

**DRAFT MINUTES OF DUCKLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2012
IN THE LILAC ROOM, VILLAGE HALL, DUCKLINGTON AT 7.30 PM**

115.12 Members Present: Edmund Strainge (Chairman)
Richard Border
David Duthie
Peter Godwin
Catherine Maddison
Sarah Stanley

In Attendance: Helen Sandhu – Clerk
Jane Bowley, Project Officer of the Windrush Valley Project to the end of minute 117.12

116.12 Members' Apologies: Peter Almgill, Adrian Armitage, Glyn Rees

117.12 External guest – Jane Bowley, Lower Windrush Valley Project

Edmund Strainge welcomed Jane Bowley to the meeting. Ms Bowley told the meeting that she has been appointed as Lower Windrush Valley Project Officer, replacing Alison Hopewell and is based in the Oxfordshire County Council countryside services offices in Eynsham. The Project is hosted by Oxfordshire County Council and also receives funding from the District Council, the Environment Agency and s106 money from the mineral companies. The Project has now been running for 10 years. Ms Bowley explained that this is a new phase for the Project – the infrastructure is now in place and no new major undertakings are planned. Ms Bowley did say, however, that she would always be interested in hearing new ideas about further development including access improvements, work which would increase biodiversity, copse planting and hedge laying – there are small pots of money still available for small projects and Ms Bowley said that she could try to identify funding for any more major projects proposed, although obtaining funding is never guaranteed.

Edmund Strainge asked Ms Bowley whether the boundary of the Project area is the A415. Ms Bowley said that this is the case in general, with the area sweeping out to include Standlake Common, along the river to Stanton Harcourt out to Bablock Hythe and back up to the A40 at Witney. Mr Strainge then asked whether Witney Lakes are included? Ms Bowley affirmed that they are as they are south of the A40. Councillors then raised the issue of current maintenance needs at the Lakes, particularly the cutting back of some overgrown planting/trees.

Edmund Strainge asked Ms Bowley whether she will be involved with the planning application for the quarry extension which Smiths of Bletchington intends to submit. Ms Bowley said that she would look at the paperwork together with the County Council Planning Ecologist, but that this would be work with which she has not had previous experience.

Ms Bowley said that she would be interested in any ideas the Parish Council has about the strategic development of the Valley as a whole. Ms Bowley also said that she has been in touch with local schools as she would like to get them and their students more involved, coming out to the bird hide for example. Ms Bowley also aims to develop the involvement of

117.12 External guest – Jane Bowley, Lower Windrush Valley Project (continued)

volunteers in the Project – she said that because she previously worked with the Wychwood Project she has experience of getting volunteers involved.

Ms Bowley told the Parish Council that she has walked the footpath between Ducklington and Witney which is a permissive path – she is aware that some maintenance is needed and she is going to try to find out who is responsible for what maintenance. She told the Parish Council that a decision needs to be made on whether the definitive path should be reinstated or whether the current permissive path should continue to be used. Ms Bowley agreed to contact Edmund Strainge outside the meeting to discuss the maintenance/building of gates and stiles on the path as he farms the field.

Edmund Strainge invited Ms Bowley to come to the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2013 to give a presentation about the Project.

118.12 Minutes of meetings held on 4 July 2012, 25 July 2012 and 1 August 2012

The minutes were approved by the Council and signed by Edmund Strainge as a true record of the meetings.

119.12 County/District Council Matters

Both Don Seale and Steve Hayward had given their apologies for this meeting.

120.12 Parish Councillors – Disclosure of interests on agenda items

Edmund Strainge, the planning application for Ducklington Farm, Course Hill Lane - minute 124.12 as he is the applicant.

Edmund Strainge, the planning application for the Former Dudley Motor Homes site, Aston Road - minute 124.12 as he is a neighbour of the applicant.

121.12 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

a) Installation of waiting restrictions on Standlake Road near Fritillary Mews

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that she has received correspondence from the County Council indicating that the road marking and signing works would shortly be completed and the restrictions brought into effect from Tuesday 28 August. It was noted that there are, however, still gaps in the single yellow line.

b) Village Pond

The work to install the new drainage pipes and swale has been completed.

Edmund Strainge asked whether the Parish Council should install some new planting in the future. It was agreed to let the work and grass settle in first.

