

**MINUTES OF DUCKLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2012
IN THE LILAC ROOM, VILLAGE HALL, DUCKLINGTON AT 7.30 PM**

14.12 Members Present: Edmund Strainge (Chairman)
Peter Almgill
David Duthie
Peter Godwin
Catherine Maddison
Glyn Rees
Sarah Stanley

In Attendance: Helen Sandhu – Clerk
Steven Hayward, West Oxfordshire District Councillor, arriving at
Minute 17.12 and leaving before Minute 18.12

15.12 Members' Apologies: Adrian Armitage, Richard Border

16.12 Minutes of meeting held on 4 January 2012
The minutes were approved by the Council and signed by Edmund Strainge as a true record of the meeting.

17.12 Parish Councillors – Disclosure of interests on agenda items
None.

18.12 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

a) Parish infrastructure issues

- *Request for traffic calming measures/waiting restrictions around entrance to Fritillary Mews*
Awaiting installation by the County Council.
- *HGV signage on Ducklington roundabout*
A design for a new sign directing traffic onto the A415 was reviewed. The Clerk was asked to inform the County Council that the sign is approved by the Parish Council.

b) Village Pond

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that the Highways Area Steward is proposing that the Parish Council should itself instruct Smiths to carry out the highways drainage redesign already approved, with Highways supplying the funding to the Parish Council. The County Council Drainage Engineer, Wayne Barker, would still provide a watching brief over the work.

The Parish Council agreed to proceed in the way proposed and considered the formal quotation for the work received from Smiths in the sum of £6,312.50, with Smiths offering to contribute the materials required (to a value of £687.50) free of charge. The quotation was approved and the Clerk was asked to confirm the arrangements for the work with Highways and Smiths.

It was resolved that information about the timing of the work would be put in the next village newsletter if possible.

18.12 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings (continued)

c) Public information signs

Bartholomew Close sign

The sign has been received and will be installed by Dick Rudd. Peter Almgill agreed to meet with Mr Rudd to agree the exact location of the sign.

Village information sign

It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the three businesses based in the village who have offered to provide sponsorship to request a sponsorship payment of £50 each. It was agreed that once the money has been received three signs will be ordered – one for installation on the fence by the school at the car park, one in the bus shelter and a standalone unit on legs to be placed somewhere near the entrance to the village on Witney Road, with the final location to be confirmed subsequently.

d) Commemoration of Queen's Diamond Jubilee in June 2012 – commemorative tree

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that Oxfordshire Highways has advised that the proposed location of the tree is acceptable. Maps showing the location of underground cables and pipes need to be obtained direct from the utility companies (Southern Gas, BT, Thames Water and Southern Electric). The Clerk advised that she has already requested these. The Clerk further advised that Highways requires organisations carrying out work on public verges to hold £10m public liability insurance, but that the Parish Council only has cover to £6m. The Highways Tree Officer is going to find out whether the £10m requirement can be reduced in this instance.

The Clerk further advised that the Highways Tree Officer recommends that the Parish Council ensures that a maintenance regime is established (to include regular watering for the early years of the tree's life) in order to ensure that the tree flourishes.

Edmund Strainge informed the Parish Council that he has obtained prices for different sizes of two types of oak tree from a local nursery. It was agreed that the preferred tree would be an 8-10cm potted quercus rubra (red oak) at a quoted cost of £100. It was further agreed that the tree should be ordered and planted as soon as possible. Edmund Strainge volunteered to collect the tree from the nursery when it has arrived. It was agreed that the tree should be planted with a plastic pipe to enable water to be directed straight down into the roots, would need a stake, and should be protected in the early years with a wooden fence. It was resolved to approve a delegated budget to the Clerk of a maximum £200 to cover the cost of the fence and the ancillary materials required for the planting of the tree (stake, plastic pipe).

