

SHIPTON UNDER WYCHWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

A COTSWOLD VILLAGE AND COMMUNITY

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Thursday 4th May 2023, 7:30pm, New Beaconsfield Hall

Present: Jill Mavin (chair), Tim Yates (vice-chair), Jan Lund, Joe Hames, Simon Randall, County Councillor Liz Leffman, Clerk Zoe Thornburgh, and approx. 60 members of the public.

1. Welcome

Cllr Mavin welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced our two new Councillors, Joe Hames and Amelia Harvey (absent)

2. To approve minutes of APM, 21 April 2022, and sign as a correct record.

Parish Council received the minutes of the 2022 APM prior to this meeting.

Resolved: To approve the minutes.

Action: Chair signed the minutes as a correct record.

3. Environmental Portfolio Report

Cllr Lund described plans she has for the upcoming year, for Council-led projects within the village, whilst highlighting how residents can participate:

- Rewilding verges, to improve biodiversity
- No Mow May – liberate your lawn!
- Hedgehog highways and habitats
- Dark Skies – astronomy group evening

Cllr Lund projected a map of the village onto the screen, in preparation for the first speaker, showing the location of the local Thames Water sewage treatment works. She also indicated the area whose water is cleaned by these works.

4. Speaker: Thames Water – Yvette de Garis, Head of Environmental Engagement

Yvette outlined how water is cleaned in the sewage treatment works, and how untreated discharge occurs, particularly as a result of storm overflows and development. Also, how Thames Water monitor the discharge concentration, gain an understanding of how it's happening, and what they are doing about it.

5. Thames Water Q&A

Questions from the Parish led to a detailed discussion re the importance of improving sewage flow rate as well as water quality. Currently, the sewerage system, which includes storm tanks on the A361, is insufficient for the inflow, but Thames Water are planning to improve this. A system is being designed, suitable for a Milton population of 4,778.

Parishioners were encouraged to think about what they put into the sewers, as contamination by household products such as medications, plastic, and flame-retardant materials, are also an area of concern. Also, the importance of not jumping to conclusions about discharge, on the basis of a small amount of data; wet weather can greatly influence a year's data.

5. County Councillor's Report – Cllr Liz Leffman

- West Oxon District Council (WODC) are actively working with Thames Water, to create an infrastructure suitable for a developing area.
- Parish meetings along the Evenlode, are all having similar discussions about their local water quality. It is hoped that a collective meeting can be held, so all can work together.

- The current Oxfordshire County Council administration is in its second year, and its new budget has climate change at its centre. OCC are working hard to improve their carbon footprint, which is a challenge due to the need to improve social care within the same budget.
- Potholes are an ongoing problem, due to there being insufficient funding for road maintenance. OCC are experimenting with different fillings, including recycled tyres, which should be more resilient.

6. County Councillor Q&A

County Cllr Leffman answered questions about road maintenance, and the cost of pothole repairs. She explained that, in their current state, Oxfordshire's roads need £45million. The Government provides £15million, but OCC are unable to get the remainder from Council Tax.

7. Councillors' Reports

7.1 Highways, Emergency Planning and Drainage Portfolio

Cllr Hames reported on the consultation recently held by the Parish Council, to gather parishioners' views on its proposed application to OCC's 20mph scheme. 81 were broadly in favour, 4 were ambivalent and 20 were against the scheme.

On that basis, the proposal has been submitted to OCC Committee, for their opinion. OCC's proposal will then form the basis of a second consultation.

7.2 Planning, PCC, Shipton Fair

Cllr Randall explained a Parish Council's involvement in planning applications, and that they don't make decisions, simply comment, using their local knowledge. Much of Shipton under Wychwood is designated a conservation area, in which developments are subject to specific additional conditions. It is also in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, so it is important that all works have a management plan, which covers protection of the landscape. Anyone who has an interest in the application is welcome to submit a comment.

The next Shipton Fair is 26th August 2024. The 2022 fair raised over £3,000 for local organisations. The next Church Fair will be 29th May 2023, on the village green, 12-4pm.

