

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Sonning Parish Council held in the Pavilion, Pound Lane, Sonning, on Tuesday 8 October 2013 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT.

Mr P J Doyle, (Chairman), Mr A Evans, Mr T Fisher, Mr J Hargrave, Mr S D Liddiard, Mrs P Pownall, Ms V Reeve, Mr I Runnalls. Cllr M Haines (WBC) Mrs L A Bates (Clerk). 4 Visitors.

APOLOGIES/WELCOME TO VISITORS.

Mr Farnese was recovering from his operation.

8335: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The Minutes, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

8336: CASUAL VACANCY.

There had been no call for an election for the Vacancy created by the resignation of Mrs Hicks. The Vacancy could therefore be filled by co-option. The Chairman said that Ms Reeve would like to return to the Council now that both her children were at school and he was pleased to propose that Ms Reeve be co-opted. Mr Runnalls seconded and this was unanimously approved.

8337: NEW COUNCILLORS DECLARATION OF OFFICE AND TO ABIDE WITH THE CODE.

Ms Reeve signed the Declaration and Code and this was witnessed by the Clerk. The Chairman welcomed Ms Reeve back.

8338: DECLARATION OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest.

8339: DEFIBRILLATOR.

The WBC Planning Officer had informed the Clerk that he would approve the application for change of use for Telephone Kiosk but had discovered that advertisement approval was required as the Kiosk was a K6 listed building and none of the exceptions applied to these types of kiosk. The Chairman had a note from the Conservation Officer in which he said there would be no need for advertisement approval if the stickers were mounted on the inside of the kiosk. The Clerk would double check the position. Ms Reeve said that the defibrillator application form had been completed and was ready to go when required.

8340: CORRESPONDENCE.

Letter from Mr McCulloch. The Clerk had circulated a letter from Mr McCulloch objecting to the Council paying for the Bridge lighting. The Clerk would write to acknowledge receipt and thank the writer for his interest.

Society Request. The Chairman of the Sonning and Sonning Eye Society, Mr Bob Hine had written asking if SPC would pay Mr Shaw's travel expenses, of £100, out of the Conservation Area budget. The Chairman said that the Society had invited Mr Shaw to a meeting and the Chairman had attended on an informal basis. As the Chairman had a previous appointment he arrived part way through the meeting and had left a short while later. In no way was this a joint SPC/Society arrangement, SPC had not been consulted and had no prior knowledge of

any financial implications. Following a short discussion it was agreed to ask Mr Hine for more

8340: CORRESPONDENCE.

details and to put the request on the November agenda for a formal decision.

WBC Borough/Parish Conference. WBC were inviting three Councillors and the Clerk to the Conference on 6 November at Shute End, 6.30pm for 7.00pm. The Chairman would accept but the Clerk had a long standing appointment.

Allotment Hedge. A complaint had been received about a large area of the hedge, between the allotments and the Little Glebe bungalows, being removed. One of the allotment holders was, apparently, responsible. There appeared to be no justification for this. Mrs Pownall would take a look and the Clerk would then write to the allotment holder based on her findings.

8341: PLANNING.

The Chairman said that the development at 1 Old Bath Road, which was an amendment of a previously approved application, had been approved. As the roof had been demolished it was impossible to tell if the latest proposal was larger than the original but it appeared to be.

Fire Station. The Chairman said that the application for the whole development, was in fact to agree the S106 contribution. The development had been approved previously but rejected as the developer had not paid the S106 contribution within the 30 days as required. The developer had appealed against the £160,000 contribution towards affordable housing and the independent person had reduced this element to nil although other S106 contributions were still to be paid. Cllr Haines said that sites varied and they could not be compared, the site had to be viable and S106 was not aimed at putting the developer out of business. It was an independent decision and affordable housing had lost out. The Chairman said that he had made sure that the WBC planning committee were aware of the poor site lines and that the WBC highways engineer had based his conclusions on a formula for use on roads where no overtaking was possible and he had shown a photograph showing a vehicle overtaking another. The Chairman said that he, together with Mr Evans, Mr Fisher and Mr Runnalls, had met Claire Lawrence and highways officers to discuss the matter. When asked to explain why the site lines were acceptable the highways officer had just said that they were and there had been no fatalities. The Chairman had said that SPC tried to follow national guidelines when accessing these things but had been told that the highways officers made decisions based on their experience. Mr Evans said that the Council should write to Ms Lawrence thanking her for the meeting and saying that SPC hoped that she understood the Council's view which was to disagree with the highways opinion. Mr Fisher said that it would have been hoped that highways officers would be working from a safety position but apparently not. The officer had said that the Fire Station site lines were the worst case scenario, it would be good to put the Council's concerns on record as WBC seemed to think Pound Lane was a small country lane. Mr Runnalls said that there were acceptable standards but the WBC engineers turned 90 degrees around from them. Mr Evans said that the rules had changed over the years as well as an increase in the amount of traffic, saying that other entrances onto Pound Lane were substandard was not justification for allowing another one. The Chairman said that WBC's own figures showed that 7,000 vehicles used Pound Lane every day. WBC had measurements on the level of traffic on their roads and it would be interesting to know how Pound Lane compared. Cllr Haines said that WBC had some of the highest levels of car ownership in the country. Mr Liddiard said that it was frustrating that WBC were still using an out of date map, Ordnance Survey had recognised the mistake immediately and had corrected it, why hadn't WBC recognised it. The plans for the Fire Station had been based on an incorrect map. Mr Runnalls and Mr Liddiard agreed to work together with Mr Evans on a draft letter raising these concerns.

