every year which are the plant sale, 2 village clear ups (once in spring and again in autumn) and the carol signing at Christmas. Toby has noticed that there is a lack of events for residents between the ages of 20-50 year olds and would like to make this his starting point with planning a village event. He is very much open to ideas and suggested a 'bring a bottle/dish event and maybe look into starting a WhatsApp group for people to join from different areas of the village to bring their ideas together. MT has also been asked about whether the amenities group could organize a Halloween event.

8 **Planning and Estates**

Orchard Row trees

Hugo Ashton was contacted by a resident on behalf of Rickyard Cottage Management Limited regarding the overgrown trees just behind their properties.

FPC became involved in the Orchard Row grassed area more than 25 years ago. The area was originally just used as car parking and WODC (predating Cottsway) agreed to widen the road there. FPC had planned to install children's play equipment, however, strong local objections prevented this plan and FPC have since organized for the grass to be cut.

The horse chestnut and copper beach have been in place for many years however, the tulip tree was not formally planted by FPC.

The councilors agreed that FPC does not have funds for significant tree work. As it is a small group of parishioners who want the tree work completed the councilors agreed it appropriate that the Rickyard Cottage Management Limited should fund the work. FPC would have to increase its precept to pay for this work, which would spread the cost over the whole parish which is not fair.

It is suggested that Rickyard Cottage Management Limited should direct their concerns to Cottsway, who own the land and any concerns regarding cable and transformer issues are the responsibility of SSE.

Overgrown Shrubs

There are overgrown shrubs which obstruct the A361 footpath in several places. The owners/tenants of the adjacent properties are unable/unwilling to take responsibility for maintaining the shrubbery.

In addition to the above there is a bush beneath the Pill Box which restricts drivers' view when entering the roundabout from Cocklands hill. It was discussed whether FPC should be responsible for this or whether this is an issue for Highways. A parishioner offered the opinion that this could be something that residents of Fulbrook could help with during the village clean up or whether they could get a group of volunteers together who could help keep the village tidy on more of a regular basis.

McCracken's

A question was asked about what patches of grass are included in the grass cutting done by McCracken's and it was noted that the 30mph sign as you come into the village from Shipton is prone to be obstructed from overgrown grass. Getting a group of volunteers to keep the village tidy could also reduce the amount we pay to McCracken's.

MT to discuss the contract with McCracken's.

9 Road Safety

Speed sign

It has been confirmed that the speed sign is under a 'back to base guarantee' which means that FPC is responsible for getting the sign taken down and sent back to the company for them to fix.

Clerk has emailed the company who put the sign up for a quote to remove the sign and deliver it back to the original company.

Speed watch

A parishioner asked whether speed watch could again be reinstated through the village. Speed watch hasn't worked very well in the past as the police didn't take it seriously. Malcolm Allsop has agreed to work with PB to bring speed watch back and help with trying to find ways of reducing the speed through the village.

PB to check the battery of the speed camera and follow up with Malcolm Allsop.

Burford Bridge

MT emailed Mike Wasley regarding the pedestrian crossing proposal for the bridge and was advised that a committee had been formed to discuss this further. No contact has been made since. MT asked Malcolm Allsop to help with a campaign to get WODC to listen to our concerns regarding pedestrians crossing the bridge.

Question: Shouldn't there be notices up on the bridge to say 'Caution Pedestrians'? MT advised that signs were due to be put up at the beginning of August, but these had yet to be done.

NFJ to arrange a face-to-face meeting with Mike Wasley to discuss pedestrian crossing.

10 **Play Park**

Grant

The grant application process has now been extended from 12 weeks to 16 weeks due to them starting a new application. If the first application doesn't go through, we can then apply again for the new one. The application was put through 10 weeks ago.

Other avenues for funding:

Tesco grant

Crowd funding

Negotiating price with supplier

Going back to the original plan of upgrading the park in sections therefore spreading the cost.

11 **Climate Change**

Nothing new to report

12 **Future Meeting Dates**

The next meeting will take place on Thursday the 16th November at 7pm.

**REPORT TO Fulbrook PC – August 2023 Edition
FROM CLLR NICHOLAS FIELD-JOHNSON**

GENERAL OCC REPORT.

THAMES WATER IMPLODES.

As you all know that I (and with the help of WASP) have continually campaigned against Thames Water dumping raw sewage into our rivers and have called on Thames Water to re-invest funds to improve the water quality of our rivers and upgrade their infrastructure. My last report commented: “if Thames Water continues to fail to make these capital investments, then serious consideration should be given to bring the water industry back under public control.” Sadly events have shown that this has become reality.

