Milton under Wychwood Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 15th November 2023, 1930hrs

Milton under Wychwood Village Hall

Minutes

Present:

Vice-Chairman Glynn Allcock (GA)

Councillor Rod Blackman (RB)

District Councillor Jeff Haine (JH)

Councillor John Pratt (JP)

Councillor Peter Rawlins (PR)

Chairman Graham Smith (GS)

Councillor Pat Ward (PW)

Clerk: Lara Jacques (LJ)

17 MOP

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Chris Trotman (CT)

County Councillor Liz Leffman (LL)

2. Declaration of Interests

JH – Planning, Village Hall

JP & GS – Wild Gardens

RB - Planning application 23/02745/FUL

3. Proposal to approve the minutes of the October meeting

JP proposed

JH seconded

All in favour

4. Matters rising from the October meeting

All defibrillators have been checked and codes are readable.

David van de Poll provided an update to the PC with regards to the maintenance of the defibrillators. The PC thanked him for the continued maintenance of them

5. Public session for all items relating to the Agenda

5.1. Joanna van de Poll provided additional information in relation to the Wychwoods Day Centre S137 application. The day centre has not had great financial success recently due to rising costs and circumstances out of their control – most notably the building damage preventing the day centre from running

It is not an option to increase member fees. There have been fluctuating numbers due to illness and sadly some deaths.

5.2. John Bennett commented on planning application 23/02745/FUL – additional comments have been circulated to the PC prior to the meeting. JB commented that overall he is in support of the new housing and views the development as an improvement to the site. JB is involved with the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and is fully briefed on the NP priorities. JB commented that a new right of way will be created along with eco planting to enhance the area.

5.3. Steve Whiting stated his concern regarding the development conflicting with some of the NP policies. The development will be built on a blue/green corridor. It looks towards a key hedge line view which needs to be preserved. SW queried the current land supply for the area - JH confirmed that there is currently a 5.4 year housing supply.

5.4. Clare Armstrong stated the development is in the middle of a nature network recovery zone which is a concern.

5.5. Caroline Greenwood queried whether the PC are in contact with the Evenlode Catchment Partnership regarding Littlestock Brook. JP confirmed he is a participating member as a citizen scientist.

5.6. Hannah Wessel expressed concern that the planning application doesn't mention the impact on the triangular field with the old river bed and doesn't mention the flood risk to the surrounding areas including her property.

6. Reports

6.1. Chairman's Report (GS)

GS attended a meeting of the Library Partnership and there is a new partnership agreement which will be signed and published shortly. This will have an impact on the donation the PC make to the library each year.

There has been an expression of interest for the PC Clerk role.

6.2. **District Councillor's Report (JH)**

There is a waterways day at the corn exchange on 23rd November. Please contact JH if attending so he can issue a parking permit.

6.3. **County Councillor Report (LL)**

6.3.1. Bus services: In this year's budget, we allocated £400,000 to providing community bus services, and I am pleased to say that the application made by Milton-u-Wychwood for a new bus for the Wychwoods has been successful. This will be announced shortly. Also, during December in the run up to Christmas, single bus fares in Oxfordshire will be capped at £1.

6.3.2. SEND Improvement: Steps are being taken to improve the support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). A priority action plan has been developed by organisations involved in the delivery of SEND services, including Oxfordshire County Council and the NHS, along with the county's parent carer forum. The plan will need to be approved by Ofsted. An Improvement Board meeting will take place later this week.

6.3.3. OCC Budget 2024-2025: Cabinet agreed an approach to setting the 2024/5 budget. Continued inflation and demand pressures (particularly in SEND and adult care) mean the council is currently forecasting £30-40 million in additional costs in 2024/5. The council's financial strategy includes a 4.99% rise in council tax for 2024/5 with 2% ring fenced for adult social care. Details of the proposals will be published in November. We are holding a consultation on the budget and several "sounding board" sessions, details of which are on the Let's Talk Oxfordshire website.

6.3.4. Oxfordshire tops table for county councils tackling climate change: Oxfordshire was rated the best performing county council in the UK on climate change by the Climate Emergency UK climate action scorecard. Oxfordshire County Council has also won the award for the best climate action and decarbonisation initiative at the recent Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Service Awards 2023. It was recognised for its energy insights tool and energy flexibility trials, successfully demonstrating the crucial role local authorities can play in moving away from the use of polluting fossil fuels.

6.3.5. Reducing disruption caused by utilities & developers: The County's new plan for charging an increased daily fee of £2500 (instead of the £300 fixed fee) to utility companies that dig up major roads is being consulted on. By law it is restricted to 5% of Oxfordshire's roads and so will focus on busy, critical parts of the network. Surplus funds will be reinvested. The DfT is encouraging all councils to adopt schemes like this.

6.3.6. Homes Upgrade Grants: Money is available for off-gas grid homes to improve energy efficiency (including solar). To quality a resident (renter or owner-occupier) must live in a home rated EPC D or lower, and have a household income of less than £39,000.

7. **Planning (PW/PR)**

7.1. **Planning application 23/02758/HHD**

The PC cannot see a reason to object, all agreed with the recommendation not to object

7.2. **Planning application 23/02745/FUL**
The style of buildings does not fit the existing character of our village or the specific area of Church Road, which contravenes policy CH1 of the NP.

Key views into and from the village green will be adversely affected, contrary to Policy CH1 and CH2 KOV 11 on page 17 of Appendix 8.

Disturbance of the known springs in the field could very well cause flooding in the properties downhill of the field in Church Road and Green Lane.

The sewage pumping station in Milton is already under severe strain and cannot take additional volume. It is regularly discharges raw sewage into the adjacent stream. Thames Water have upgrade investment planned but any upgrade will not take place before this development is completed.

