

Swinbrook & Widford Parish Council Meeting

21st November 2016

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at the, Swinbrook Village Hall, on Sunday 21st November 2016 at 7.30pm

Present

John Matthews (Chairman), Jeremy Duckworth (JD), Neil Norridge (NN), Linda Baillie (LB)

In attendance: Lisa Harrop (Clerk)

Apologies: Christine Standen, Andrew Mitchell

The meeting was called to undertake the following business

0001 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Christine Standen and Andrew Mitchell

0002 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

0003 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2016 were approved and signed as a true record.

0004 **Correspondence**

1. Email received from Daryl Buck regarding British Native Crayfish
Action: LH to email Daryl Buck and give him LB email address so he can place an article in the Chronicle & send communication to the village distribution list.
2. Email received from Bruno Peek regarding asking if we wish to take part in Nations Tribute WWI Beacons of Light on 11th November 2018.
Action: LH to email Bruno Peek informing that Swinbrook & Widford Parish will be taking part.
3. Email received from WODC regarding Consultation on Local Plan, this has been communicated to the Village.
4. Email received for Priority Services.
Action: LH to place Poster on the Village Notice board and send email communication to the village distribution list.

0006

Planning

1. Applications

16/03455/LBC 16/03454/FUL Swan Inn Swinbrook

Extension and Internal alterations to Grade II Listed public house to form new kitchen, toilet and dry store areas.

Council Decision: No Objections.

Comments:

16/02471/HDD 16/02418/LBC Swinbrook Place Erection of two storey rear extension, Internal & External Alterations, modifications to approve application 12/1600/P/FP

Council Decision: No Objections

Comments:

16/02518/HDD Court Cottage East Erection of detached single garage

Council Decision: No Objections

Comments:

16/03618/HHD Keepers Lodge Proposed Single Storey Orangery

Council Decision: No Objections

Comments: LB registered an interest as one of "nearest neighbours" to Keeper's Lodge but, had no objections - particularly because they had been kind enough to bring the plans round in advance.

2. West Oxfordshire District Council Decisions

16/02471/HDD 16/02418/LBC Swinbrook Place Erection of two storey rear extension, Internal & External Alterations, modifications to approve application 12/1600/P/FP
Approved

16/02518/HHD Court Cottage East Erection of detached single garage
Approved

3. Planning Issues

Phone Mask – West Oxfordshire District Council have confirmed that no records exist of any inquiry being made in relation to the mast from the provider. As the site is within the AONB planning permission would be required if both the mast and antenna are new constructions – if the mast existed and the dishes/antenna are replacements this is likely to be a "permitted development".

Action: LH to confirm to West Oxfordshire District Council that Swinbrook Parish Council wish this matter to be pursued by the Planning Enforcement Team.

Red Roof Tiles Swinbrook Place – LH on behalf of Swinbrook Parish Council have contacted West Oxfordshire District Council Planning Enforcement Team regarding a breach of Listed Building Consent on a Listed building. This relates to planning application 14/1350/P/FP where planning permission was granted on the basis that the existing stone slates tiles would be used. Confirmation received from WODC that a complaint has been lodged and has been passed to a Conservation Office to investigate the breach. Awaiting outcome from WODC Conservation Office.

0007

4. Swin Lane update LH sent the following communication to the Village

As some of you may be aware there are 2 houses in Swin Lane which have been empty for some time and now being advertised for Sale as whole lot. These houses are not owned by Swinbrook Parish or West Oxfordshire District Council, but were transferred to the housing association Cottsway after it was formed in 2001, from WODC. The sale of the properties is now in the hands of Cottsway and the PC can have no formal influence over their sale.

Whilst there is a belief among some who have lived in Swinbrook for a long time, that a legal covenant may have been placed on the land on which the houses were built for it to remain in use only for social housing, the PC has been unable to find any written evidence of this covenant, including through enquiries in the land registry.

The PC is very aware that these houses have been empty for a long time and has on a number of occasions raised the issue with the WODC, expressing a view that social housing should be preserved in Swinbrook. During this summer, a member of the Parish Council twice met with the Chair of Cottsway to make this point and conveyed the view that the land had been originally provided to the village for social housing purposes, but that no documentary evidence to back up this claim had so far come to light. The Chair passed on our enquiry to the CEO of Cottsway who later responded. In summary their views were that:

1. They had considered developing the houses for use in Swinbrook, but concluded that the expenses of refurbishment to modern standards would significantly exceed their rental value.

