

Shilton Parish Council

Minutes of Annual Council meeting on 19 May 2022 held at The Old School, Church Lane, Shilton, OX18 3AE at 7.30pm

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

Members of the public: 17

1. Welcome from the Chairman

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced the two new parish councillors, Andrew Robertson of Ladburn Lane, Shilton, and Donal Lowry of Bradwell Village. He asked at this point for someone to propose their co-opting as councillors – Cllr SR proposed and Cllr AB seconded. Pete Handley then stated that he had no objections to either person becoming councillor but expressed the view that this co-opting was not done in accordance with the 1972 Local Government Act. The Chairman replied that he had already been conversing with Electoral Services and that he was proceeding as advised. He also stated that as this was a new electoral cycle, he would be stand again for re-election. Cllr SR proposed and Cllr AB seconded.

2. To receive or accept apologies for absence

No apologies were sent.

3. To approve and sign minutes of Council meeting on 31st March 2022

It was resolved to approve the minutes and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

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

There were none.

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

None.

6. To receive reports from District and County Councillors

County Councillor Nick Field-Johnson sent through his annual report for the year and also attended the meeting to deliver an update in person. This is his fifth year in post. He welcomed Rosie Pearson as District Councillor. He noted that it has been a torrid year of regime change resulting in a coalition that focused on more peripheral issues that fundamental issues, such as roads. He has been working hard to improve the conditions of the river, which Thames Water has been dumping sewage into. Testing equipment to measure the discharges into the river is being considered but will have to be funded by the council and local residents, as Thames Water does not need to do this. 25 years ago the water was clear, now it is coffee colour. Work to chase and fine Thames Water will continue. It was also noted that new housing developments have had a negative impact on the infrastructure.

Rosie Pearson introduced herself as the newly elected District Councillor. As such, she didn't have much to report yet but has attended training course and meetings. She has been appointed to the Climate & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and the Economic & Social Overview & Scrutiny Committee. She also noted that the West Oxfordshire alliance has its own identity and policies. Two key priorities are on energy and refitting homes, and encouraging residents to

meaningfully becoming involved in democratic processes, especially in rural areas. Since election, she has been on a walk and talk with WASP (Windrush Against Sewage Pollution) along the Windrush in Witney. Cllr AB asked with a view to Cllr RP's involvement with Environmental Scrutiny Committee if she knew why no attempt had been made by WODC to communicate plans to the District Council to bring them together, communicate policy and involve local groups. Cllr RP thought this would be a good idea to bring the two groups together. Cllr DC wanted to note our thanks for all of the hard work, energy and commitment that Alex Postan has contributed over many years as Councillor.

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

Pete Handley spoke on the results of the traffic survey that was circulated. He noted that very few responded and that this shouldn't be circulated on computer. He also noted that Thames Valley Police do not support 20mph restriction. Cllr DC responded that he is applying for the limit from the Oxfordshire County Council and the survey was part of a process of showing local support and consultation. Pete Handley noted that the police will not monitor or fine people. Cllr NF-J said that the TVP units do enforce the limit and that cars driving through Swinbrook, Minster Lovell and Burford do slow down for the flashing lights, that drivers do self-police, and that the signage is effective. Cllr DC informed us that he had approached a company about Evolvix speed signs which tell you what speed you are doing. They are solar powered and moveable. They cost around £2200. Cllr NF-J pledged £1000 towards one, if the parish council agree to proceed with buying one. Gillie Coghlan mentioned the issue of lorries and cars speeding past the dip at dangerous speeds, and wondered what could be done about the limit near the dip. Cllr DC noted that there were signs already at the dip to 40mph. Stephen Harrison mentioned speed camera devices, which are very effective. There are moveable battery signs which require a computer to download the data and pass to police for speeding statistics. Cllr DC noted that solar powered versions are more expensive. It was thought to be a good idea to do a traffic survey for more information to pass to Oxfordshire County Council. He noted that in the survey circulated recently, the results were against a one way system through Shilton.

Policy and Finance

8. Co-opting new councillors – see point 1 above.

9. Finance update – The annual accounts were provided to those attending the meeting. There were no questions from the floor.

10. Payments and receipts – to review and approve current payments and note receipts. See attached. All approved.

11. Year-end accounts. The council's income and expenditure being below £25,000 agreed to complete a certificate of exemption for the year ended 31st March 2022. The Chairman DC proposed and Cllr SR seconded and was unanimously agreed. The Chairman and Clerk then signed the AGAR 2021/22 Form 2 and Annual Governance statement.

Planning

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

There were no new planning applications at the time of the meeting.

13. Update on previous planning applications.

An amendment had been made to the planning applications for Pump House. These were passed.

Traffic

14. Survey results – attached.

15. 20 MPH scheme see attachment and also point 7.

16. Speed Watch Group

Steve Harrison updated us on progress. He is now recorded as co-ordinator and Sarah was also trained and recorded. They need 6 or more people – 3 or more are needed for each speed watch session. There needs to be 100 yards straight view so some roads will not be suitable. Hen N chick lane and Alvescot Rd will be better suited. Steve will submit this and get people trained. Catherine Beresford will join. Chris Bourton asked about the dip, but Steve said that there were visibility issues, and also that he is focused on getting people joining and trained up. A route review may be considered later.