The development would also run contrary to a number of WODC Local Plan policies and objectives.

JP stated that the view from Green Lane will make the housing development highly visible. This is Key View 11 in the NP. It is the view of the PC that the planning proposal does nothing to enhance the area, surrounding area and village. This can be clearly seen from the photographs within the NP. JP further stated that 5 houses of the 8 house development are in clear conflict with the NP Blue-Green Corridor 3 under NP Policy E1. This planning application will therefore be a clear test for what weight the NP carries when used to assess planning applications.

The Planning Sub-Committee recommends objection (RB abstained from voting because of a declared interest.). All other councillors in favour of objection. Given the complexity of the inputs to this objection GS will circulate a draft to the PC prior to submitting the objection to WODC.

7.3. **Creation of the Biodiversity and Monitoring Action Group (BMAG) -** PW updated the PC on the creation of this group to work towards increasing biodiversity in the parish in line with one of the projects set out in the NP. PW will be placing posters within the village to encourage those interested to take part in the work.

8. **RFO report (GS in CT absence)**

8.1. Acceptance of the October Income, Expenditure and Bank Reconciliation
PR proposed
JH seconded
All in favour

8.2. To approve the S137 Terms of Reference - S137 will usually be approved at the Fin Com meeting prior to being brought to PC
JP proposed
RB seconded

All in favour

8.3. To approve the updated Planning Terms of Reference - JP had circulated the NP planning checklist for use with the Planning TOR. The checklist will be an Appendix to the ToR.
PR proposed
PW seconded
All in favour

8.4. To approve the Asset Register - GA stated more work is needed regarding the Asset Register to establish ownership of certain assets including the Pound Parking & Bus Shelter. The register was not approved.

8.5. Review of the draft FOI Publication - GS stated the FOI publication scheme has been circulated. The PC acknowledged receipt and no amendments or changes were proposed.

8.6. GS stated a December PC meeting will be scheduled in order to discuss the draft budget and precept application.

9. **Risk Register (RR) Update (GA/GS)**

GA and GS have met and have extended the RR to focus on the top 10 risks. The amended RR has been circulated to the PC. There were no comments at this meeting, so going forward the RR top ten risks will be reviewed by Fin Com at regular intervals, and the longer RR reviewed annually.

10. **S106 update (GS)**

There is £7200 available for the Art Project. GS has met with local artist Julia Sorrell who is a recognised artist and is delighted to provide the artistic input and leadership for this project. She has proposed 4 monolithic stones, accompanied by engraved slates, to be positioned in prominent places around the village. Each slate will have an appropriate quote from a poem, and will have a QR code on which will provide users with information about the location and a map showing the location of other stones and footpaths to reach them. Adjacent to the St Jude's development, for example, the quote could be one which references the Wellington Bomber crash, and the QR code could lead to a web page describing the relevant history on that crash.

It is likely the funding will require an additional amount of £1800 from the PC. GS confirmed that the aim will be to spend the funds within the current financial year.

JH stated this project sounds like a great idea and is happy to propose the additional funds if required. PR seconded and all in favour.

11. **S137 applications (GS)**

11.1. Wychwood Day Centre application for £1000.
PW proposed
RB seconded

All in favour

11.2. Wild Gardens pond dredging - The PC acknowledge there is work needed and the project is worthwhile however the PC aim to match contributions from SUWPC and AUWPC. Therefore the PC will grant £1000. Should there be funds available before the end of the finance year then the PC will grant a further £1000 to the Wild Garden in March.

11.3. Wychwood Primary School PTA - This was seen as a good cause and JP proposed granting £500, PR seconded and all in favour.

12. **Proposal for maintenance to village benches (GS)**

Following the update at the October PC meeting, GS is requesting the PC proceed with sending a 'test' bench to be cleaned and repaired at a cost of £227.50. If that works well then the PC can consider giving other benches the same treatment.

PR proposed

GA seconded

All in favour.

13. **Eco area transfer update (GS/PW)**

GS spoke with the solicitor prior to the meeting and subject to amendment of one clause in the agreement this is still proceeding, albeit more slowly than we would like.

14. **Erection of Christmas Tree and Carol round the tree (CT/JH)**

Bruern will deliver the Christmas tree w/c 4th December

GA confirmed that the owners of the Old Post Office are happy to provide the electricity. They will also provide mince pies and mulled wine for the Christmas Eve carols. This will take place at 6pm on the 24th December.

JH confirmed that John Witts will be overseeing the music.

15. **Public session for non Agenda items**

Margaret Connolly queried whether notices are permitted on telegraph poles. The PC confirmed that they are not. There are 5 noticeboards within the village which should be used for notices.

PR will follow up with CT regarding the tennis net wheels.

PR will ask Groves whether they will be willing to hold some ping pong bats and balls for use with the table on the green.

JvdP queried whether the Day Centre can collect donations at the carol singing. JH confirmed that this is permitted. She also asked if the new TOR will be available on the website, GS confirmed that they will.

16. **AOB**

16.1. JH stated the football pitches are heavily waterlogged. Work has been done to aerate the pitch but will require an additional visit. JH requested the PC pay for this. JH will bring a proposal to the next PC meeting.

JH stated the potholes in the village green car park are getting worse. JH will bring costs to rectify this to the next PC meeting for discussion.

16.2. PR stated Kevin Grant has finished his work for this season.

16.3. PW stated Ellie Rawdon of OCC will be meeting with PW in MUW regarding further planting of trees in the village. PW will report back.

PW will be placing notices within the village regarding the Biodiversity action group.

16.4. LJ queried the bus shelter remedial work – this is in hand but there are fewer Wychwood volunteers. RB and GA have confirmed they will help with painting of the bus shelter.

Meeting closed 2043 hours