

WOODCOTE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of WOODCOTE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held in the Village Hall,
Woodcote 19th April 2016.

<u>PRESENT</u>	Chairman	Mr. R. Peirce
	Vice Chairman	Mr. G. Botting
		Mr. A. Crockett
		Mr. M. Smith
		Mr. B. Williams
		Mr. B. Lewin
		Dr. P. Sudbury
		Mrs. S. MacGurk

District Council David Nimmo-Smith.
County Councillor Kevin Bulmer.

Parish Clerk Ms J. Welham

Members of Public in attendance: 28 residents.

1. APOLOGIES.

Apologies from Cllr. Mrs. D. Hadaway, Cllr. Mr. D. Booth, Mrs. S. Sandford.

2. TO AUTHORISE the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28th April 2015.
Then minutes were accepted and signed as a true record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairman reported on activities over the last year;

The recent public consultation on 16th April to review various plans for improvements to the Village Hall, Village Green, Traffic and the Woodland the PC will own to the rear of the development of the Old Bus Depot, Long Toll, Transport the bus service.

The Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan has reached National fame and is referred to as good practice for rural village plans in the AONB. Cllr. Botting has been invited to talk to many villages and also to talk to Ministers. The 1st site the Old Bus Depot Long Toll has been developed and completed with all 14 houses occupied, the design and visual finish was felt was good and most people in the village were happy with it. There are 4 private dwellings and 10 social housing, 5 of which are rent to buy. The PC will acquire the triangle of woodland to the end of the site for a minimum of a £1.

The 2nd site Chiltern Rise off Reading Road has had planning approved, which took over a year to reach with the PC very involved as custodians of the WNHP policies and responding as a PC to ensure the detail was correct for the site and the village. The planning has been granted with many conditions attached, all the points of concern raised by the PC have been met.

Two other sites in the WNHP have had a planning applications submitted these being the Garden Centre site and the Old Reservoir site on Greenmore these are currently being processed. It is expected that these will take some time for various issues to be addressed and amendments to the submitted plans are expected.

A total of 4 sites have either been complete or are underway from the WNHP.

The PC have dealt with planning Appeals during the last year, one being for development of land to the rear of Goats Gambol, Beech Lane. This was successfully upheld and refused by the Inspector. Since then a further application for development of 5 houses to the opposite side of Beech Lane has been refused and will go to Appeal, the PC will support refusal at Appeal.

Section 106 Funds are paid by developers to SODC and the County Council for infrastructure but some of these funds do come to the PC for the benefit of the village. New funding structure called CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) effective from April 1st 2016. Because Woodcote have a Neighbourhood Plan this means the PC will get 25% of the CIL on the houses developed in the village. The funds are worked out on the square m footage of the dwellings. The PC decide and prioritise which village projects that best benefit the village for these funds to be spent on.

A Traffic Working Group was set up to look into some of the Traffic issues raised by residents in the village. Details were shown at the public consultation and Cllr. Smith will be showing the results later in the meeting.

Other working groups set up are Education Group, Woodland Group, Sustainability and the ongoing Neighbourhood Plan Group who will need to work on a 2nd revision of the NHP to take into account the SODC revised Core Strategy up until 2031. This will mean a revised plan and a further referendum. The Chairman thanked all the Councillors and residents who are on these groups for all their extremely hard work behind the scenes and their continued support.

Other major projects the PC have completed;

Village Hall - Installed WiFi in the Village Hall for free use. Installed a T Loop Hearing System in the Village Hall for people who are hard of hearing. New Fire Alarm system. A defibrillator has been purchased and will be installed for use outside the VH.

Greater integration between the PC and the Village Hall Management Committee, including the insurance of the Hall onto the PC policy. Changes to the funding arrangements between the two by formalising that the PC pay for capital maintenance of the building, and the VHMC pay the running costs and daily maintenance from the income from hiring.

The PC went through the complicated process of acquiring the First Registration of Title for the Village Hall. Although the PC own the VH and the Green, it had never been registered with Land Registry which created problems when applying for various grants and funding in the past. The application was successful and the PC now have registered title with Land Registry to the VH and the VG.

The PC paid for repainting many of the highway white lines and road white line signs around the village as the County Council no longer carry this out due to funding cuts. They also had the interactive 30mph sign repaired.

The PC are looked at ways to improved communication with the residents of the village, they have now set up a Facebook page to post up to date information.

Also a mailing list with approximately 400 residents email addresses is set up to use to circulate information and details of important issues that may affect the village. All residents can subscribe by contacting the Parish Clerk.

The Chairman finished by thanking all members of the Council for their contributions and all the work they have carried out over the past year. He also thanked the Parish Clerk for her work on behalf of the Parish Council.

Questions where invited;

A Resident asked how many local people had purchased a house on the Long Toll Development? The Chair replied that the PC knew of at least 1 who had, and added that the developer had followed the agreement of releasing the 4 houses for private sale to Woodcote residents only for the agreed period of 12 weeks before they went onto the open market.

The question was asked will all other developments in the NHP have the same agreement? The NHP makes this condition on all sites.

A resident asked when the CIL was known about did the PC know about it when the NHP was developed? The Chairman said there has always been Section 206 funding which was known about, the new CIL funding only came into place after the NHP was made legal.

Resident asked if training will be given on the use of the defibrillator? The Chairman advised that training will be arranged.

Agenda agree to change order by the Chairman due to time constraints of the District Councillor.

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr. Nimmo-Smith reported;

Planning applications have increased in the District and SODC are recruiting more Officers to handle the amount. Also Planning Enforcement will get more Officers so they can progress breaches to planning more effectively.