Crisis has now hit Thames Water. Since Privatisation, Water Companies have taken on £60bn of debt and instead of using the money to improve infrastructure, £50bn was paid either to overseas shareholders or parent companies. The Macquarie Group, who owned Thames Water until 2017 and then sold its stake for £1.3bn, was criticised for paying out more than £2.7bn in dividends, whilst taking on £2.2bn in extra debt. This was not only financially irresponsible but also morally indefensible.

Not only have we had to put up with sewage dumped into our rivers and offshore coastline but it was also reported that Thames Water discharged sewage overflow 8,014 times last year – the equivalent of 22 times per day !!

The company is also under financial pressure and has recently been seeking a cash injection of around £1bn from investors. It is time for the Government to bring our water back under public ownership as, unlike electricity, gas and telephone, where we have a choice of provider, and the market does decide on who is the most competitive, with our water we have no alternative: we have to use the provider in our area and there is no choice – it is a monopoly.

REVIEW OF HGVs IN OXFORDSHIRE

We had a further meeting with OCC to discuss the review of HGVs routes throughout Oxfordshire, but this continues at a slow pace. However there are commitments that by the Autumn some recommendations will be made and further HGV trials implemented.

POTHOLE INNOVATION TRIAL

After a winter that saw the number of potholes reported in Oxfordshire double compared to the same period last year and heavy criticism from the public, a trial has taken place aimed at improving the repair process. On Monday and Tuesday, 26 - 27 June, OCC and its highways contractor Milestone Infrastructure used the road between Steventon and East Hanney as a test site to trial seven different methods of filling in potholes or repairing minor defects requiring ‘patching’. Some of these methods are already used in Oxfordshire – including the Milestone [dragon patcher](#) – while the others were new ones sourced by Milestone. The Hanney/Steventon Road was closed and a 1km stretch was divided into sections. Each section had a different type of pothole or patch repair carried out to get a direct comparison of the various methods.

Last year, Milestone Infrastructure, repaired 31,413 road defects. This was against a backdrop of perfect pothole-forming weather conditions – a prolonged freeze over winter followed by a protracted period of wet weather, which led to an unprecedented increase in the number of emergency pothole repairs. The trial will allow comparisons of the type of repair, equipment, material, and labour used, and the time taken. This would include an understanding of the potential results, longevity of repairs, waste generated, carbon impact, use of recycled content and productivity that may be achievable. The next stage will involve contractors returning for at least four more days of work and additional testing and analysis to enable a longer-term review of the methods.

LTN IMPACT REPORT LEADS TO GROWING CALLS FOR RESIGNATIONS

Leading OCC Cabinet members have faced calls to resign after a Council report revealed modelling which showed Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) lead to ambulances experiencing delays when responding to “life threatening” calls. The council report analysed the impact of LTNs in East Oxford and Cowley on South Central Ambulance Service’s response times and found the traffic measures cause delays to response times for life threatening, emergency, and urgent calls in East Oxford. There have been calls for Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for highways management and Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for travel, to resign for not releasing the information in an “open and transparent manner”.

GENERAL OCC REPORT.

July and August have been fairly quiet months, but I attach my HGV review.

MY QUESTION IN THE JULY FULL COUNCIL RE: HGVs IN OXFORDSHIRE

COUNCILLOR NICK FIELD-JOHNSON: “Could you please give us an update on the HGV County-wide report. A report was due by the end of March and we are now in July. What are the timelines to receive this report and implementation of the HGV strategy? What decisions have been made?”

COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: “The area weight restriction feasibility study has been completed and draft outputs have been received. Following refinement and internal approvals they will be shared more widely and will be uploaded to a new freight webpage. Officers are also working to arrange an all-member briefing to provide an overview of the study and next steps (*in September*).

Due to the complexity of weight restrictions, it has not proved possible to identify workable proposals for area weight restrictions at the countywide Page 25 ANNEX 3 level, at least not at this stage. Instead, the work has developed an approach to identify and prioritise those areas that would benefit from more detailed studies. It is planned that more detailed local studies are now conducted to test the approach in 2 trial areas. This work will begin shortly, timescales are currently undetermined but experience from other local authorities suggests that planning and implementation is likely to take approximately 2 years. The study also highlighted the need for a more holistic approach to HGV issues, including early consideration as to whether weight

restrictions are always the right answer and seek to find the appropriate solution. We are therefore developing a clear process for how HGV issues or weight restriction requests are dealt with in the county. This will include how communities can request action to address inappropriate HGV movement, information required and the assessment criteria.”

Further comment:

There is still no budget provision for the HGV work and provision will need to be made in the February 2024 budget and compete with all the other priorities.

[OCC Cllr Nicholas Field-Johnson, Burford & Windrush Valley](#)

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