

# **BOURTON PARISH COUNCIL**

The Bourton Parish Council Annual Assembly will be held on  
Thursday 19 May 2016  
at 1930 hrs in the Village Hall

## **AGENDA**

- 1. Apologies for absence**
- 2. Minutes of meeting held on 20 May 2015**
- 3. Matters arising**
- 4. Chairman's Report**
- 5. Accounts for year ending 31 March 2015**
- 6. Update on Bourton Village Road Repairs**
- 7. Report from District and County Councillors**
- 8. Update on Local Planning Issues**
- 9. Update from Neighbourhood Watch**
- 10. Any Other Business**

**You are warmly invited to stay for refreshments after the meeting**

Signed:

Dated:

**MINUTES OF THE BOURTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL ASSEMBLY HELD**  
**THURSDAY 19 MAY 2016 AT 1930 HRS IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

**PRESENT**

Cllr Nial Ledingham (Chairman), Cllr John Bean, Cllr Derek Austin and Cllr David Swann. There were 5 parishioners present.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from County Cllr Yvonne Constance, District Cllr Simon Howell, Cllr William Moore and Cllr John Bean.

**2 and 3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20 MAY 2015 AND MATTERS ARISING**

Copies of the Minutes had been displayed on the noticeboard from July-September 2015 and the Clerk had copies available at the meeting. They had been approved and signed on 22 June 2015. There were no matters arising.

The Chairman agreed to take Item 7 first as Elaine Ware needed to attend to a second meeting.

**7. REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

A report from District Cllrs Elaine Ware and Simon Howell is attached as Appendix A. In addition Elaine reported that a planning application had now been submitted for between 136-140 houses on the golf course between Shrevenham and Watchfield. A report from County Councillor Yvonne Constance is attached as Appendix B. Elaine very kindly offered to take questions on behalf of herself and Simon and also Yvonne.

There was some confusion about the timing and length of the Lower Bourton road closure that Elaine offered to look into. She also reported in response to a query that the planners were hoping to get contributions from the North Shrevenham developers to fund a new roundabout where the Highworth Road crosses the A420. This would be instead of any work to the junction at Bourton Wharf. Councillors mentioned the continuing use of Bourton's roads as a rat run to the A420 as a direct result of the Shrevenham traffic calming and the fact that HGVs could not easily turn left at the top of Townsend Road. Despite the Parish Council lobbying Oxfordshire County Council to impose a weight limit restriction sign at The Avenue to prevent HGVs accessing the village unnecessarily, they were not willing to do so. Elaine offered to raise all of these highways issues with Yvonne on our behalf. Elaine was thanked for attending and for all her hard work on behalf of our communities over the last year.

**3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman reported that the second Pinewood School car park is now operational and the Bursar has offered to work with the village in trying to ensure that both parents and staff use it. The Parish Council would be very pleased to hear from parishioners who can identify cars that they know belong to staff or parents and where they are parking. The Parish Council had asked for staff cars to display stickers and the code used for the pedestrian gate be changed and the school ensure that only pedestrians use it. Chris Field kindly offered to speak to the Headmaster.

There is currently a planning application in from Pinewood School for a 3-storey extension to provide kitchens, dormitory and bedroom accommodation. The Parish Council did not propose to object.

The Parish Council had objected to the application for 2,800 houses at Lotmead, 370 houses on the Redland airfield, 136 houses on the Watchfield golf course and 116 houses at Swanhill (the latter being granted on appeal).

The Parish Council had met with Oxfordshire County Council to discuss possible traffic calming measures but there was no funding for this and the Parish would be expected to fund this work themselves – each traffic calming cost around £10K and traffic lights on the Lower Bourton bridge would cost £60,000. The Vale planners had proved unwilling to ask the developer at Manor Farm, Lower Bourton to fund any road infrastructure measures, despite the fact that the large barn had now been given approval under a permitted rights application for two further dwellings, making 6 in total.

The VWHDC EIP had taken place in February and the Western Vale Villages objections on grounds of lack of adequate infrastructure had been put forward by Charles Lochrane and the transport experts, Bob Hindhaugh Associates. The WVV had continued to be represented at the A420 Working Group meetings with Swindon BC, VWHDC and Oxfordshire County Council.

A DSLAM equipment cabinet had been erected at the end of The Avenue to enable the installation of fix-line broadband electronic communications apparatus but only some Bourton residents who live close to the new cabinet seem to have benefitted from any increase in internet speed. DS encouraged residents to insert their postcode into the BT broadband checker to find out if they were close enough to the cabinet to benefit. Unfortunately he wasn't!

Thanks were recorded to John Bean for liaising with Thames Water to get the leaks in the village sorted out. The leak at Lower Bourton was proving to be troublesome which is why the road closure notice did not appear to be correct.

The Parish Council is liaising with neighbouring parishes to look into the possibility of having a local bus serving the villages. There are no subsidies from Oxfordshire County Council.

#### **5. ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2015**

The Clerk presented the accounts for the year ending March 2015 and copies were circulated. The precept had been reduced to honour the promise made by the Parish Council that they would do this once the loan for the graveyard had been repaid. No grants had been awarded in this financial year but costs were higher because £675.00 had been spent on repairing the village cross (partly paid for with a grant from the Art classes and thanks to Margaret and Malcolm McIntyre for this). End of year funds of £2668.63 were considered a healthy balance. The Clerk thanked Katharine Hodgson for providing an excellent and very reasonably priced service as Internal Auditor. There were no questions from the floor concerning the accounts.

#### **6. UPDATE ON BOURTON VILLAGE ROAD REPAIRS**

The Chairman reported that he and Derek Austin had attended a meeting in March with Tim Hawes (OxCC), George Bartlett (Network Rail Project Manager for Shrivenham bridge) and Murray Ross (Network Rail Area Project Manager) conducted while walking the village roads. He outlined the works that had been agreed at that time which would include some resurfacing, pot-hole and verge repairs to be carried out by Network Rail. It included reinstatement of verges along The Avenue and road repairs, verge reinstatement at Cleyfields and repair of pot holes, sections of resurfacing at Grange Farm to include verge reinstatement and pot-hole repair, together with possible sunken road repair (the latter to be decided and the Chairman was trying to find out if it was included in the specification). The verge repair on the road from Lower Bourton railway bridge to the Wharf was the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council. It was agreed that once the work has been completed, a joint inspection would take place. Thames Water needed to dig the road up to repair the leak outside Grange Farm first before the resurfacing could take place.

#### **8. UPDATE ON LOCAL PLANNING ISSUES**

These has been covered earlier in the meeting.

#### **9. UPDATE FROM NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

In John Bean's absence it was reported that it had been a very quiet year with only an issue regarding the theft of a parcel by another parcel delivery company being reported. The Chairman thanked John for his excellent stewardship of Neighbourhood Watch.

#### **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Simon French reported that many Pinewood mums were walking their dogs down Pot Lid in the morning and failing to pick up after them. The Clerk was asked to source a sign.

**Action: Clerk**

It was noted that the village noticeboard needed a little attention and Derek Austin kindly offered to speak to the person who had carried out the original repairs.

**Action: Clerk**

The Chairman offered his thanks to fellow Parish Councillors for giving up their time to help run the village over the last 12 months and also to the Clerk. He also thanked Fred Jefferies for the work he did on behalf of the Parish Council keeping the village tidy and parishioners for attending the meeting. Parishioners thanked the Parish Council for their hard work on behalf of the village.

Signed:



Date: 13/6/2016

# REPORT FROM VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS (WATCHFIELD & SHRIVENHAM WARD) TO PARISH COUNCIL ASSEMBLIES 2016

## Introduction

The 2015 Local Election included boundary changes within the Vale. The Shrivenham Ward was expanded from four (4) Parishes to twelve (12) and re-named Watchfield & Shrivenham Ward. Elaine and Simon were re-elected to represent the new ward which comprises Watchfield, Shrivenham, Bourton, Longcot, Fernham, Ashbury, Little Coxwell, Great Coxwell, Coleshill, Buscot, Eaton Hastings and Compton Beauchamp.

Once again the past twelve months have been challenging with a significant amount of time and effort invested in representing the views of the Parishes that we serve on a wide variety of subjects.

Following the election Simon continued as Chair of Audit & Governance Committee and the Faringdon Area Committee. Elaine continued as a Cabinet Member but with a change of responsibility to Corporate Strategy including grounds maintenance and Waste.

