

**MINUTES OF DUCKLINGTON  
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY 11 MAY 2009  
IN THE VILLAGE HALL, DUCKLINGTON AT 7.30 PM**

**1. Present:**

**Parish Councillors:**

Edmund Strainge (Chairman)  
Adrian Armitage  
Richard Border  
Peter Godwin  
Brian Hicks  
Graham Lenton  
Catherine Maddison  
Glyn Rees

Helen Sandhu (Clerk)  
Steven Hayward – WODC Councillor  
Don Seale – OCC Councillor  
PC Duncan Johnson - Thames Valley Police  
Alison Hopewell – Lower Windrush Valley Forum  
14 members of the public, including the speakers from the village organisations

Displays were provided by Ducklington Brownies and the Lower Windrush Valley Forum

**2. Apologies:**

Sally Craig

**3. Welcome**

Edmund Strainge, Chairman of the Parish Council, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**4. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting on 13 April 2008**

The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

**5. Ducklington Parish Council**

Edmund Strainge, Chairman of the Parish Council provided an update on the work of the Parish Council.

*Councillors:* The Councillors remained the same over the year. However Martin Dickson has resigned recently due to pressure of work. The Parish Council is now looking to co-opt a new member – anyone interested should get in touch with the Clerk.

*Planning/Fritillary Mews:* There have been fewer planning applications over the past year – probably due to the recession. A lot of new families have now moved into Fritillary Mews. There was unfortunately some flooding on the site again in June 2008. Some work has been done on the ditches to help reduce this risk and the Parish Council has asked for more work to be carried out on the ditches alongside the A415. Parking on Standlake Road by Fritillary Mews is making it difficult for traffic in the area. The County

Council is applying to have the 30mph speed limit extended to Red Lodge. Thames Valley Police has objected to this and it will now be considered by the County Council Cabinet in July. The Parish Council has requested that Highways place some new signage in the area highlighting the risk to road users – the Council is concerned about the accident risk on this stretch of road.

*Footpaths:* The footpath between Fritillary Mews and the Old Rectory has been repaired but the Parish Council is not happy with the quality of the work. The danger posed by the narrowness of the footpath by the Old Rectory has also been pointed out to Highways. Dog fouling is a problem on some of the footpaths in the village. Parking on footpaths is also causing problems – this is inconsiderate to people walking, damages the footpath and is illegal.

*Sports pavilion:* A new felt roof has been put on and electrical works carried out over the past year.

*Cyclepath:* New reflective bollards have been installed by the County Council alongside the A40 sliproad. There was not enough funding for proper crash barriers. Further work on the end of the path in the village remains outstanding.

*Play areas:* Some of the equipment has been subject to graffiti. This spoils the equipment and costs money to remove. Some of the equipment and safety surfaces are getting tired. The Parish Council is hoping to start a phased renewal programme and will look to people in the village to come up with some ideas.

Mr Strange ended his presentation by offering his thanks to the Parish Councillors and the Clerk.

## **6. Parish Council Accounts**

Helen Sandhu, Clerk to the Parish Council spoke about the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2008 which had been circulated at the meeting. 63% of the Parish Council's income came from the precept, the Parish Council's share of the Council Tax paid by residents. In 2007/08 £2,529 was received from an insurance claim for flooding in the sports pavilion. A further large receipt for the claim was received in 2008/09.

The largest area of expenditure is on the upkeep of the sports and play facilities in the village. Open spaces management, including grass cutting is also a significant area of expenditure. £5,500 was spent in the year on the installation of fencing on the Standlake Road boundary of the sportsfield.

At 31 March 2008 the Parish Council had cash reserves of £21,463, necessary to cover unexpected future expenses and to meet the Parish Council's operational requirements.

## **7. West Oxfordshire District Council**

Steven Hayward, Ducklington's District Councillor gave a report on District Council matters.

*Finances:* WODC has the second lowest Council Tax in the country. The District Council is rated highly by the Government and has received a very good audit report which commends the District Council for using its resources well. However this was before the Icelandic bank losses. The District Council is now hopeful of getting 50% of the cash tied

up in the Icelandic banks back.

The District Council is cash rich, having built up its reserves particularly from when the housing stock was sold. Some of the cash reserves have been moved into property investments. £11 million was put into tenanted property over the last year – this had an investment return of 7.5%. It is proposed to carry on with this policy, with another £11 million set aside to invest in property in 2009/10. The returns being achieved from these investments are helping the District Council to substantially reduce the need to use any of its capital reserves to make up any revenue deficit.

*Waste collection:* The District will change to a new waste collection regime in the next year. Residual (non recyclable) waste will continue to be collected weekly, with recyclables collected fortnightly.

*Housing:* The District Council is responsible for assigning social housing to residents. New social housing comes on stream particularly when new large developments are built (with 30% to 50% of housing units on such developments being social housing). The inflow of new units relies on developments being built – new units are still flowing through in Carterton and will soon follow in Marriotts Close. The District Council is gaining between 130 and 150 new social housing units per year compared to the target set by Central Government of 105. Beyond 2011 the picture is less clear as the planning of large housing developments has slowed down due to the recession.