2. Swinbrook was not regarded by Cottsway as a priority area for social housing; other areas in West Oxfordshire had greater need.

3. Their policy was to sell properties in high value areas where there was low priority for social housing, to fund need where there was a higher priority.

4. They have therefore decided to sell the two Swin Lane houses as one, to maximise sale value, as they feel this is the best way they can meet their mission to increase the stock of social housing in West Oxfordshire in areas of greatest need.

The Parish Council feels it is unable at this time to do much more to influence this process. This matter is now closed.

0008

5. Village Hall

The Parish Council have identified a grant that they can apply for next April/September 2017 up to the value of £50,000 from West Oxfordshire District Council to assist with the refurbishing of the village hall. This will be reviewed in the New Year in preparation for making the Grant application in 2017.

JD has contacted Alisa Monk regarding whether she is still interested in the hall to start a Montessori School but has not received a response.

Action: JD to chase.

NN commented that the Burford WI may be interested as the cost of rent at Warwick Hall had been raised and they were no longer able to afford the raise. However it was noted with the current state of the facilities in the village hall it may be difficult to rent the hall out.

0009

6. Parish Council Website – LH presented to the Parish Council a proposal to engage a company called ParishCouncil.net to develop a Parish Council Website for Swinbrook & Widford PC. LH advised that they have 3 packages available,

- a. Bronze £150 development £100 Annual Hosting, 1st year costs £250 year 2 onwards £100 per annum
- b. Silver £250 development £200 Annual Hosting, 1st year costs £450 year 2 onwards £200 per annum
- c. Gold £500 development £300 Annual Hosting, 1st year costs £800 Year 2 onwards £300 per annum

LH advised the PC that the Bronze Package would be sufficient for the PC's needs.

Action: LH to email Parish Councillors link to the company's website for them to review so that approval can be obtained at the next Parish Council Meeting to the spend of £250.

0010

7. Speed Report LH informed the Parish Council of the discussions with Anthony Kirkwood of Oxford County Council regarding the process for applying to reduce the speed to 20Mph through Swinbrook Village, lower the approach roads speeds from 60Mph to 40Mph and implement a 30Mph speed limit from the Cricket pitch to Widford.

The process for reducing the speed limits as confirmed by Anthony Kirkwood are as follows:-

- a. Swinbrook & Widford Parish Council would engage OCC by email from the Parish Clerk to perform 5/6 Traffic Surveys on the roads that we wish to reduce the speed on and pay the cost of £720 upfront to complete.
- b. OCC would complete the 5/6 traffic surveys and inform Swinbrook PC the outcome of the surveys based on the Department for Transport guidelines on setting speed limits and whether they would support/promote the new speed limits.
- c. If OCC did support promote the new speed limits then Swinbrook & Widford Parish Clerk would send an email communicating to OCC that they wished to proceed with the applications.
- d. This would then start the formal process including the public consultation and if approved by Cabinet Member the work would proceed to implement and payment would be due in full following completion.
- e. If however OCC only part supported the speed limit reduction (i.e. they support the 20Mph speed limit through the village, but will only support the other speed limit reductions on the approach roads if additional speed calming measures are implemented, OCC would inform Swinbrook Parish Council of this decision. Swinbrook & Widford Parish Council would then be able to decide whether they wished to proceed with the full application including the additional traffic calming measures which would incur additional costs and would need to be funded or whether they just proceeded with the application to reduce the speed to 20Mph through the village.

With the full application process being fully understood the Parish Council Voted (JM, LB, NN in favour) to proceed with the 5/6 Traffic Surveys being conducted and agreed to spend £720. JM asked to be recorded that he had only agreed to the speed surveys being conducted as he was opposed to the speed limit reduction project and did not support it.

A discussion then ensued on when would be the best time to conduct the surveys. General view was that they should not take place during Xmas or school holidays and perhaps spring would be the best time. Also the Parish Council should be involved in the location of the boxes as it was felt that the position of the previous sites were not appropriate and did not give a true reflection of the problem. If the Parish Council needed to erect temporary posts then this would be considered.

Action LH to contact Anthony Kirkwood to ask if the Parish Council can have a say in when the Traffic Surveys are conducted and their locations.