It was resolved that the tree would be planted in the following way – Dick Rudd to be asked to dig the hole, Sally Craig to be asked if she can provide some oversight of the work, Edmund Strainge and Adrian Armitage to be present at the planting to put the first/final soil round the tree, with the event to be photographed by Graham Lenton if he is able to be present. It was further agreed that Glyn Rees would contact the Headteacher of the primary school to invite the school to send some children to assist with/watch the planting.

Sarah Stanley volunteered to contact the Jubilee Committee to tell them that the tree will not be able to be planted during the Jubilee weekend.

e) Inspection of trees at Bartholomew Close

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that Boward Tree Surgery has inspected the horse chestnut and ash trees. They advise that the decay at the base of the horse chestnut tree has increased, but no work is required at the moment. Boward recommends that an internal decay test is undertaken when it is inspected in a year's time.

18.12 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings (continued)

Inspection of trees at Bartholomew Close (continued)

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that Boward has advised that the stability of the ash tree is compromised and recommends a reduction in the canopy for a quoted cost of £270 + VAT. Any work to the tree will require the approval of the Tree Officer at the District Council – the Clerk advised that she has already requested this and awaits a response.

It was resolved to accept the quotation for the reduction work from Boward, with the requirement to obtain alternative quotations waived in accordance with the provision in the financial regulations in relation to ongoing service work.

f) *Bench to commemorate Brian Hicks' service as a Parish Councillor*

The Clerk advised that the bench has been received and is being stored by Dick Rudd.

Peter Godwin volunteered to obtain the necessary wood treatment product from AK Timms and to apply two coats to the bench. He will make the arrangements direct with Mr Rudd.

The wording of the plaque was agreed as: "Thanks to Brian Hicks/Parish Councillor for 38 years". The Clerk agreed to measure the top slat of the bench and to provide the measurements to David Duthie so that he can arrange for the plaque to be prepared.

It was resolved to carry forward the decision about the position of the bench to a future meeting as this may be affected if Highways agrees that the sportsfield fence can be moved nearer the A415.

19.12 County/District Council Matters

The County Councillor was not present.

District Councillor Steven Hayward arrived at this point of the meeting and was invited to speak on behalf of both the District and Council Councils.

Mr Hayward informed the Parish Council that the County Council has resolved to make no increase to the council tax charged to residents – they are on schedule to meet the financial savings needed. The staff headcount has been reduced by 480 in year one of the cost reduction plan (non front-line staff). The County Council is expecting to hear within the next two weeks whether the compulsory purchase of the land required for construction of the Cogges link road has been approved.

Mr Hayward then informed the Parish Council about District Council matters – the District Council share of the council tax will also not be increased. There has been no significant reduction in the numbers of staff employed by the District Council. Work on the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF) is ongoing – no large developments are planned for within or near Ducklington. The outline planning application for the new housing development at the west of Witney ("Deer Park 2") has been received. The LDF may relax the conditions which need to be met to convert redundant farm buildings to residential accommodation.

Mr Hayward asked whether the Parish Council has been contacted by the County Council with the offer of an oak tree for planting to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee. The Clerk advised that she has not been contacted about this. She was asked to contact Don Seale to see if the County Council will pay for the oak tree which the Parish Council had agreed earlier in the meeting to plant.

Mr Hayward informed the Parish Council that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has announced the results of its review of the electoral boundaries for Oxfordshire. Ducklington will be put in the electoral ward of Witney West and Bampton, which will also include Burwell, Thorney Leys, Deer Park, Bampton and Clanfield. The LGBCE proposals must now be placed before Parliament for approval and provided this is granted will come into effect with the elections in 2013.

19.12 County/District Council Matters (continued)

Glyn Rees asked Mr Hayward whether he knew if people will be able to obtain new concessionary bus passes from local libraries once the responsibility for issuing them passes to the County Council. Mr Hayward agreed to look into this issue.

Mr Hayward left the meeting.