*Marriotts Close:* This project is being built by WODC. It is due to open at the beginning of October 2009. The shops that are already signed up are standing by their contracts. Mr Hayward said that he hopes that this will be a development that local people are proud of.

*Road infrastructure:* The new two way junction at Downs Road has been announced. This will reduce the traffic going onto the A415 at the Station Lane junction. This junction should be completed by 2011 as an Environmental Impact Statement needs to be carried out first. The Cogges Link Road has now been approved by the County Council. This road has been the cause of much controversy and has been in discussion for 20 years. This will also have an affect on the Station Lane junction.

*Q: How many parking spaces will there be at Marriotts Close and will the parking remain free?*

*A: Parking will be free but time-restricted. There should be 30-40 more spaces than there were in the old Welch Way car park. There will be no long-term overnight parking for lorries.*

## **8. Oxfordshire County Council**

Ducklington's County Councillor Don Seale spoke about matters relating to Oxfordshire County Council. Mr Seale started his presentation by paying tribute to the Parish Councillors who work hard and very professionally for the parish, receiving very little thanks.

*Finances:* The Council Tax increase has been held down to 3.75%. This is a good achievement given the poor settlement from Central Government and the £5 million that remains lost in the Icelandic banks. All main services provided by the County Council remain unaltered, with savings being achieved through efficiency measures including the shared services system.

*Health and vulnerable people:* The County Council's policy is to provide help to keep people in their own homes. Telecare helps with this by using information systems to monitor vulnerable people's wellbeing. Residents need to ensure that they are taking responsibility to maintain their own good health while they are younger and must consider investing money to cover their own future potential care requirements.

*Road safety and speed limits:* People continue to drive above the speed limits. The County Council is now planning to introduce a 20mph limit in certain parts of Oxford. If this works well similar schemes may be introduced in other towns and villages.

*Planning and the Green Belt:* County Council policy is to preserve the Green Belt around Oxford. The City Council is seeking to review the Green Belt policy but the County Council is resisting this. There is a risk that Central Government will intervene and override decisions made locally.

## **9. Presentation by Thames Valley Police – PC Duncan Johnson**

PC Johnson introduced himself to the meeting – he is a member of the Witney Neighbourhood Team and has been a PC for 20 years, 16 of those in Witney and the surrounding area. He is also resident locally.

In the last 12 months there have been 52 reported crimes in Ducklington – slightly down on the previous year. Thames Valley Police has introduced a new policing pledge in a bid to make the local police more accountable to the public.

The Witney Neighbourhood Team has been in place for three years and has recently been expanded slightly – there are now three PCs and 8 PCSOs. Hilary Rabson and Heather Jones are the PCSOs for Ducklington.

*Q: Why did the Police object to the proposed extension of the 30mph speed limit on Standlake Road?*

*A: Thames Valley Police does not object to the principle of extending the speed limit but has an issue with the length of it. The proposal is to take it back to Gill Mill. Thames Valley Police's policy is for 30mph speed limits to start where the housing starts – the perceived edge of the built-up area. If it starts before drivers see any housing they speed up and forget that they are in a 30mph zone. If drivers ignore the speed limit Thames Valley Police is then asked to enforce it which causes resourcing problems. Thames Valley Police would rather the 30mph limit starts where the bungalows are. The Police's objection will be considered at the County Council cabinet meeting.*

*Q: When will the mobile Police station visit Ducklington next?*

*A: The Clerk replied that she had today received an email giving the future dates and will put these on the notice boards.*

## **10. Lower Windrush Valley Forum**

Alison Hopewell, the Forum's project officer gave a presentation about the work of the Lower Windrush Valley Forum. The project was launched in 2001 – Ms Hopewell has been the Project Officer from the beginning. The Forum was set up as a partnership between WODC and OCC. Gravel extraction was transforming the local landscape and the authorities were concerned that no-one was taking a strategic overview. The forum covers the area from the A40 in Witney to the Thames near Newbury. The project was set up to provide a strategic overview of the whole area and to get money from the gravel extractors to benefit the local area in the same way in which developers such as Tesco are required to put money back into the communities where they develop. The authorities

accept that gravel extraction will go ahead but want it to therefore give some benefits back into the local communities. Ms Hopewell works with the mineral companies, landowners and the local communities to enhance the landscape, provide wildlife projects such as the project to reintroduce water voles into the valley, and create rights of way and access opportunities on and around the lakes created because of the gravel extraction. Witney Lake has historically been the only site put into public ownership. There are two key sites – Standlake Common Nature Reserve which is developing nicely and has some bird hides on it – keys for these can be purchased from Alison Hopewell at cost. The Rushey Common site near Witney has now been restored as another nature reserve – the access requirements are being sorted out and this site should be open in Spring 2010.