0011

Finance

1. Lower Speed Limit Funding JD went through the 5 year cash flow forecast for the Parish Council to consider on how best to finance the proposed Speeding Project. The key takeaway from this is that if we are to fund the c£10k costs of the Speeding Project then we need to raise £6k such that:
 - a. The Parish Council have a surplus of £2k in the bank at all times for rainy days and emergencies
 - b. The Parish Council keep a contingency of £500 each year for costs in the annual cash flow forecast we can expect to incur but are not as a regular item.
 - c. As a consequence of 2, the expected current level of the annual precept income of £1,600 meets our expected annual costs
 - d. The Parish Council have c £6k in cash at the moment, and JD would strongly advise that at all times we keep a surplus of £2k, i.e. we have a

net £4k available to meet the £10k Speeding Project costs, implying a shortfall of £6k which we therefore need to raise from new sources.

The Parish Council have two main sources in order to raise £6k:

- a. Donations from the village, and/or
- b. An increase in the precept for a period of 2-4 years

Precept Alone

The current precept is £1600 so to raise £6k from increased precept will require an increase of 100% for 4 years, i.e. $£1600 \times 4 = £6,400$. JD explained there are c100 people on the electoral roll, i.e. an annual cost per person of £16 or £32 per household assuming 2 people per household on average. JD explained that if the Parish Council raised the precept by 100% this would increase the cost of the average household from £32 to £64 per annum, or £1.20 per week on average. After 4 years the precept would revert back to its current level.

Donations

The Parish Council have been informed that there are currently pledges for c£3k. LH confirmed that the Parish Council can accept gifts using Sec 139 Local Government Act 1972:

- a. *For the purpose of discharging any of their functions, gifts of property, whether real or personal, made for that purpose; or*
- b. *For the benefit of the inhabitants of their area... gifts made for that purpose;*

And can execute any work (including works of maintenance or improvement)

If the Parish Council raise monies by fundraising or gifts the Parish Council are advised to ring fence the money and to make it clear to all donors the purpose of the fund and the possible consequences if insufficient money was raised by that method and that the funds donated would be returned.

JD confirmed that the Parish Council would be able to ring fence the donations and suggested that any donations or commitment to donate should be collected upfront before proceeding with the application and ring fenced with the understanding that the funds would only be used by the Parish Council to fund the Lower Speed Project and if the project did not go ahead then the money would be returned to the individuals.

Hybrid of donations/increased precept

JD discussed funding the Lower Speed Project by adopting a Hybrid of donations and increasing the precept. JD assumed £3k of donations, then this would require the balance of £3k from an increased precept which would mean increasing the precept by 100% for only 2 years and would revert back to its current level after that the 2017/2018 precept application form has to be completed by end December 2017/2018, so we need to agree this quickly.

Timing of cash receipts

JD informed the Parish Council the increase in the precept will take some time to collect, the Parish Council may need to require OCC/WODC to provide us with some time to repay the Speeding Project costs. LH confirmed that the payments for the work would need to be paid on completion.

The Parish Council discussed the options above. There was a strong feeling from both the Parish Council and the villagers present at the meeting that Precept should

not be increased to fund the Lower Speeding Project, however no formal decision was made and this will be decided at the next Parish Council meeting in December as the Parish Council must submit the Precept form for 2017 by the end of December.

ORIGINAL

0012 **Michael Bloor – Speeding Report**

Michael Bloor was invited to speak and provide background on the Speeding Report compiled and conducted by Christine Standen. Michael started by thanking Christine Standen for all her hard work in producing an excellent report. Michael proceeded to inform the Parish Council that when the application is made to OCC that we as a collective need to ensure that we have strong convincing rationale to support the application. The supporting documentation could include gathering information from people visiting the area in the form of a survey and should include latest research and good practise guidelines. Michael also recommended a Sub Committee was formed which would be made up of Parish Councillors and villagers to assist in gathering the above as it was recognised that there was a considerable amount of work required to support the application.

0013 **AOB**

The Chairman invited members of the public that were present to ask questions:-

Richard Harrop raised a point regarding when the Speed Surveys should be conducted and noted that they should be done when the schools are not on holiday or over the Xmas period and suggested that Spring might be a more appropriate time to undertake them.

Sue Meech raised a point regarding the precept and how Swinbrook & Wilford's precept had not been raised and was below the average for the area.

Sue Meech also raised the point that the donations raised for the Speed Lowering project should be used for the main application once successful and that the Surveys and Application costs should be funded by the Parish Council.

The following villagers were present at the meeting:-

Michael Bloor, Richard Harrop, Robin & Sue Meech, Carol Duckworth, Sarah Morland, Michael Standen, Martin Kerry, Tim & Eileen Graham & Sue Lucas.

The Chairman JM thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.45pm.