20.12 New Business

a) Dog fouling on the playing field

Sarah Stanley informed the Parish Council that there has been a significant increase in the amount of dog fouling on the playing field. It was agreed that people should be reminded that dogs are not allowed on the field via the next newsletter.

It was resolved that new signs for installation at the two entrances to the field on Standlake Road and at the main entrance by the pavilion should be purchased, with the signs to include a reference that the byelaws for the playing field prohibit people from taking dogs onto the field. A total budget of £100 was agreed. David Duthie was asked to place the order with Witney Signs and to make arrangements for them to be put up by the Sports Club. The Clerk asked him to ensure that the invoice is addressed to the Parish Council and forwarded to the Clerk's address so that the VAT can be reclaimed.

b) Help with the teas for the Diamond Jubilee weekend

Peter Godwin and David Duthie volunteered to serve teas on the afternoon of Sunday 3 June. The Clerk will inform the organising committee.

c) Communication from local residents about the ducks at the pond

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that two residents have recently contacted her about the problem of the ducks at the pond – one by email and one by telephone. The suggestions made by the residents were discussed but it was resolved that no action would be taken at the present time.

d) Report about the allotments

A report prepared by the Clerk had been circulated in the Clerk's Briefing Notes. The condition of the allotment which a tenant would like to end their tenancy on was discussed. It was resolved that the tenant would be advised that they must clear the allotment of the materials which shouldn't be on it by 1 March and that if this is not done, the Parish Council will undertake the work and recharge the cost to him.

It was resolved not to undertake any action in relation to the rabbits.

It was further resolved to carry forward discussion of the idea of hiring a skip for allotment holders to use to dispose of non-compostable, non-hazardous materials which they no longer want to the March meeting.

The Clerk had put a document entitled "Health and Safety on allotments – a management guide" and other documents about allotment management published by The Allotments Regeneration Initiative in the folder for circulation amongst Councillors.

It was proposed to discuss any issues raised by these documents at the March meeting.

20.12 New Business (continued)

e) Annual review of the Parish Council's risk assessments

The existing risk assessments and a report by the Clerk had been circulated in the Clerk's Briefing Notes. Some amendments were proposed and agreed

- an "s" to be added onto the sentence "Copies also sent to District and County Councillor." on the section entitled "Proper, timely and accurate reporting of Council business" on page 3 of the non-open spaces risk assessment.
- The hole in the path between Peel Close and Lovell Close has been repaired; reference to the hole to be removed from the Peel/Lovell Close open space risk assessment
- None of the gates from the sportsfield onto Standlake Road are now locked; reference to this to be removed from the sportsfield risk assessment

Subject to these amendments being made, the risk assessments were approved by the Parish Council.

f) NALC/CPRE training event on the new planning system resulting from the Localism Act 2011

David Duthie and Peter Almgill agreed to attend this event on 12 March. The Clerk agreed to send the RSVP and to forward information about the event to Mr Duthie and Mr Almgill.

21.12 School Report

Catherine Maddison gave the school report. The repairs to the roof necessitated by the theft of the lead will soon be carried out. The school is investigating the possibility of creating a parking area at the front of the building and is thinking about introducing a breakfast club.

22.12 Playgrounds/Sportsfield

a) Inspection Report for January – circulated in the Clerk's Briefing Notes

Glyn Rees reported on the inspections which he had carried out. The only issues noted were the splits in the rubber covering of some of the swing seats. Mr Rees expressed the view that the seats should last until the summer.

b) Annual independent inspection

It was resolved to reappoint John Hicks to carry out this inspection at a cost of £84.60 + VAT.

c) Playing field/development of pavilion

David Duthie told the Parish Council that he is still chasing Highways for their view on the Sports Club's proposal to reposition the fence at the A415 edge of the sportsfield. He also told the Parish Council that the consensus of the Sports Club Committee is that whilst the prospect of receiving significant funding to build the new larger pavilion proposed seems unlikely at the moment, the Sports Club remains committed to the plan to build a new pavilion. However, the Sports Club intends to carry out some cosmetic improvement works at the existing pavilion in the short-term including internal decoration and replacement carpeting. Mr Duthie said that the Club would also like to investigate the idea of replacing the windows on the field side of the pavilion with doors, with the support of the Parish Council. Mr Duthie agreed to bring more detailed information and costing of this proposition to a subsequent meeting of the Parish Council.