The Chairman said that WBC required details about the contractor and photographs to comply with conditions attached to the permission for the renovations to the Palmer Pump, and the Clerk had submitted this information. Mr O'Callaghan asked if there was to be any planned

8341: PLANNING (Cont'd).

maintenance of the area around the pump as it was overgrown. The Chairman suggested that the Scarecrow Committee might take this on and agreed to speak to Mr Fry.

The following applications were ongoing: 1 Sonning Gate (F/2012/1398) Land facing Duffield Road (F/2013/0634); 11 Hawthorn Way (F/2013/1549).

The following applications had been approved: August Field (F/2013/0140); South Meadow Cottage (F/2013/0801); 11 Hawthorn Way (F/2013/1549); 1 Old Bath Road (F/2013/1487); Former Fire Station (F/2013/0149); 7 Old bath Road (NMT/2013/1546).

The following applications had been refused. 1 Greendown Cottages (F/2013/1048).

The following applications had been withdrawn. Pilgrims Thames Street (LB/2013/0924).

The following new applications had been received. 1 Greendown Cottage Thames Street ((F/2013/1662). Two storey front/side extension plus single storey rear extensions to dwelling; Pilgrims Thames Street (F/2013/1742) Listed Building Application for proposed removal of internal wall, new internal walls, removal of spiral staircase, reinstating of floor, poulticing of beams and timbers and lowering an existing concrete floor; Pearson Hall (LB/2013/1763). Listed Building Consent to install a defibrillator in a K6 telephone kiosk reconnect power and apply x3 vinyl stickers (185 x 370mm) to the glazed sections of the kiosk.

8342: CONSERVATION AREA ASSESSMENT.

The Chairman said that progress had stalled over the summer holidays but he planned to ask the Society for an update on their current position. Although WBC could not process the Assessment until March 2014 someone was required to pull everything together. Mr Gilmore was taking additional photographs and there should be a progress report for the November meeting. Cllr Haines said that WBC would be allocating officers to deal with Conservation Area Assessments. Mr O'Callaghan asked if other parishes were carrying out CAA's and Cllr Haines said that he thought Remenham, Twyford and Shinfield were.

8343: QUESTIONS FOR BOROUGH COUNCILLOR.

Mr Fisher asked Cllr Haines if there were any accident statistics for Pound Lane and other areas in Sonning. Cllr Haines said that there was now a web site with all this information. Ms Robinson said in the light of the recent decision of the independent person to reduce the S106 contribution towards affordable house to nil, was the WBC officers original S106 allocation of £160,000 incorrect and if so should they undergo training on the subject. If the original allocation were correct had the independent person's decision given others the opportunity to appeal? Cllr Haines said that this had been one of the most exceptional cases. A new system, CIL, would be introduced over the following two years and WBC would be publishing information about S106. The original S106 allocation had been considered too high. Mr Evans said that Councillors had explored this at their meeting with Claire Lawrence and other WBC officers. They had said that the computer programme WBC had used had indicated that £160,000 was the correct figure. Apparently the process was that WBC asked the applicant for a certain figure, then a negotiation stage and if agreement couldn't be reached then it went to arbitration. There was no appeal on the decision made at arbitration. The developer had to show why they considered the allocation to be too high and Cllr Haines said that the development had to be viable and everyone could go to arbitration. The Chairman said that WBC would be getting a lot of S106 money from the SDL's and Cllr Haines said it would run into millions.