Annual reports

17. Shilton Old School Committee.

Marilyn Cox updated the meeting. Despite the last two years, the Committee was still well placed and can cover the cost of the heating system that needs replacing. She noted that the fuel bill for last year was paid in April, not March, to clarify the report and accounts. It is a relief to be able to socialise again and asked that if anyone wants to join the Committee, to contact her. Cllr AB then spoke about the heating system to be put in place. An Environment Committee formed in the last year, as a committee with the parish council, with 2 members drawn from active parish councillors, and 2 from the community. (This was Cllr Bray, Cllr Holloway, Veronica Bray and Ian Lazarus, with Glenn Loxton joining as he has an interesting in roads and flooding. As Cllr Holloway has stood down, Cllr AB is hoping either Cllr AR or Cllr DL might get involved.) This group has been looking at the village hall work and what is the best possible options for renewable energy to mitigate climate change. This has been hampered by lockdown and other issues, but now the plan is agreed. Insulation of foam and membranes for the roof, for which Government funding is available. The Council agreed, this just needs signing off. The heating system was slightly less straightforward and several ideas were considered, including heat pumps and solar panels, and upgrading the electric heating and solar panels. The issue of heating the building in winter was very important. It was decided that an oil fired boiler would be the best option in the meantime, with replacement by an air source heat pump, and newer technology when possible. Underfloor heating and insulation in the main hall which would seal off draughts. Marilyn Cox noted that the real priority was heating the building through the winter as storage heaters were not good but there is a need for pragmatism. Cllr AB noted that the insulation would make a huge difference. Christine Beresford asked if the underfloor heating would need to be left on all day and was this sensible. Cllr AB responded that the thickness of the walls meant that the stones would need heating continually to stay dry through the winter. Cllr DC remarked that 15 years ago, the hall was unusable and that an ambient temperature is required. Cllr AB reiterated that there was potential for upgrade in the future. Pete Handley said that in his experience, the underfloor heating was not a suitable measure, especially as the flooring would need ripping up and replacing, which would cost money. Cllr AB said that the flooring would need ripping up anyway. Pete Handley advised a combustion boiler instead as this with radiators would be more efficient and save the floor. Cllr AB responded that he is consulting professional heating contractors.

River and flood prevention work will be taking place in autumn, with some desilting. Marilyn Cox asked if a dam had been removed by the first field near the church. The bottleneck dam was still there, but this one wasn't. No-one seemed to know. In short/medium term, the poplars were exhumed. The pipeline needs relining. A lot of work has been done around the war memorial, the bank, and lots of trees have been planted. More work will follow, including planting the bank and by the pond, and any other projects that people would like to suggest. Cllr AB reminded us all that the

swift talk and walk is coming up, to which all are welcome. It will begin at 7pm. Cllr AB to check the date of this event. Cllr RP asked if we were aware of Caring for God's Acre which encourages biodiversity in churchyards. They are worth contacting. Cllr DC said that he is contacting the District Council to ask about water valve pressure as no-one has agreed on what can be done. Having spent £85,000 on bunds up the valley, this is a big issue.

18. Shilton Welfare Fund

The accounts are attached in the minutes. There were only two grants paid out. If anyone is aware of anything suitable, let Cllr DC know. Broadshires infant school may apply as their heating system is an issue.

19. Shilton Parochial Church Council

Accounts were also attached. It has been a difficult couple of years as there has been no congregation in person. The accounts are £10,000 down but it could have been worse as investments went up by £5000. A villager has also left a bequest. Cllr AB asked if this was for preservation of our church or for all churches? Cllr DC said that although this is an unrestricted grant, it will be used for our church. There is also a specific fund, not for paying general running costs, but for the fabric of the building.

20. Environment Group. See various points above.

21. Neighbourhood Watch

Cllr SR stated that there was nothing to report. A PCSO was supposed to be attending the meeting but was not here. She did note that a neighbourhood watch sign has disappeared from opposite Ladburn Lane, and wondered if this was due to Storm Eunice or something else. Pete Handley said that Carterton Town spend £15,000 a year for an extra PCSO. He also said that Thames Valley Police take the money but then say that they can't have them all year. With all the rural crime and agricultural theft, it would be good to see one out here. Cllr DC noted that they are invited to every meeting.

22. Flood defence

We have a contractor for the desilting, which will take place at the end of September. The tree by the pond has been removed, but no bill has arrived yet.

Other matters

23. AOB

Pete Handley remarked that the churchyard is looking bad, and very overgrown. Cllr DC said that someone would be coming to cut it soon. Cllr RP raised concerns about the biodiversity of the churchyard and the wildlife, and said that it is not advised to mow in May to avoid harming or reducing wildlife. Cllr DC noted that the general consensus was to cut the verges. Cllr RP said that this hampers the growth of wildflowers. Cllr DC said that the decision of what to cut was not ours as we do not pay.

24. Date of next meeting 25th August 2022.

The meeting ended at 8.30

