

WESTON ON THE GREEN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

For the meeting of Parish Council, held in Village Hall on Wednesday 6th March 2024

Meeting Number 24.406

Note for information: Cherwell District Council – CDC, Oxfordshire County Council - OCC

Public Participation

There was nothing to note under this section.

24.406.1 To Receive: Apologies for non-attendance

Councillors Bohm (DB), Davis (SD), Miller (JM), Lanham (BL) and Rowan (TR) were all present.

Councillor Coton (Cherwell District Council) and Councillor Simpson (Oxfordshire County Council) were also in attendance, the latter for the second half of the meeting.

1 member of the public was in attendance.

24.406.2 To Receive: Declarations of Interest

JM declared a declaration of interest in relation to planning application 24/00441/F (Fir Tree Farm, Northampton Road).

24.406.3 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th January 2024 (DB)

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th January 2024 were discussed following the addition of key points discussed under item 4 regarding a potential development site at Stoneyfield, North Lane.

The resolution to approve the minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 9th January 2024 was then proposed by DB and seconded by TR. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to present minutes to Chair to sign, then file and upload to the web.

24.406.4 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th February 2024 (DB)

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th February 2024 were discussed with no changes required.

The resolution to approve the minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 7th February 2024 was then proposed by DB and seconded by BL. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to present minutes to Chair to sign, then file and upload to the web.

24.406.5 For Information: Chairs Comment (DB)

DB presented her report to the Council commenting that it's a complicated time for Parish Councils, and our work is no exception. With the hard work of the Clerk and each of the Councillors, our finances are in good shape with great work from the Finance group led by the work of TR and the clerk. One of our development goals – the development of the playground is moving forward. Our planning work is exceptional, and SD is fearless when it

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comes to challenging errors and requesting further action on projects. What other village could muster the support for Works that need to be done, ideas to save us money, JM is a quiet star. However, the Parish Council still needs more Councillors, and hopefully spring will help bring people forward.

There are concerns: Cherwell's positive housing number has been challenged at appeal by an Inspector and as a result Heyford Park is getting 230 more houses.

For information - Note: Appeal Decision

81. The appellant has argued that the Council's Regulation 18 consultation does not include a policies map as defined in the Regulations and therefore the Council must demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing land. Both main parties provided copies of legal advice they had received on this matter.

82. However, as I have stated above, the Council has less than a four-year supply irrespective of whether this is assessed on their own supply figures or that of the appellant. It is therefore unnecessary for me to determine whether paragraph 226 of the Framework is applicable, i.e. whether a five year or a four-year supply should be demonstrated. It is also not necessary for me to assess each of the disputed sites.

83. Accordingly, I conclude that the Council has less than a four year supply of deliverable housing land and this shortfall is significant.

This could be significant for our village or the expectation could fall on the towns as CDC stated in the Draft Local Plan. However, developers will see this as a window to apply for developments.

This matter was discussed at length at the recent Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plan Alliance meeting. They were able to share four recent Inspectorate decisions within Oxfordshire challenging housing data. It feels like our area of the country is going to be strongly pushed for more housing.

The ground re: planning feels like it is shifting - with our Local Plan in draft form, a new NPPF to wrap our heads around with further changes expected any day, Inspectorate decisions shredding what we thought we knew. How do we keep abreast of all of this? The answer is teamwork and networking. At the same time we need to understand our village, the views of the residents and act as guardians of a long and special history.

SD commented that strategic sites in towns e.g. Bicester have under delivered, whilst rural areas have in fact over delivered.

DB highlighted the Village Hall's welcome drinks event to be held on 26th April 2024 as an opportunity for the Parish Council to look for new councillors.

It was also noted that Patsy Parsons will be taking over the Neighbourhood Watch programme as an interim measure and a meeting with the regional liaison person will be taking place shortly. The scheme needs to be re-launched and new volunteers found, DB would like this work to be connected into the Parish Council so it can liaise between the Neighbourhood Watch team and the village Emergency Plan, if the need arises.

The last foodbank collection provided 118kg of food for the Bicester foodbank which was gratefully received as their shelves were virtually empty.

24.406.6 For Information: Clerk report (Clerk)

The clerks report to the Council was noted which confirmed the standard clerk salary payments from the Parish Council bank account.

The clerk confirmed various defect reports relating to drainage, cobblestones, footpaths and potholes had been raised with OCC Highways and responses were awaited.

Confirmation was provided that insurance and road tax have been purchased for the Parish Council's community van. An application to the Oxfordshire Councillor Priority Fund has been submitted for £500 of funding towards the running of the community van.

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The audit of trees in the Parish is booked for 4th April 2024 and a report will be sent up to a month following that date.

A new Horizon Elm tree is to be planted by the pond in the centre of North Lane by OCC. This is reportedly to replace nearby trees previously cut down as part of OCC's tree planting policy.

The annual spring clean event will be held on Saturday 16th March 2024.