## Planning

2015/16 has been another difficult year for our local communities. Planning issues have again been top of the agenda and we continue to do our best in representing the views of our residents. The lack of an adopted Local Plan and a five year land supply has continued to cause significant concerns throughout the Vale. Speculative developers have taken advantage of the situation and unfortunately many planning applications have reluctantly been agreed. Where applications have been refused developers have been quick to appeal and the results so far have not been positive.

*Highly likely Five yr housing supply now confirmed - June 2016*

Currently there are a number of major applications under consideration in the Watchfield & Shrivenham Ward and we will make representations to the Planning Committee when these are considered.

Of course housing in Swindon's New Eastern Villages will have a significant impact on our villages and the Eastern Expansion is now a reality. Following approval last year of Swindon's Local Plan a total of 8000 dwellings will be built in 8 villages and South Marston will expand. "The Business Hub" now known as Symmetry Park at Gablecross is currently under construction. It will provide new industrial/warehouse facilities over an area of 1,000,000 sq.ft. and is expected to be fully operational in the not too distance future.

There is of course grave concern regarding the impact that all these new homes and Symmetry Park will have on the A420 and representations are being made at the highest level to identify how the impact on this road can be alleviated. Indeed it is included as a high priority in Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4. A major concern that has been forthcoming in the last few weeks is the proposed number of traffic lights from the Oxfordshire boundary to the White Hart Roundabout. The proposal is for six (6) sets.

## Local Plan

The Vale's Local Plan Part 1 has been through its inspection and the final report is awaited. The Inspector has requested some additional information and some modifications which may require further consultation. Should the Plan be confirmed as "sound" it will then be adopted by the Vale later this year. Once adopted the Plan will hold weight and therefore be a tool to resist speculative applications. The Local Plan Part 2 is expected to be prepared and consulted upon after the adoption of Part 1.

## Policing

We are pleased to report that the Vale of White Horse continues to be one of the lowest crime areas in the country.

The local Neighbourhood Police Team work closely with the community and indeed rural crime is top of their agenda. They have developed a close working relationship with farmers and gamekeepers to ensure that crimes such as hare coursing are dealt with in a coordinated manner. A number of arrests have been made during the past year.

Elaine is a member of NAG1 (Neighbourhood Action Groups area1) and if Parish Council's or residents have any specific issues they would like raised please let her know.

## Recycling

The Vale is No.2 in the whole of the country for the % of recycling material and has received awards for its success. The No.1 council is South Oxfordshire with whom the Vale shares its services. The latest initiatives with the recycling of old textiles and small electrical items have been a great success and residents are encouraged to use these new services.

## **Corporate Services**

The Vale has entered into a contract partnership with four other local authorities namely, South Oxfordshire, Hart, Havant and Mendip for the provision of a number of back room services. The services include HR, IT, Car Parking, Property Management, Accountancy, Revenues and Benefits. The services will be provided by two suppliers – Capita and Vinci. It is anticipated that over the 9 year period of the contract there will be savings of in excess of £50m for the five councils. The Vale and South Oxfordshire will be the first Councils to use the new contracts commencing on 1 August.

## **Accommodation Changes**

Following the fire at the Crowmarsh Gifford offices of South Oxfordshire DC in January 2015 arrangements were made to take a four year lease on offices at 135 Eastern Avenue Milton Park. Staff moved into the new offices during May and June and have settled well. This has given staff some stability after the upheaval of the fire and working in temporary accommodation.

Shortly there will be a change to the telephone numbers at the Vale. It had been expected for these to change in early May but unfortunately there has been a delay and new numbers will not be available until later in the month or early June. There will be a press release once the date is confirmed.

## **Devolution**

At the end of February details were announced of a proposal to Government to create 4 Unitary Authorities for Oxfordshire. The authorities would be Cherwell with South Northamptonshire, West Oxfordshire with Cotswold, Southern Oxfordshire (Vale and South) and Oxford City.

Currently expert consultants PricewaterhouseCooper (PwC) have been engaged to examine proposals and report back by the end of June. The proposal has created some concern amongst local communities and indeed Oxfordshire County Council who, although invited to join with the other authorities, has decided to undertake a report of its own. Further information about the devolution proposal is available on [www.oxford.gov.uk/devolution](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/devolution)

## **Retirement of the Chief Executive**

David Buckle will be retiring this summer and recruitment is currently taking place to replace him. David has been CEO for both the Vale and South Oxfordshire for over 8 years and has dealt with many interesting, challenging and changing times. Once an appointment has been made there will be a formal press release.

## **Finance**

Financial diligence has again enabled the Vale to keep the Freeze on Council tax for 2016/17.

## **Conclusion**

Along with your local Parish Councillors we work relentlessly for our communities and deal with numerous issues that affect the area.

We attend a variety of meetings and make representation to various Vale Committees, Swindon Borough Council, the County Council and other organisations. We work tirelessly to get our voice heard and our views listened to.

We continue to provide assistance and advice to residents when they have any problems or concerns. We may not advertise what we do on a daily basis but as locals we have our local community at heart and will serve you all as best we can.

Cllrs. Simon Howell and Elaine Ware  
April/May 2016

## **REPORT of COUNTY COUNCILLOR for 2015/2016**

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has been rethinking provision of all services in response to unexpected reductions in its grant from central Government. Savings of £292 million per annum have already been made, but the grant was further reduced by £70 million between Dec 2015 / Feb 2016. A transition allowance of £4 million was allowed in time for the budget-setting Council on 16th Feb which will be used to ease the reductions in social services. OCC has increased its Council Tax by 1.99% plus 2% permitted specifically to meet the impact of Living Wage from April 2016, but the impact is severe and OCC now spends 50% of its revenue on 2% of the population (adult and children's social care.) The Council has decided to withdraw from providing services within the villages and all bus subsidies and negotiate with bus companies serving rural areas. Pot hole patching will continue as necessary and Gov has made special funds available.

**OXFORDSHIRE TOGETHER** : aims to agree formal arrangements with Town/Parish Councils to support them to develop their own grass-cutting, gritting and snow-clearance within the villages; OCC will continue to cut grass on the verges outside village (2 cuts per year) and to grit and snow-clear on major routes (mainly bus routes). Some villages are planning to provide this service also. By April 140 Town/Parish Councils have expressed interest and will now sign S.101 Local Agency Agreements for formal transfer to undertake highway services, initially for 3 years. It is promoted on basis of:

providing services according to local priorities, with local decision-making;  
improved quality of service from more responsive service;  
generating local employment opportunities;  
'ownership' of local area;  
increased satisfaction and pride in local area

OCC will continue to provide highway safety services.

**BUS SUBSIDIES** : OCC has withdrawn all bus subsidies from July, and is negotiating with the bus companies to re-route and consolidate services (possibly with school bus service) to keep open some connections for rural villages. Bus 66 is already commercially viable; Bus 67 will continue on A417 Wantage to Faringdon on developer funding, but there is currently no plan to serve villages along B4507. The schools service may be adapted.

2.

**STANFORD TIP:** is again reprieved until 2024! I am requesting that some developer money (S.106) be spent to improve the facility.

**RESTRUCTURING LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN OXFORDSHIRE :** Reduced Gov funding makes clear that local government must reorganise to better use the funding available. OCC report in 2014 showed that £25-£32 million is tied up in two-tier administration and a unitary authority is a better solution. In December, OCC and the health commissioner (OCCG) together applied for devolved powers and budgets, but Gov requires Unitary or an elected Mayor for devolved powers. There was a (long) pause . . . .

The Oxfordshire District Councils with Oxford City organised themselves to propose 4 District-based unitaries in February 2016 and have commissioned PWC to conduct a viability study, expecting a report by end of June.

The County Council has decided to conduct a separate study on the case for a single county-wide unitary, One Oxfordshire, which is still to be announced.

There are advantages in District-based unitaries : more local decision making reflecting local needs more closely ( better roads and infrastructure and closer management of S.106 agreements!) but not clear how best to provide county-wide social services effectively and efficiently from 4 Districts with no experience of delivering these services currently.

A single One Oxfordshire structure with 650,000 residents currently, and expected to grow to about 850,000 by 2030, would be the biggest unitary in the country (currently Cornwall with 550,000 is the biggest.) That structure would have to provide for local input in the districts (esp. for planning decisions) and we await proposals after OCC's study.

I support the decision to get a separate OCC study. Despite the spend in very tight times, 'opposing' proposals will deliver best evidence of each proposal and better decisions will be made. This will be the new structure for Oxfordshire for the next generation- we must have best evidence to make it!

The decision lies with Secretary of State (Greg Clark at DCLG) who expects to have clear proposals to consider by the end of the year. I will keep you informed.

Cllr YVONNE CONSTANCE

25 April 2016