22.12 Playgrounds/Sportsfield (continued)

d) *Roadway lighting*

Peter Almgill told the Parish Council that he now has the light unit purchased for the Parish Council by Jason Fennymore. Catherine Maddison agreed to ask the primary school whether they would like this to install on their school site somewhere to provide additional lighting to the car park.

e) *Pavilion safety*

The three quotations for an asbestos survey were considered by the Parish Council. It was resolved to ask Amiantus to undertake this work at a cost of £295 + VAT.

David Duthie told the Parish Council that the Sports Club will prepare a fire risk assessment and will forward this to the Parish Council with a copy of the current certificate for the fire extinguishers.

David Duthie also told the Parish Council that he will look into the issue of legionella in order to assess the systems, procedures and documentation which need to be put in place.

23.12 PLANNING

NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS

12/0093/P/FP 12 Standlake Road

Conversion and extension to garage to form living accommodation

No comments

12/0112/P/FP

Dudleys American Motor Homes, Aston Road

Change of use of site from sale and display of motorhomes... to motor auctions including parking and storage of cars. Removal of derelict buildings and erection of sealed car wash facility and site security fence

It was resolved that the Parish Council would object to this planning application, for the following reasons:

- *Highway safety: the road and junctions here are unsuitable for the proposed use, the road is unlit and subject to a 60mph speed limit, and a primary school is located in the immediate vicinity. The road and junctions are particularly unsuitable for the volume of traffic anticipated and the large car transporters associated with the business*
- *Parking: concerns about people visiting the auctions parking on the verges near the site and within Ducklington – both on the residential streets and in the Parish Council car park*
- *Environmental impact of lighting in an unlit rural location, particularly the impact on the residents whose houses back onto the A415*

The letter of objection to the District Council to include the request that if the application is granted, that conditions are attached to it to make sure that people visiting the auctions don't park on the verges or within Ducklington and consideration is given to the need for mitigation of the increased highways safety risk, including reviewing the Parish Council's previous suggestion that the speed limit on the A415 in the location should be reduced to 50mph

The Clerk was asked to forward a copy of the letter of objection to both the District and County Councillors.

Peter Almgill was asked to put information about the Parish Council's response to the planning application on the website.

23.12 PLANNING (continued)

NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS

12/0145/P/FP 13 Manor Road
Erection of single storey front and rear extensions
No comments

DISTRICT PLANNING

12/0084/P/OP Land at Downs Road/Curbridge Road, Witney
Development comprising up to 1,000 dwellings, an employment area of 10 hectares, a primary school, possible secondary education, playing fields and various other amenities
It was resolved to respond with concerns that this development will increase the problems already experienced with traffic congestion at the Station Lane junction into Witney

PLANNING APPLICATIONS GRANTED

11/1945/P/TCN Land adjacent to 1 Bartholomew Close
Installation of communication equipment cabinet (BT Openreach)
Permission automatically obtained as prior approval by the Planning Authority is not required