24.406.7 For Information: Update on oak tree footpath (DB)

The clerk provided comments from Roger Evans who confirmed that he had not heard anything further from OCC regarding the Method Statement for demolition of the oak tree footpath and there was no progress to report.

DB confirmed she had contacted OCC requesting an update.

24.406.8 For Information: Playing field & playground update (BL)

BL provided an update to the Council on the playing field and playground. A brief visual inspection of the playground reported no obvious deterioration aside from that previously referenced.

BL confirmed that the repair works and installation of the two new swing sets were due to commence 11th March 2024. Demolition work of the existing swings were to be carried out on Saturday 9th March and fencing erected around the site. It also confirmed that the underground searches for the site have been completed and provided to Playdale.

The playground will be cleaned once the works have been completed and there are also volunteers to paint the wooden fencing surrounding the playground.

Ardley FC have not responded regarding the extra fixture request.

24.406.9 For Discussion & Resolution: To Approve Appointing a contractor for monthly maintenance of playing field for 2024 (JM)

JM presented the quotes provided for the monthly maintenance of the playing field for 2024 which were then discussed by the Councillors.

The resolution to approve the appointment of contractor – Slade Estate Services - for monthly maintenance of the playing field for 2024 was proposed by JM and seconded by BL. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Clerk to inform relevant parties of the decision made by the Council.

Action: Clerk to inform Slade Estate Services that their quote was accepted for maintenance of playing field.

Action: Clerk to inform Oxford Edens the outcome of discussion over monthly maintenance of playing field.

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24.406.10 For Discussion: Discuss recommendations from the Planning Group on planning applications (SD)

Key planning applications on the planning report were discussed by the Council.

Building Applications

Decisions Received – Permitted

23/03531/F – Dower House, Church Lane

Variation of Condition 2 (plans) of 23/00154/F - Minor revisions to design.

23/03511/DISC – Starbucks, Part of A34

Discharge of Condition 3 (specification details – turning area/parking spaces) of 22/03709/F).

Decisions Received – Refused

None

Withdrawn

24/00161/TPO – Dower House – Walnut – reduce canopy by 2m

Awaiting Decision

23/03383/F – 2 Church Close (discussed Dec 23)

Two storey side and rear extensions (re-submission of 23/01872/F).

Commented

24/00028/F – 20 Westlands Avenue - Loft extension/conversion including increase to height of roof, and garage conversion with associated internal and external works.

Commented

24/00122/F – 22 Milestone Lane – change of use from agricultural land to residential garden. Retrospective incorporation of 5m of land on the northern boundary of the development site.

Awaiting response from Duty Planning Officer

New Applications

24/00441/F – Fir Tree Farm – Erection of Wood store. Resubmission of 23/03300/F

24/00495/TEL – Mast 4962 Manor Farm – Declaration of compliance

24/00497/F – Cruck Cottage – Resubmission of 23/02717/F

24/00498/LB – Cruck Cottage – Resubmission of 23/02718/LB

Appeals

None

Tree Applications

24/00146/TCA – The Warren, Northampton Road – Mature walnut – reduce crown – permitted

Action: SD/Clerk to send appropriate planning replies to Cherwell District Council.

SD highlighted there has been some concern over work being done at Dormers, North Lane where the owner is undertaking a lot of building work himself and this is reportedly impacting on the neighbours. A request has been made to building control to send an officer out to check.

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SD confirmed that she and DB had submitted a response on behalf of the Parish Council in relation to the updated CDC Planning Application Validation Checklist.

24.406.11 For Information: Update on Southfield development (DB)

DB provided an update of Councillor Coton's involvement with CDC enforcement to provide a response regarding concerns at the Southfield development site.

An email in response was received on 9th February 2024. CDC had spoken to the developer and have received assurances that the outstanding works will be completed within the next 2 months.

These works include s38 highways, drainage, landscaping and restoration of the land currently in use as a compound. CDC will continue to actively monitor the situation and a site visit will be carried out to confirm that this is the case; any decision on the appropriateness of formal action will be taken following that site visit.

The Parish Council thanked Councillor Coton for her time and support.

24.406.12 For Information: Update on Stoneyfield site on North Lane (DB/SD)

A round table discussion (17 people) regarding a potential application for housing on the paddock at the back of Stoneyfield, on land owned by Jon Kirk, was held on 5th March 2024. The discussion was facilitated by the Parish Council. Jon Kirk (resident) and Daniel Moore (Manorwood Homes) were there to answer questions.

The overall areas of future investigation discussed were:

- Traffic for the construction phase – this was a RED line for the neighbours.
- Neighbours request no self-build – seen as a process that is too long and demands a wide variety of contractors and managers.
- Ridge heights – the view is still important.
- How can a legal agreement be given to the Parish Council that restricts development, without making it a cash incentive – more research required on the concept of this.
- Surface water and how its dealt with - the fields are 'spring meadows' and more building affects drainage
- Foul capacity – septic tanks will discharge cleanly but onto waterlogged land adding to the issue of excess water. Thames Water usage would be the first choice.
- It was also stated that the proposal is alien to the character of the village. Pushing the envelope of the village for new homes is a sign of further encroachment of the countryside. Does this open up potential development of land behind houses on North Lane?