It was resolved that Dick Rudd would be asked to replace any wooden posts which are missing/damaged around the pond and village green.

c) Village information signs

All the signs have now been installed. The Clerk informed the Parish Council of an email she had received from a resident commenting on the low height of the sign on Witney Road. Edmund Strainge told the Council that he may be able to provide some posts which could be used to increase the height of the sign.

d) Dog bin on the footpath between Tristram Road and Sealham Road

The Clerk advised that she is shortly going to meet with an officer from West Oxfordshire District Council to agree the new location for the bin.

121.12 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings (continued)

e) New dropped kerbs

The Clerk told the Parish Council that Don Seale has proposed that this work could be funded from the County Council's "Big Society" budget and that she has submitted the application form required. The Clerk further advised that she will soon be meeting with an officer from Oxfordshire Highways to ensure that the right locations are marked up.

f) Overgrown hedge/tree, 46 Manor Road

The Clerk told the Parish Council that she has had further discussions with an officer from Oxfordshire Highways about the problems at this location. Highways has advised that if the Parish Council wishes to carry out any work itself, the Council must identify the owner of the property (via a Land Registry search) and issue the two formal notices/letters required in advance of the work.

The Highways Officer has agreed to attempt to contact the resident further to try to achieve some action.

Councillors said that they will continue local efforts to find out whether the property is occupied and the identity of the owner of the property.

g) Ditch/gulley maintenance end Standlake Road near Fritillary Mews

The Clerk advised that she has informed Oxfordshire Highways of the urgent need for the problems with the gulley outside 75 Standlake Road to be attended to.

The Clerk also advised that she has written to the property agent who works for the Feilden family who own the field between the sportsfield and the bungalows opposite the entrance to the Philip Dennis site to request that they attend to the maintenance of the ditch alongside that field.

The information received from Dick Rudd following his assessment of the drainage problems in the area was discussed. Peter Godwin advised that he had met with Mr Rudd and that the start point for any work needs to be on the ditches at the field between Gill Mill and Philip Dennis. The ownership of this field is not clear, but there was a suggestion that it may belong to Smiths of Bletchington. Edmund Strange agreed to contact Smiths to ask if they own the field or know who does.

The Clerk was asked to contact the Probation Service to see if they can arrange for a team to come and cut back the plant growth in the ditches which are the responsibility of the Parish Council.

It was noted that the Parish Council needs to ensure that there is money set aside in the annual budget for ditch clearance.

It was agreed that information should be put in the next newsletter informing residents that the Parish Council is aware of the drainage problems and is attempting to ensure that the action which is necessary to deal with the problems will be undertaken by the various responsible parties.

h) Removal of low branches to a height of 2.5m to assist with mowing

The quotations from Dick Rudd to carry out this work on the land for which the Parish Council is responsible (Bartholomew Close £175.00, Village Green £40.00, Chalcroft £60.00) were approved.

121.12 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings (continued)

i) Parish "walkabout" with Highways

The walkabout will take place on Tuesday 18 September at 2pm. Richard Border agreed to attend, Sarah Stanley and Catherine Maddison said that they would also try to attend. The Clerk was asked to contact Glyn Rees to see if he would also like to be there. It was agreed that the poor state of Witney Road, particularly on the bends should be raised with the Highways officer. Councillors were asked to email the Clerk with any other issues which they think should be raised.

j) Jubilee Tree

It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Lorraine Douglas at the County Council to discuss the arrangements for planting the tree this autumn.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would consider tree guards at the next meeting.

k) Tree at centre of Peel Close

The Clerk will check whether Dick Rudd has removed the damaged tree as previously agreed.

It was agreed that the tree will be replaced, with the proposal made that it will be with a hornbeam which has a round crown. Edmund Strainge agreed to find out what sizes/prices of tree are available. It was agreed that a strimmer guard and watering pipe would be needed.

l) Litter picking

Mr Luckett has had to resign from his role as the litter picker with immediate effect.

It was resolved that information about the vacancy for a self-employed litter picker would be put in the next newsletter. The litter picker will need to be eighteen or over and will continue to be paid at the existing rate. The information will include the areas to be covered and Councillors noted that they think the work should take approximately two hours to complete each week. Councillors agreed to continue to make efforts to keep the village tidy in the meantime.

m) Station Lane junction

Oxfordshire Highways has replied to the letter the Parish Council originally sent in October 2011 about the future plans for the Station Lane junction. Whilst the intention had been to replace the traffic lights with a roundabout, the refusal of the compulsory land purchase order to construct the Cogges Link Road will now require the preparation of an alternative transport strategy for Witney which will include this junction. There will be a consultation on the proposed new strategy, probably in late October/November 2012.

122.12 New Business

a) Proposed signage for playgrounds

The Clerk advised that RoSPA advice is that the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 requires councils to ensure that play areas have correct and adequate signage.