24.12 FINANCE

- a) *Account Balances and Debts due to Council* – as circulated with the meeting papers
Current Account at 31 January 2012 £17,470.82
Deposit Account at 31 January 2012 £27,400.00
- b) *Bank reconciliations at 31 December 2011*
Circulated in the Clerk's Briefing Notes – contents noted.
- c) *Budget for 2012/13*
A copy of the approved budget for the year had been circulated in the Clerk's Briefing Notes for Councillors' information.
- d) *Pavilion electricity contract renewal*
The Clerk informed the Parish Council that the current contract expires on 10 May 2012, with the renewal period ending on 20 February 2012. She advised that she had obtained contract rates from e-on for 12, 24 and 36 months and had used uSwitch to see whether a better rate could be obtained from a different supplier. She advised that e-on were offering the best rates and information about the relative costs of the different contract periods had been included in the Briefing Notes.
It was resolved to enter into a two year contract with e-on, beginning on 11 May 2012.
- e) *Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control*
In order to assist the Parish Council with their annual review of the effectiveness of the internal control system the Clerk had recirculated the Parish Council's Statement of Internal Control in the Clerk's Briefing Notes.
The Parish Council resolved to readopt this Statement and Councillors confirmed that they are satisfied that the internal control procedures being followed are effective.

24.12 FINANCE (continued)

f) *JANUARY INVOICES*

PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL AND PAYMENT AT 1 FEBRUARY 2012 MEETING

		Statute
Clerk's salary & working from home allowance	358.65	LGA 1972, s112 & LGA 1972 s111
HM Revenue & Customs	12.40	LGA 1972, s112
Boward Oxford Ltd – tree inspection, Bartholomew Close	78.00	LG(MP)A 1976, s19
Getmapping plc – subscription to Parish Online	48.00	LGA 1972 s111
Margaret Johnson Ltd – stationery & photocopying	41.99	LGA 1972 s111
B Lockett – litter picking for January	60.00	LG(MP)A 1976, s19
R Rudd – playground inspection December 2011	50.00	LG(MP)A 1976, s19
e-on – electricity at pavilion q/e 29 Dec (estimated reading)	818.24	LG(MP)A 1976, s19
Helen Strainge – newsletter preparation Feb/March	47.48	LGA 1972 s111
TOTAL	£1,514.76	

The payments were approved. The cheques were signed by Glyn Rees and Peter Almgill.

25.12 Parish Councillors' reports from meetings attended

Glyn Rees reported on the Parish Transport Representatives' meeting he had attended at the end of January. The only item discussed at the meeting which has a local impact is that the responsibility for issuing concessionary bus passes will be transferred to the County Council from 1 April 2012. Residents will be able to get their passes from libraries and other council buildings.

26.12 Other matters for discussion – for information only

- a) The Clerk told the Parish Council that Smiths plan to hold a liaison meeting at Gill Mill at the beginning of March. Edmund Strainge and Glyn Rees volunteered to attend this meeting and it was agreed that the preferred date was Monday 5 March.
- b) The Clerk informed the Parish Council that she has been contacted by the owners of Pond Cottage with concerns about the open space area between their property and the pond being left uncut. The Clerk was asked to tell the resident that the ecological advisor who prepared the report on the pond had recommended that some areas are left uncut in order to improve the ecological value of the area.
- c) Sarah Stanley informed the Parish Council that there was some rubbish on the Chalcroft play area and some smashed glass on the footpath running beside it.
- d) Edmund Strainge reported that there are some potholes on Church Street near the Church. The Clerk will report them to Highways.
- e) It was agreed that the next newsletter should inform residents that they should not enter agricultural fields unless there is a footpath and that if they take dogs into fields with a public right of way they should ensure that the dogs are kept under control.

26.12 Other matters for discussion – for information only (continued)

- f) Peter Almgill told the Parish Council that the Localism Bill will be coming into effect soon and that it will change the way personal interests are dealt with. Parish Councils will need to change their Code of Conduct and the role of the District Council Standards Committee will change. He advised that it is not clear whether West Oxfordshire District Council will be issuing a model code of conduct for Parish Councils in the district to consider adopting. He stated that if a Parish Council has a website, the register of members' interests will have to be published on it. Mr Almgill said that in the light of the upcoming changes it will be sensible to delay the adoption of Standing Orders for the Parish Council until the Localism Bill and the new arrangements for the code of conduct are in place.

27.12 Date of next meeting - 7 March 2012 - Lilac Room, Village Hall, 7.30pm
Monthly meeting of Parish Council

Signeddated.....