Roger Evans suggested the Parish Council hire an independent consultant to study Surface Water and Drainage in the area behind Stoneyfield. The further loss of the flood plain needs to be assessed and this suggestion can be considered by the Parish Council.

There was a suggestion to see if neighbouring land owner, Mr. Wilcox, could help with a 'dirty access' to the site.

An issue over flooded gardens along the north side of North Lane was also raised. The opinion of residents was that building extensions on homes and piling the top soil on the gardens has raised the level of some gardens causing run-off onto neighbours. The Parish Council will need to monitor this area as there are lots of new homeowners.

There was agreement and concern that verges are being destroyed by commercial vehicles, some for construction, including Gigaclear and some for deliveries.

Action: Parish Council to discuss suggestion to hire an independent consultant to study Surface Water and Drainage in the area behind Stoneyfield, North Lane.

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24.406.13 For Information: Update on Gigaclear project (DB)

DB highlighted there has been no noticeable movement since the complaint sent to Gigaclear on 19th December 2023 about poor and slow service.

DB and James Henderson have been working on a village wide survey to collate responses and utilise in the next communication with Gigaclear:

- a. Get a clear view of how many have taken up the service, how many have taken it on and cancelled
- b. Complaints: what are they?
- c. Who is waiting to be hooked up

TR/SD agreed to review survey before sending round to the village.

Action: TR/SD to review Gigaclear village survey prior to circulating to the village.

24.406.14 Resolution: To Approve the following invoices for payment (DB)

DB requested approval of the following invoices detailed in the table below.

PC Ref	Payee	Purpose	Total (incl VAT)	Budget Line	Amount Remaining in 2023-24 Budget
393	Clerk (J Mullane)	Community bus vehicle insurance, 08/02/24-07/02/25 (Endsleigh Insurance)	£1,029.82	Village Initiatives/Community Bus Scheme	£1,346.54
394	WotG Memorial Village Hall	Village Hall hire for PC meetings (Apr-June 24)	£45.00	Meeting Costs/Hire of Village Hall	£165.00
395	Clerk (J Mullane)	Planter noticeboard litter posters (Instant Print)	£34.98	Sundries/Administration & Printing Costs	£178.96
396	OALC	Annual membership renewal subscription (2024-25)	£168.00	Subscriptions/OALC	£150.00
397	WotG Memorial Village Hall	Village Hall hire for meeting (5 March 24)	£15.00	Meeting Costs/Hire of Village Hall	£120.00
398	Clerk (J Mullane)	Printer ink, condolence book/frame/cloth (Amazon)	£99.22	Sundries/Administration & Printing Costs	£143.98

It was noted that invoice ref 393 had already been paid (via the clerk) to ensure continuation of insurance cover for the community van. The Council felt it was appropriate that the Stoneyfield developer be asked to pay Invoice ref 397 and therefore that invoice was excluded from the approvals list.

The resolution to approve the invoices detailed in the table (except ref 397) was proposed by DB and seconded by SD. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to update invoice log with approvals.

Action: Clerk to initiative request for payments from Councillors and ensure payments authorised.

Action: Clerk to ask developer to pay invoice ref 397 relating to Village Hall hire for the Stoneyfield meeting.

24.406.15 For Information: Oxfordshire County & Cherwell District Councillor updates (Councillor Simpson/Councillors Coton & Nedelcu)

Councillor Coton highlighted key topics (not previously discussed) from CDC including:

- Functioning budget approved at last full CDC council meeting. For a Band D property council tax would go up by £5/year.

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- CDC's new Chief Executive has been invited to attend a Weston on the Green Parish Council meeting.
- Reminder that need ID to vote at May 2024 elections and that postal voting applications need to re-apply every 3 years.

Councillor Simpson highlighted key topics from OCC including:

- Budget agreed following 10 hours of debate. Additional money was provided for areas including special educational needs and highways but overall it was very city centric focussed and not for the benefit of the whole county.
- Noted the importance of seed funding within voluntary sector to support groups rather than council run initiatives.
- Peer review into adult services undertaken.
- Noted there is a good programme in the county regarding homelessness. A collaborative approach between county, districts, NHS, Police and voluntary sector.
- Noted that the volume of food is not coming through to the Cherwell Larder, supermarkets have also tightened their supply chains.

24.406.16 Resolution: To Approve the updated Parish Council Risk Register (DB)

The resolution to approve the updated Parish Council Risk Register was proposed by DB and seconded by SD. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to place the updated Parish Council Risk Register on the PC website.

24.406.17 Next Parish Council Meeting Date: Wednesday 3rd April 2024, 7.30pm (DB)

Meeting Closed: 21.35

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