#### **11. Ducklington CE Primary School**

Aileen Tattam, Acting Headteacher, gave a presentation on behalf of the School. She has been seconded from Blakes School for the summer term to cover Julia Hamper's sabbatical. The school roll continues to increase – there are now 189 children on roll. There are 7 full time equivalent teachers, the Headteacher and 20 part time teaching assistants. At the last Ofsted visit the school was judged to be good; this was some time ago so the next assessment may be soon. Schools are judged on their league table results. The SAT results for Year 6 in 2008 were: 89% of children achieving a level 4 or better in English, 83% in Maths and 100% in Science – well above the national average. At a recent Special Needs audit the school's provision was judged to be good. The children in the school enjoy lots of extra opportunities – there are residential trips in years 2, 4 and 6. There are a lot of opportunities for the children to get involved in sports thanks to the commitment of both staff and volunteers. The rugby and tennis teams are through to the Oxfordshire Youth Games. There is also a lot of music in school. The school aims to develop the all round child.

The school was awarded an Eco Green Flag in 2008 which will be due for reaccreditation in 2010. The school also has a Healthy School award.

Mrs Tattam told the meeting that the school is very keen to get the local community involved in school – some people go in to listen to children read and there are always a lot of opportunities for people to be involved in school life.

#### **12. Ducklington Pre-School**

Amanda Armitage, Chair and Debbie Buckley, Senior Supervisor, gave a presentation on behalf of Ducklington Pre-School. The Pre-School runs for five mornings a week during term-time and is based in the Village Hall. It is a pack away pre-school meaning that the staff have to set up from scratch for each session and then pack away completely at the end. There are five permanent staff and a parent helper assists each day. The Pre-School is managed by a Committee of parents which is re-elected every year. The Pre-School can accommodate a maximum of 26 children at each session from 2.5 years to school age. There are currently 40 children on roll. A lunch club runs at the end of the session on Tuesdays and there is a rising fives session for the older children on Tuesday afternoons.

Debbie Buckley provided the meeting with an overview of the pre-school curriculum.

#### **13. Ducklington Brownies**

Jane Tywman, the unit supervisor gave a presentation on behalf of Ducklington Brownies. The unit has been in existence for over 40 years and was run for 30/35 years by Jean Hill and Jennie Izzard until they stood down in December 2008. Mrs Tywman has led the unit since January. The unit has always had a waiting list. Guiding has started to increase in

popularity again following a slump – the numbers going onto Guides is building up. Brownies is being constantly modernised – the girls now get involved in a big variety of fun sports, games and outdoor activities although completing interest badges remains popular. They are currently working together towards an Environment badge. Ducklington Brownies are going to do kayaking this year, which will be a first for them. Brownies is there for girls to build confidence through fun and activities so that they can go on to develop as Guides and young adults. Qualified Guiders are needed to run meetings – it takes around one year to become a leader. The unit has the help of a girl on her gap year before University at the moment and there is a parent helper rota. More help is always welcome.

#### **14. Ducklington Sports Club**

Dave Duthie, Vice Chairman and Welfare Officer and John Burke, club Secretary, gave a presentation on behalf of Ducklington Sports Club. Ducklington Sports Club provides sporting activities to 250 participants in 22 teams – mostly football and cricket – from the age of 7 years to adults. The Sports Club's main goal for this year is to continue to work towards getting a new pavilion. This will be placed near the current one but closer to the brook, freeing up space on the sportsfield. The new pavilion will cost around £500,000 – 10% of that must be raised by the Sports Club through their own fundraising activities and from the support given by the Parish Council. It is hoped that the building will be started before the end of 2010 when Chartered FA and charitable status should be in place – the Sports Club is working on getting those in place now. The Club hopes to put in an application for a lottery grant. David Duthie spoke of the Club's recent successes – the Men's cricket 1<sup>st</sup> eleven has been promoted every year so far and the Men's football 1<sup>st</sup> team is in two finals this year.

#### **15. Ducklington and Hardwick with Yelford Charity**

Glyn Rees, a member of the charity's Committee spoke on behalf of Ducklington and Hardwick with Yelford Charity. It is a small charity created when the funds from a property sale were donated for the use of local people in hardship. The capital funds cannot be used, but the annual interest can be used to assist people in Ducklington, Hardwick and Yelford who are in financial hardship. The charity can give grants for educational needs such as for the purchase of books or costs associated with going to University. Grants can also be given towards the cost of heating bills, up to £100. There have been very few applications to the charity - if anyone knows someone who may benefit from the funds available, they should encourage them to contact Mr Rees or Joyce Parry.

*Q: Is there a website?*

*A: No, but information about the charity is put in the village newsletter at least once a year.*

#### **16. Other matters raised by the public**

A local resident said that she had found the meeting very interesting and informative and felt that it was a shame that more people did not come.

**17. Closing Comments**

Edmund Strainge thanked everyone for coming and hoped that the evening had been of interest. He especially thanked all those who had contributed to the evening.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Signed .....dated.....