8344: PARISHIONERS QUESTIONS

Mr Harvey said that the light outside 22 Pound Lane was obscured by overhanging trees. The Clerk would write asking the owner to cut the trees back from around the light.

8345: PROPOSALS FOR QUEENS JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS.

The Chairman said that WBC had originally found the proposals for installing the Bridge lights acceptable but recently had changed their minds and decided that the Bridge must be closed during installation. Closing the Bridge was likely to add at least £15,000 to the cost but WBC had suggested that the lights should be installed when WBC had a TRO in place to carry out essential work to the Bridge in March 2014. There would be no additional cost to SPC for this and the Council felt this was an excellent suggestion. In the event the Chairman had discovered, when speaking to a WBC engineer, that the timing had changed and the work would be carried out in October 2013. Possible dates of 28 October till 8 November had been mentioned and the Bridge would be closed from 9.30am till 4.00pm Monday to Friday inclusive. A temporary three week Section 18 Traffic Order was required for the closure, part of the huge cost involved checking that all the 'road closed' signs were in place each day and WBC were arranging this. The lighting work could be carried out when the Bridge repairs, which were likely to take 10 days, had been completed. Power to the new lights would be taken from the main lighting supply which diverted at the bridge down to the Lock. Ms Reeve asked when the shortfall in the funding was found. The Chairman said that, had WBC closed the Bridge in March 2014 as originally mentioned it would have given an additional 5/6 months in which to raise the additional funding. Currently there was approximately £5,000 in the fund and a resident had agreed to pay the VAT. Ms Reeve asked when had the decision that SPC would make up the shortfall, been made and the Chairman said that this was on the agenda for a decision. The cost had already been reduced by £800 as less work was involved. Ms Reeve said she thought it would be more difficult to raise additional funds once the work had been completed and the Council had originally said that no Council money would be spent on the project. The Chairman said that other avenues of funding were being explored, Mr Hargrave was involved in a local Reading Business Forum and was hopeful that corporate funding would become available. However it was a great opportunity to install the lights while the Bridge was closed. Cllr Haines agreed. The Chairman said that this was in the interests of public safety and the Council had already carried out several safety projects, work to the Wharf, additional street lighting and the bollards outside the school. Ms Reeve asked if there had been any consultation, Mr Liddiard said that it had been mentioned at the Annual Parish Meeting and there was a report, from Peter Brett & Associates, identifying the danger to pedestrians, the Council had a duty of care to carry out the work. If the work wasn't carried out while the Bridge was closed it would jeopardise the whole project and all the work that had already been completed might be wasted. It was important to try to make Sonning more pedestrian friendly. Cllr Haines said that the project didn't have universal support and Mrs Pownall asked if it would be possible to get some feedback from residents about SPC paying the shortfall but it was pointed out that time was not available for that. The Chairman had visited Blackfriars in London to see a similar project and that had a lot of local support. Ms Robinson said that a lot of alternative projects had been considered, and rejected, before deciding on the Bridge lighting. Mr O'Callaghan said that he had been at a meeting when a number of objections were raised and where it had been stated that there would be no need for SPC to make a financial contribution, it was therefore preferable for the Council to carry out a consultation. The Chairman said that time would not allow this and were the Society against the scheme. Mr O'Callaghan said that he didn't know the current situation. Ms Robinson asked if the Council would be voting on a capital or revenue expenditure. The Clerk said it would be a capital expenditure and when voting Councillors should assume that they may not

receive further contributions. Mr O’Callaghan asked what would happen if the full £8,000 were not raised and the Chairman said that the fundraising would have to be extended. Mr Runnalls asked if the contract price was fixed and the Chairman confirmed that it was. Mr Fisher said that he was fully supportive of the scheme but a little uneasy about the Council paying the £8,000. Mr Hargrave said that the Council had ample money to make the payment. Mr Harvey said that the autumn 2012 Newsletter did say there

8345: PROPOSALS FOR QUEENS JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS (Cont’d).

Was no need for SPC to finance the scheme, if this changed it could upset a lot of people. The Chairman then proposed that the Bridge lighting should be installed and that he should instruct the contractors to proceed, Mr Liddiard seconded and this was unanimously approved. The Chairman then proposed that the Council pay the shortfall of £8,000 and that the Council would actively fundraise until this aim was achieved. Mr Liddiard seconded and this was approved seven to one with Mr Evans abstaining.