The District are allocated £150 per square metre in their budget towards basic infrastructure, such as libraries, roads, etc. He feels this is too low and he has challenged this. The SODC Budget was set in February and no increase by the District to the Council Tax has been made, however the County Council has increased by 4%. The District can use funds in reserve from the previous sale of Council housing.

With South and Vale SODC are one of the best districts in the country for waste recycling. Fly tipping in the area is a problem and the DC is conscious of this. He asked that any fly tipping be reported promptly so it can be investigated and dealt with.

The Chief Executive at the District is retiring this year, and the management structure is being “flattened”, operational staff will be kept. There are two District Councillors for the Ward that Woodcote is in Cllr. Nimmo-Smith covers the area that includes Woodcote.

Community Grants for projects will be available again this year for Parish Councils to apply for.

Mr. Woolley had a question regarding the proposed extension to the A329 with regard to a 3rd Bridge over the Thames proposed, will this be part of the discussions? Cllr. Nimmo-Smith said replied that a report will be published during the Summer.

4. FEEDBACK REVIEW FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION 16TH APRIL.

Before Cllr. Smith presented, the Chairman reported the situation with Thames Travel and the X39 bus following discussions with the Commercial Manager Edmund Trensham who had attended the public consultation. The PC have been in communication regarding this for many months.

The proposal is that the X39 bus is scrapped and that there is just the X40 that will run every half an hour through the village. In order to achieve this there would need to be a re-routing of the X40 through the village with just stops along the Reading Rd. these being the two existing at the far end near Tidmore Lane, and the Londis shop and stops adding at the top end near the Village Hall. This means that the bus would no longer loop around the village as it currently does today.

He also is optimistic that the 9am bus will be reinstated to the timetable when it is reviewed in July.

Some questions asked by residents, could the route go down Greenmore and not Reading Road? This could be a problem at school time with parked vehicles. Thames Travel have yet to decide formally what they can offer, the PC will continue discussions with them.

Cllr. Smith then presented the results from the public consultation. The slides presented are attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

5. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr. Kevin Bulmer reported;

Oxfordshire County Council worked out their current year budget based on an expected £51 million cut from central government, the cut was actually £69 million which has created significant difficulties. This follows a continuation of cuts over the last 4/5 years. OCC will have to raise the council tax by 4%, a percentage of this will go to the latest increase in minimum working wage.

The discussions on Unitary authority are a work in progress, the structure will be simplified. Current proposal is a 2 tier structure. The District and County Councils are both looking into this and 2 reports will be issued, the County will issue an independent report, this will be the biggest reorganisation of local government in a decade.

There will be opportunities for Parish Councils if one unitary is created, many powers will transfer down to Parish Councils.

Cllr Crockett asked if this is Central Government lead? Cllr. Bulmer replied it is part of the devaluation and that Government have not insisted and asked him for his ideas?

Bus subsidies will cease from 21st July 2016, apart from home to school buses. This will not impact Woodcote as the village has a commercial not a subsidised service.

Road network still has many pot holes, following the winter wet weather some previous repairs are already breaking up. OCC are working on the pot holes and a new machine which is now commissioned should help progress. Cllr. Bulmer asked residents to continue to report pot holes on the "Fix my Street" website.

Didcot Power Station collapse, work continues to remove the debris and recover the 3 bodies, OCC fire services were very involved in this disaster and continue to offer support.

Waste recycling centres. The loss of the Oakley Wood Site has been advertised for the time being and it will remain open until 2017. Government will not allow OCC to make a small charge which would help to continue to ensure the future of the site. Financial pressures on the OCC budget mean that other options need to be looked at to keep it open, this is work in progress.

OCC has looked at reducing its property portfolio and back office services and officer numbers. They are now down to the lowest level possible and there are not enough officers to carry out the work.

Cllr. Bulmer invited questions;

Gerry Green questioned if the libraries that are still operating will they have cuts and not get any new books? Cllr. Bulmer replied that they are not getting completely cut and they are trying to add services into libraries to add value to communities to keep the libraries viable and useful for the future. The amount for new books has been cut but not completely.

7. Written Reports from Other Local Committees/Groups in Woodcote

Questions to representatives from these Committees/Groups.

Mr. Woolley said that the VH had been given an Energy Audit and he felt this should be used and carried out as an example to the village. The VHMS said many recommendations had been made and some had been done to the hall. A plan will be put together following the next meeting which is their Annual General Meeting, all are welcome.

Fiona Preston stated that the Youth Club continues to thrive and is well attended.

8. PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2015/16

The Parish Clerk reported that the precept budget received by the Parish Council and allocated to various "budget" items over the past year was on budget and in some cases below budget. Any surplus funds were held in reserve at the end of the year to be used for major projects around the village such as Traffic, Village Maintenance etc.

The Annual report will be available after audit on request from the Parish Clerk, it can be emailed or a copy collected from the Parish Office by residents who wish to have a copy.

A resident asked why the Parish Council had increased the Precept by 5% for the forthcoming financial year 2016/17. The Council replied that this was to offset the extra costs that the PC will have to bear now that the County Council will no longer be carrying out some of their services due to their budget cuts. The amount per household equates to 6pence per week which was felt not to be too high to maintain the additional services that the PC will need to carry out.

The Chairman addressed the meeting for questions; he also stated he welcomed on behalf of the PC email comments or for residents to attend PC meetings to address the PC with views and concerns.

Parking along Reading Road was questions a resident felt that if Folly Field has improved facilities then more cars will park on Reading Rd. The PC are looking at this issue but to remove it completely they need land so cars can park.

A resident of Greenmore thanked the PC for maintaining such a lovely village especially the Play Area, she said she had not seen anything like it in any other village.

The Chairman finished by thanking again the nine other councillors who have worked tirelessly and put in many hours outside of the Council meetings on projects. He also thanked the Clerk who works at implementing the decisions behind the scenes.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm