

Shilton Parish Council

Minutes of Council meeting on 16th February 2023 held at The Old School, Church Lane, Shilton, OX18 3AE at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr David Cuthbertson (Chair), Cllrs Andy Robertson, Sarah Royle & Andy Bray, Parish Clerk Julie Alden.

Members of the public: 21

1. Welcome from the Chairman.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. To receive or accept apologies for absence.

No apologies were received.

3. To approve and sign minutes of Council meeting on 1st December 2022.

The minutes were approved.

4. To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Matters arising from that meeting not on the agenda.

None were raised.

6. Councillor vacancy.

Following the sad death of Donal/Daniel Lowry, there is now a Parish Councillor vacancy. There are three people who have expressed an interest: Steve Harrison, Andrew Pearson and Ian Lazarus.

There will be talks with each of them and it is hoped that someone will be appointed in due course.

7. To receive reports from District and County Councillors

Nick Field-Johnson was absent from the meeting but District Councillor Rosie Pearson was able to give a report.

District councillor's report for Shilton parish council – February 2023

WODC has won £1m through the **Shared Prosperity Fund** (levelling up) First year, £70,000, which will fund various feasibility studies, including the rural services study you should have been sent recently. The proposal for year two is to focus on work that supports rural services to make sure

people can access what they need. Town centres and markets will also be prioritised. Year three is likely to address both skills training and business support.

Marriotts Walk

You may have heard WODC has purchased Marriotts Walk in Witney. This is mainly for investment purposes, and was a very good price, but will hopefully also help the council to support local businesses.

Planning – it's really important to be clear that none of the major schemes proposed around Carterton is anywhere near finding its way onto a local plan or being approved. At some point, one of them will probably be, but that is a long way off, and nobody knows for sure which one it will be.

Also much excitement around changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, and whether this will mean local planning authorities are less vulnerable to opportunistic development – it probably will. Coles Field in Burford refused again. Definitely taking more account of Thames Water

Grampian clauses – we will be looking in scrutiny committees at the potential for these clauses which prevent houses being occupied until infrastructure in place.

Water & sewage

Regular monthly meetings between WODC and Thames Water, tackling issues one by one.

I've been involved in several meetings with the various players in the Windrush catchment partnership – trying to get it up to the level of the Evenlode CP, which then attracts funding for natural flood prevention, water quality testing and so on.

I have learned a lot about the inner workings of Thames Water, mainly through the disasters that have been going on in Brize Norton, where sewage has been spilling across the road. So I have made some contacts, and have started to question them in more detail about the Shilton situation. Nothing definite to report so far.

Nature recovery & climate change – trying to keep on top of the multiplying opportunities for parishes and community groups as part of Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network.

Meeting for parish councillors at Wood Green March 8th 6-7.30pm. I have been in group feeding ideas into new **Local Plan** to 2040 – how can nature recovery, renewable energy and community benefit be given more weight, as against housing? Also pressing for more small-scale development – some innovative new housing companies specializing in fitting new houses into existing communities.

WODC revised Local Plan will not be completed until 2024

It will be quite different – slimline, with a high degree of local relevance, and there is a will to make all new developments net zero.

Paul Hedges asked about the status of the plan as we are still operating on the old one. Rosie Pearson said that the plan is still valid. The council are keen to keep up to date with fast changing priorities. Paul Hedges noted that this is a huge concern for local people, as the plan was hard fought as it is, and how can we defend ourselves against further encroachment? Rosie Pearson noted that there are always plans that developers want, and that confidential meetings occur between developers and councilors, nothing gets reported and acceptance is taken as read. Cllr Dc noted that he there was a meeting between Carterton town and parish councils and developers. The wishlist was 2 major developments north of here to tie up with Carterton, and to help with development, to put 3 separate villages around Brize Norton. Both Carterton and Brize Norton have responded negatively as they have had enough. The developers were very aggressive and want thousands of homes built up to the A40. None of these proposals has the backing of local community. Cllr DC said that we have the plan and will be consulted on the new plan. Paul Hedges wondered about looking beyond 2030. Rosie Pearson said the number of houses is likely to be lower than the current plan. Cllr DC said that there is a likelihood of brownfield housing around Carterton. In response to a question about proposed housing on Hen N Chick lane, he responded that it was part of a survey, and that this was rejected by an inspector.