The Clerk was asked to bring suggested wording for the signs and possible prices to the next meeting. It was agreed that the sign for Chalcroft needs to have legs and that the sign for the Glebelands playground could be installed on the tennis court fence.

b) Complaint about overgrown hedge at Bartholomew Close

The Clerk advised that a resident of Bartholomew Close has reported that the hedge adjoining the open space is overgrown and is scratching her car as she drives past it.

It was resolved that Edmund Strainge will arrange for it to be cut soon and the sportsfield hedge cut later in the year.

122.12 New Business (continued)

c) Free salt bag offer from the County Council

It was resolved that the Parish Council will request the free cubic metre bag of salt offered which could be used to top up the grit bin during the winter. Edmund Strainge agreed to store the salt on his farm.

d) Request from resident of Fritillary Mews for the Parish Council to ask the County Council to install an additional streetlight between the last one of Standlake Road and Fritillary Mews

The Clerk advised the Parish Council that the County Council has the statutory obligation for highway safety and that no local authority has a statutory obligation to provide lighting. The Clerk further advised that when the Parish Council asked the County Council to install two lights on Standlake Road in 2009, the Parish Council had to provide the funding of £3,042, and that there is no money set aside for streetlights in the budget for 2012/13. It was resolved that the Parish Council will not request the County Council to install an additional streetlight.

e) Dog related incident on 3 August in Witney Road, Ducklington

The Parish Council has been kept informed about the action being taken about this incident by Thames Valley Police. Councillors agreed that this incident is a police matter.

f) Playground inspection training from OPFA

Catherine Maddison will check to see whether she can attend this training on Saturday 22 September and will inform the Clerk accordingly.

g) Affordable Housing Conference

It was resolved that the Council would not send a representative to this conference on 26 September.

h) Half Day minerals seminar organised by Oxfordshire Mineral Producers' Group

It was resolved that the Council would not send a representative to this seminar on 24 September.

123.12 Playgrounds/Sportsfield

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

No new issues identified.

b) Outstanding work

- Installation of two replacement flat swing seats at Chalcroft – Edmund Strainge noted that he still needs to contact Dick Rudd
- Dick Rudd will file down the reported sharp edges under the platform of the slide at the sportsfield soon
- The Clerk has had no contact from Andrew Fisher about whether he has retreated the weeds on the tennis court

Richard Border said that he has done some tidying up at the tennis court. He advised that weeds are breaking through the concrete and that the poor state of the court means that it now gets little use. It was agreed that the weeds need to be effectively treated. Edmund Strainge agreed to contact a company he has experience of based in Carterton to see if they can kill the weeds. It was resolved that Mr Strainge could place the order for this work if the cost is below £250. Once the weeds are dead the Parish Council will then look into what patching/resurfacing is necessary.

123.12 Playgrounds/Sportsfield (continued)

c) *Inspection for September*

Richard Border agreed to carry out this inspection and requested that Adrian Armitage be asked to accompany him.

d) *Pitch hire fee to Ducklington Sports Club for 2012/13*

David Duthie declared a personal interest in this item and left the meeting.

A report prepared by the Clerk which had been included in the Briefing Notes was discussed. It was resolved that the pitch hire fee for 2012/13 would be £675. The Clerk was asked to advise the Sports Club that it is hoped that the reduced fee will help the Sports Club finances and that it is reduced with the understanding that if the issues with the current contractor are not resolved, the fee may be increased again in future years if a new contractor has to be appointed.

David Duthie rejoined the meeting.

e) *Playing field/development of pavilion*

The Clerk advised that the orders for the replacement storage heaters and new doors and windows have been placed.

The Parish Council confirmed that the cost of this work will be deducted from the pavilion redevelopment reserve which the Council has established.

The Clerk advised the Parish Council of information received from County Councillor Don Seale regarding the Parish Council's request to obtain highways land to extend the sportsfield – Mr Seale has been told by County Councillor Rodney Rose, the Deputy Leader of the Council responsible for transport decisions, that the County Council will not be prepared to release any of this land (adjoining the A415) on any terms. Councillor Rose has suggested that the Parish Council could consider requesting permission to purchase a piece of land on the Standlake Road side which is owned by the County Council. Councillors expressed disappointment with this decision and observed that there is too little land available on the Standlake Road side to extend the field sufficiently.

f) *Pavilion safety – fire and legionella risk assessments*

David Duthie told the Parish Council that he will be meeting with Peter Almgill on 7 September to carry out further work on these assessments.