7.3 Allotments, Schools Liaison, Library

Cllr Mavin reported that there had been a good take up on allotment plots recently, although there are still some left.

Wychwood School is working hard to cope with the teacher strikes. Most children have been able to stay in class.

The Library is freshly restocked, and has a wide range of activities planned, for all ages & interests.

7.5 Shipton volunteers, Christmas carols, RFO support

Cllr Arnold described how Shipton volunteers have been keeping the village maintained and tidy since 2007. Tasks over the last year included a litter pick, spring weeding, sweeping up of autumn leaves, and sprucing up the village benches. Suggestions for future tasks and new members are always welcome; it's a great way to meet people, whilst doing something satisfying.

It was also noted that the 2024 Christmas tree will be the 60th anniversary of a Christmas tree on the village green. Cllr Arnold intends to make it a special event and requested pictures or stories of previous years. Thanks were given to Charlie Barrett who has assisted with transporting and erecting the tree since the mid 1980s.

7.6 Transport, Burial Ground, Defibrillators

Cllr Yates outlined his burial ground role as one of management of capacity, as space is increasingly at a premium. Also, to ensure an easy administration/application process.

As part of the transport portfolio, he liaised with West Oxfordshire Community Transport during lockdown, to ensure that they had sufficient funding to keep going.

8. Speaker: West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT) – Ron Wood

Ron usually drives the Witney route and was pleased to report how passenger numbers have increased over the last few years, possibly due to new service times and a new under-25s ticket, following feedback from passengers. Hopefully, car usage has decreased as a result.

9. Parish Clerk & RFO's Report – Zoe Thornburgh

An explanation was given of the Clerk/RFO's role and the services provided to the Council and to the public. Parishioners were reminded of the website, and the information provided there, and the availability of grants for community grants and organisations.

10. Speakers

10.1 1st Wychwood Scout Group – David Ensor

Thanks were given to the Parish Council for their recent donation, which has been used to part-fund a new trailer.

The Group is growing fast, currently consisting of 14 adult group leaders, 22 supporting volunteers, 90 active youngsters aged 9-14 years, and 79 on the waiting list. Unfortunately, they have outgrown their space at the Primary School and need to find a site, of approx. 1 acre, for their own scout hut.

The group enables its members to develop skills for life, and make memories and friends, so it needs to continue to expand, both in size and at either end of the age range.

10.2 Sustainable Wychwoods Action Group (SWAG)

In the 3 years since it started, SWAG has built a Facebook following of almost 400 people, has implemented several activities, including Repair cafes and Terracycle bins, and is working with the Wychwood Junior School to increase awareness and Milton Life Centre to reduce food waste.

Why? Because the opportunity to carry out sustainability is a rapidly closing window, and addressing it starts with us as individuals.

10.3 Charlbury Town Council - Peter Kenrick

Declared a Climate emergency in 2019 and committed to act on that. Has many community groups working on environmental projects, including nature recovery, water quality and energy production. Oxfordshire Treescapes have used mapping software to collate a lot of information about what exists, to identify gaps. Volunteers are working with Citizen Science to monitor water quality, and are looking to involve as many people as possible, including schools and youth groups. One project just started is the creation of a fish pass, to bypass a weir in the Mill Field River Evenlode.

11. Open Q&A session

- Should street lights be on a timer?
They should; if apparently faulty, they can be reported on Fix My Street.
- What is the timing for the implementation of the 20mph scheme in Shipton?
This is pencilled in for the same time as Milton, hopefully in 2024. Currently, we are waiting for OCC to present its own recommendations, which will be put forward to consultation. There is a website detailing the scheme <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/traffic/20mph-scheme>
- How long are wreaths left on the war memorial?
There is no guidance for this, but they are usually left for several months. Unfortunately, some were recently removed, with those from Remembrance Day, which had been placed much more recently. The Chair apologized for this.

12. The Chair's closing message

Cllr Mavin thanked the speakers and attending public, and invited them all to stay for some social time, with a glass of wine and nibbles.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

The Chair
23rd May 2024