Policy and Finance

8. Finance update – to review and approve finance update.

There is £7616.03 in the main account and £18,204.28 in the reserve account.

9. Payments and receipts – to review and approve current payments and note receipts

One major item of expenditure was the work done desilting the pond by Hickmans, and there was added expenditure for maintaining the wildflower bank, which was carried out by Peter Edwards.

10. The Council budget for 2023-24.

The budget was submitted as previously presented. The precept is slightly up, but is a target for what we expected.

Planning

11. To comment on any planning applications received before the date of the meeting.

There were no new planning applications.

12. Update on previous planning applications

The planning application submitted by the Rose and Crown has been passed. This was supported by the parish council on the grounds that there would be the possibility of additional parking. Matt agreed on signage, and making the field suitable for parking. The barn will be rebuilt and 5 accommodation areas created, with parking for them in addition to the back field for parking. This will be a long term project over a couple of years. The parish council also commented on the Fairfield Cottage application – it was hoped that delivery and parking during construction would not be on Bridge Street. Glenn Loxton noted that this needed to be fair for everyone, as a lorry can only

go in the road. Cllr DC suggested removing part of the front wall to reduce congestion and obstruction on the road. Glenn Loxton replied that they would do their best.

13. Carterton expansion

See questions and comments on District Councillor's report.

Traffic

14. 20 MPH scheme

Cllr DC said that there had been no update from Oxfordshire County Council on our application to this scheme and as Nick Field-Johnson was not here, he was unable to provide more information.

15. Speed Watch Group.

Steve Harrison said that the group had resumed this week with 2 sessions, as before it had been too cold, wet and dark. 2 vehicles were spotted doing over 53mph. This was halfway down the hill near Shilton Horse Hotel. It was suggested that a speed sign could be put on the hill. Cllr DC and Steve Harrison will discuss this.

16. Radar device.

See above.

17. Wildlife Park.

Liz Lovell has emailed about the Cotswold Wildlife Park and traffic problems in the village. Cllr DC noted that we can't do much more than we are already doing. Cllr DC proposed talking to Reggie Heyworth with Rosie Pearson. Rosie Pearson suggested traffic lights might help, although Cllr DC did not think this was the case. Paul Hedges said that cars, caravans etc were using satnav and suggested that there was a way to complain in order to change the route. Rosie Pearson noted that the traffic issues also block off Bradwell Village and enquired about why there are no yellow road markings. Cllr DC replied that this is an Oxfordshire County Council matter, so they would need to deal with it. Rosie Pearson thought this may be a spring and summer issue, as the Cotswold Wildlife Park was recently closed for part of the winter. John suggested that there might be a way to resolve the satnav issue. Paul Hedges and John will talk about this further.

18. Road closure Burford Road Carterton.

The road will be closed from 20th February. Vehicles may need to go down Alvescot Road. There is a sign up about the road closure. Cllr DC noted that the speed limit had now been reduced.

Bridge Street parking.

Cllr DC has spoken to Matt about signage. Cllr DC raised the possibility of residents parking signs. He noted that most building projects in the village are over but that there will be more to come and that the road is not suitable for so many vehicles.

Environment

19. Flood defence.

We are through the worst now and the pond is ok and the work was completed in time. There was a meeting around the pond on Wednesday with a company proposing a survey of the catchment area of the Shill. They would create a model of the area and identify what we could do to alleviate problems. This would prove to be extremely expensive. Cllr DC said that the answer could be speaking to Carterton, Bampton and Clanfield to talk about doing this together. It was noted that there is a meeting in Bampton next Wednesday on sewage pollution but it may be possible to raise this. Cllr DC said that the pond bypasses Packhorse Bridge is no problem. Sheep Bridge stops flooding by restricting the flow of water by backing it up at Charles McDowell's land. The survey would cost £40,000. Liz Fenner asked if there was a surplus left on the money raised to install the bunds. Cllr DC said that £8,000 was left as some money had been spent on the recent pond work. It had been £11,000. Andrew Pearson asked for an idea of possible cost. Helena Wright said that there was not much water in the bunds. Cllr DC said that this was also because we have changed the way the bunds operated and now they block the top bund and let the water drain into the bottom instead of the other way round as previously. Cllr DC also said that the housing being built around Burford has affected the water table. John Colson noted that the garden to Edward house and Delia's paddock used to be a floodplain, as was Bridge House. John Coghlan asked if the problem area was RAF land. Paul Hedges said that he was assured by Brize Norton 2 years ago that the area would be regularly cleared. John Colson said that the water was running through his farm ok. Cllr DC said that there is no water up the Shill in summer. He will speak to Rosie Pearson about getting a group together to look at this survey and modelling and see if it is feasible.