124.12 PLANNING

PLANNING APPLICATIONS GRANTED

12/1012/P/FP 10 Witney Road

Erection of new detached garage, wall and fence

With the condition that "the garage hereby approved shall be used for purposes ancillary to the residential occupation of the dwelling known as 10 Witney Road and for no other purpose whatsoever."

12/1100/P/FP 2 Feilden Close

Erection of single storey extension

124.12 PLANNING (continued)

NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Having previously declared an interest in the following two applications, Edmund Strainge left the meeting.

12/1314/P/FP Former Dudley Motor Homes site, Aston Road
Change of use from business to agricultural use for storage of grain, machinery and ancillary farming materials (retrospective)
It was resolved that the Parish Council would not object to this application but would request that a condition is attached that no grain dryer is installed on site as the noise generated would be detrimental to the residential amenity of the properties on Feilden Close.

12/1315/P/AGD Ducklington Farm, Course Hill Lane
Erection of agricultural building
No comments.

Edmund Strainge rejoined the meeting.

12/1331/P/FP 39 Feilden Close
Erection of single storey front and side extension
The Parish Council resolved to object to this application on the basis that the size and shape of the extensions will create a property which is not in keeping with the other properties in Feilden Close

125.12 FINANCE

- a) *Account Balances and Debts due to Council* – as circulated with the meeting papers
Current Account at 31 August 2012 £ 8,696.40
Deposit Account at 31 August 2012 £39,663.94

b) *AUGUST INVOICES*

		Statute
Clerk's salary & working from home	385.62	LGA 1972, s112 & LGA 1972 s111
Clerk's expenses – mileage to Ducklington (zipwire, grass), printing 29/5 to 24/8, mobile phone calls q/e 26/7, bin bags for litter picking	49.88	LGA 1972 s111 LG(MP)A 1976, s19
HM Revenue & Customs	4.20	LGA 1972, s112
Margaret Johnson Ltd – stationery & photocopying	18.48	LGA 1972 s111
ISS Facility Services Ltd – grass cutting 5/4 to 27/7	1662.38	LG(MP)A 1976, s19
R Rudd – playground inspection, installation of signs	110.00	LG(MP)A 1976, s19 LGA 1972, s144
AK Timms – lock and chain for sportsfield gate	23.20	LG(MP)A 1976, s19
Thames Water – water supply for pavilion & playing fields, 17 May to 10 August 2012 (estimated reading)	73.50	LG(MP)A 1976, s19
J Miles – two cuts of cemetery grass (9 cuts in year to date)	170.00	LGA 1972, s214
TOTAL	£2,478.78	

The payments were approved. The cheques were signed by Edmund Strainge and Catherine Maddison.

126.12 Other matters for discussion – for information only

- a) The Clerk advised that she had received an email from Adrian Armitage stating that one of the bridges across the Moors needs to be repaired. The Clerk was asked to contact the County Council Countryside Service.
- b) Edmund Strainge told the Council that the edges of the road between the A415 and the A4095 which goes past his property are subsiding badly. Richard Border was asked to raise this with the Highways officer during the parish walk. The Clerk also agreed to email it as a job to Highways.
- c) Catherine told the Parish Council of her concern about the possible closure of the Farmers Market in Witney which has struggled since being moved to Marriotts Walk.
- d) Catherine Maddison told the Parish Council that she is going to be running a sponsored half marathon and intends to donate half of the money she raises to the Council to put in the playground reserve.
- e) It was agreed that Helen Strainge will be asked to include an item about the problems with the increase of dog fouling in the village in the next newsletter.
- f) The Clerk was asked to email Steve Hayward about the amount of rubbish left on the ground by the people who collect the household recycling.
- g) Peter Godwin told the Parish Council of the concerns that have been raised about an increase in anti-social behaviour in the village, particularly in the car park after dark. The Police have been informed. There was a discussion about the idea of installing a gate at the entrance to the car park, although it was noted that this could cause difficulties for legitimate users of the car park. The Clerk was asked to contact Thames Valley Police to ask them to ensure that they include the car park in their regular patrols of the village. It was agreed that the issue of how to improve security of the playing field would be included as an agenda item for the October meeting, with consideration of whether the five bar gate at the extension end should be replaced with a fence to prevent people from accessing/leaving the field in a vehicle at that end.

127.12 Date of next meeting - Wednesday 3 October 2012 - Lilac Room, Village Hall, 7.30pm

Monthly Meeting of Parish Council

Richard Border gave his apologies for this meeting.

Signeddated.....