8346: FINANCE.

- a) Report. The finance report was circulated and noted.
- b) Investments. The Clerk said that National Savings had reduced their interest to 1.26% from 1.99% however it was agreed that National Savings was a safe option. Mr Hargrave proposed putting £50,000 into National Savings, Mr Farnese seconded and this was unanimously approved.
- c) Payment of Accounts. Mr Liddiard proposed making the following payments Mr Fisher seconded and these were unanimously approved.

September

D P Bates – Refund Wharf Lock & Chain	126.35
Quadron – Dog Bins	83.50
Mr K Trimmings – Litter August	145.83
BBONT – Biodiversity Update	10.00
RES – Annual Extinguisher Service	71.38
Sonning Landscapes Mow Wharf £52 & Playground £52 Cut Wharf Hedge £40	144.00
SCS – Mowing – Main 192.53, Outfield 144.40, SLTC 42.00	378.93
Quadron Dog Bins - September	83.58
Mrs L A Bates – Honorarium less tax	2480.15
Mrs L A Bates – Telephone + Postage	46.22
Mrs L A Bates – Refund ZEN Domain Name	59.40
	<u>3629.34</u>

8347: HIGHWAYS.

Mr Evans said that he had been looking at the speeding problem and had found some information. Andrew Luck had been the contact at Thames Valley Police but he had retired. Tony Humphries had taken over but Lynn Burgess was running ‘speed watch’. Lynn trained people to work with the police and to use the devises. Members of the public could not stop offending drivers but could make a note of the registration number and pass it to the police. The police would write to the offending drivers, after three warnings the police would move to the next stage. One option would be to monitor speed at other times without a police presence. A group of volunteers would be required for this. If a trained person worked with

the volunteers they could track the offending motorists but volunteers could only note the offence and pass the information to the police contact. Mr Evans would circulate information to everyone before the next meeting The Chairman said a policy was needed for this and it would be advantageous if someone could come to talk to Councillors at a SPC meeting. It would be good to have an update on the Societies vision and SPC should put their own together. Mr Evans said that he had e-mailed Mr Hart to arrange a meeting.

8348: RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENT W.G.

- a) Report. Mrs Pownall said that there was not a lot to report. A new bin and was required for the exercise area and for the skate park area. The Chairman would make up a sign for the exercise area.
- b) Safety Checks. Mr Fisher said that the Wharf bins were full but not overflowing. The plastic post box on the Bridge had slipped but then straitened and he understood that Claire Lawrence wanted it removed.
- c) Field Maintenance and New Tree. The Chairman said that there were some dead branches and some decay which raised concerns about the danger from falling branches. Canon Tree Care had carried out a full inspection of the tree and were of the opinion that pollarding the tree could extend its life time. Closing the Bridge while the work was carried out would add £1,000 plus to the cost. Following discussion the Chairman proposed spending up to £700 plus VAT on pollarding the tree, Mr Liddiard seconded and this was unanimously approved. The Clerk would obtain permission from WBC as the tree was subject to a TPO.

8349: WEB SITE.

Ms Reeve said that the first draft was ready but needed some refining. Mr Gilmore would prepare it ready to bring to SPC. Ms Reeve said that Mrs Hicks was continuing to update the existing web site and they would be working together with Mrs Pownall who had also agreed to be involved. Mr Gilmore would make no charge for the work to date but would invoice the Council for work carried out after the first draft. Mr Evans said that he would like to put an article on the web site about speeding traffic and Neighbourhood Watch.

8350: POLICE AND SECURITY

Mr Evans said that he would be meeting the Neighbourhood Watch team. They needed more volunteers and would like to encourage involvement using the web site. Mr Evans would like the T V Police information updates published on the web site so everyone could benefit. The Chairman asked if Sonning residents were aware of security. Mr Evans said it varied. Problems seemed to go in waves and people were still leaving items in vehicles parked in areas such as Ports car parks and Sonning Lane. The Chairman said that WBC were unhappy about gated communities as the residents were not integrating into the wider community.

8351: NEWSLETTER.

Mrs Pownall said that the Newsletter was ready for printing but the dates for the Bridge closure were incorrect. The Chairman would send the most up to date information and do a piece on the Bridge lights so Mrs Pownall could complete the newsletter and send to the printers.

8352: ACTION LIST.

This was reviewed and updated.

8353: DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting would be held on Tuesday 12 November 2013.

Signed..... Dated.....