20. Tree planting

Cllr DC has been told that the willow is too big to be planted in the triangle of grass, so this will now be planted by the pond in the next week or so. There is a sorbus tree to plant in the triangle instead. Cllr AB noted that the Environment Group wish to plant trees on Avlescot Road to create a tree avenue, and that landowners have been supportive of the idea. He also noted that the County Council haven't responded to communications and asked if Rosie Pearson would support the idea. RP asked who would fund this. Cllr AB said that the Environment Group would plant the trees but they could either be funded or free trees could be obtained via the Tree Foundation/Woodland Trust.

Cllr AB also updated us on the river and the Windrush Against Sewage Pollution. There is a presentation next Wednesday at Bampton village hall at 7pm, and other river groups also in attendance. A representative for Thames Water will also be there. He will also try to raise the issue of the pumping station and smells. There is regular monitoring of the water quality to set the base levels to compare further down the stream. Cllr AB said a recent sample from the pond showed no pollution and the river level was high. Rosie Pearson asked when this was. Cllr AB replied that it was before Christmas. He noted that the tests also measure terraces of things like phosphates, nitrates, agricultural run-offs as well as sewage.

21. Old School refurbishment

This is now finished and they have done a super job. The floor is down and only the heating remains to be sorted. The pipes are in, now money needs to be raised for a boiler to be put in.

22. Bins

Scrubbs Lane bin is now in, although Ubico remain hopeless on the issue of invoices.

23. Street signs.

No update.

Other matters

24. Opportunity for the public to speak – to provide members of the public/press with the opportunity to comment on items on the agenda or raise items for future consideration. In accordance with Standing Orders, this will not exceed 15 minutes in total and 5 minutes per person.

Helen asked about the drainage system plans, the water and what effect bigger pipes would have? Cllr DC said that the ideal would be to have an open system that was unsightly but would take more water away, but bigger pipes were a better alternative than what we have now.

Andrew Pearson raised the issue of the icy conditions on the hill and noted a recent car crash into an electricity pole. He asked if it was possible to close the road and put up signs to that effect? Cllr DC noted that there are signs behind the schoolhouse. He also noted that we need permission to close it. Cllr DC will send out a poll to villages to ask their opinions. John Colson suggested that this could set a precedence for road closures. Helen asked how much notice would be needed. Cllr DC said that this would be whatever Oxfordshire County Council allows, as they put them up and we don't have the authority. Cllr AB noted that they had been removed previously as they had been put up without authority, for an indefinite amount of time, and some people had also driven over them. Glenn Loxton asked about who is responsible for salting the roads. Paul Hedges said that the local council used to keep the salt bins topped up. Cllr DC said that he asked 5 years ago for salt for the bins, and received a huge amount of the wrong type of salt, which the council maintained was right. Glenn Loxton suggested asking the grit lorries to add Shilton to their route. Cllr DC noted that they only do major roads. He also noted that the offer was only to deliver salt, not to actually fill the bins – there is no money for these services. Cllr DC stated that either we need to find more funds for village services or live with what we have got. He said that we rely on Cllr AB and Steve McCracken to do work for us that OCC and WODC won't. Steve Harrison suggested getting Steve McCracken to cost work and increase the precept. Cllr DC stated that we need someone reactive to contracts at short notice and suggested this may have to be maintenance services on a payroll. He also posited the idea of a village only maintenance fund to assist with this. Glenn Loxton asked if this would be a fund that villagers would be legally obliged to contribute to. Cllr DC said no, we could put it in the precept. He also noted that there was an issue in that when the precept is set, OCC apply it to all in the parish, not just the village. This would include Bradwell Village, although the money would all be spent in Shilton.

25. AOB

Brenda asked if it was possible to get the white lines at the dip repainted. Cllr DC said that this was the responsibility of OCC and advised reporting it via fixmystreet

26. Date of next meeting is Thursday 11th May 2023 at 7.30

The meeting finished at 8.40pm.