Milton-under-Wychwood Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 18th September 2024

at Milton-under-Wychwood Village Hall

Present: Cllr Graham Smith, Chair
Cllr Glynn Allcock, Vice-Chair
Cllr Jeff Haine
Cllr John Pratt
Cllr Peter Rawlins
Cllr Pat Ward
Vanessa Oliveri, Parish Clerk
Chris Trotman, RFO
District Cllr Adam Clements
10 members of the public

24/060 Apologies for Absence: had been received from Cllr R Blackman and County Cllr L Leffman.

24/061 Declarations of Interests: Cllr G Smith and Cllr J Pratt declared an interest in item 10.1 Wild Garden application and took no part in the discussion or the decision made.

24/062 Approval of the PC minutes dated 17th July 2024: Cllr J Pratt proposed to approve the PC minutes dated 17th July 2024. Cllr J Ward seconded the proposal. A unanimous vote was taken of all in favour of the proposal put forward.

24/063 Matters Arising: None, as all items are covered in agenda items.

24/064 Public Session: A member of the public asked when the netting was going to be removed in Sarah's Meadow. Cllr G Smith responded that the netting would be removed within the next few days.

24/065 To receive the following reports

1. **Chairman's report –** nothing to report which isn't covered by an agenda item apart from noting that a Finance Committee meeting had been held on 30th July 2024.
2. **District Councillor's report –** Cllr A Clements reported on the following: -
    - The planning application for 16 houses in MUW had been unanimously refused by WODC.
    - The District Council had submitted their final response for the National Planning Policy Framework, noting that increasing pressure to build in rural areas was not a sensible approach.
    - Charlie Maynard, the newly elected MP for the Witney Constituency, is planning a walk around Milton-under-Wychwood on 1st October 2024 to meet members of the community. Parish Councillors to notify Cllr A Clements if they wished to meet the MP and discuss any topics on the day.
3. **Councillor's report –** Cllr L Leffman had circulated a report prior to the PC meeting which was read out by the Chairman at the meeting.

24/066 Planning

1. **Neighbourhood Plan review –** It was noted that the August 2023 public consultation run by WODC for West Oxfordshire's 2041 Local Plan had resulted in identification of 5 potential sites for residential development at Milton-under-Wychwood that were listed in the February 2024 consultation report. Three sites, each of less than 2.5 hectares, were 'legacy' sites from earlier dialogue by WODC with landowners but two sites of 11.1 ha and 12.6 ha respectively were submitted in 2023 as expressions of interest by landowners' agents. The Parish Councillors agreed to not wait until the next formal Plan consultation and agreed to formulate a response to WODC with regard to all five proposed new development sites in the village.
2. **CIL consultation** – A consultation response had been circulated prior to the meeting and was to be revised by adding an extra item referencing S106 funding criteria. The agreed response is to be sent to WODC prior to 16.10.2024 by the Clerk.

3. **Planning Appeal received for - Vicarage Field, Church Road, Milton under Wychwood, Oxfordshire OX7 6LQ - 24/01368/S73** – Comments to be received by 8th October 2024.
   COMMENT: To re-iterate the Parish Council's previous objection.
4. **Planning Application Ref: 24/02147/HHD 12 Jubilee Lane** – Installation of an air-source heat pump.
   COMMENT: No objection.
5. **Planning Application Ref: 24/02203/FUL The Old Surgery, The Sands** -Conversion and extension of create a dwelling.
   COMMENT: No objection following an onsite meeting with the owner.
6. **Planning Application Ref: 24/02011/HDD – White Spring House, Shipton Road** – Erection of a single storey and first floor rear extensions, proposed front porch, and photovoltaic panels to rear garage roof.
   COMMENT: The Parish Council have no objection to this planning application as long as the windows in the second storey facing the neighbouring property have frosted windows, and are non-opening to provide privacy to the neighbours.
7. **Planning Application Ref**: **24/02363/HHD 39, Wychwood Drive** - Erection of single storey side and rear extension and front porch.
   COMMENT: No objection but note that there will be a loss of a car parking space on site.

24/067 RFO report

a. RFO report – Cllr J Haine proposed to approve the RFO report circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr P Rawlins seconded the proposal. A unanimous vote was taken of all in favour of approving the RFO report.
b. Cllr J Pratt proposed to approve the August and July 2024 summaries. Cllr G Allcock seconded the proposal. A vote was taken of all in favour or approving the August and July 2024 summaries.

24/068 Archived material update – The PC noted that the archiving by the Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC) had been completed following provision to them of minutes missing for a period in 2012. Items which OHC did not want to archive are held by the Wychwood's Local History Society (WLHS) in their archive. All archived documents are listed in a spreadsheet. WLHS returned a small number of items which they did not want to keep; they are now back in the cabinet in the Village Hall shed.

24/069 S137 application – Grant form received for the Wild Garden – The Parish Councillors considered the grant application received seeking funding of £5,000 to support dredging of the large pond. The Parish Councillors unanimously agreed to support by granting £2,500.00 towards the project at this time, but will consider further funding later in the year if there are sufficient funds in the S137 budget, when a further application could be submitted. The reason for agreeing to a lower amount than requested is that there is still six months to receive grant requests and the PC would need to consider other applications throughout the rest of the year.

24/070 Village green

a. Update on repair to area by toddler swings, the rope bridge and the wooden boat. It was noted at the meeting that the first half of the surface under the toddler swings had been repaired. Cllr P Rawlins would review the surfacing under the toddler swing throughout the winter and if required would undertake a further repair on the second half is required in the Spring. It was noted that the rope bridge had been repaired by councillors, saving the Council several thousand pounds in labour costs. Cllr P Rawlins reported that the wooden boat had also been repaired.
b. Insurance claim update – There had been no further update received prior to the meeting.
c. Play equipment safety checks – It was noted that Play Safe had undertaken the annual recreation inspection checks and an invoice had been submitted of £338.40. Play Safe was to be contacted for the annual report for Councillors to review if any actions were required. The Parish Councillors agreed for a safety inspection tick sheet to be prepared, and for Councillors to take it in turn to carry out safety checks on the recreation equipment every two weeks. The safety inspection sheets are to be initialled and filed for future evidence.
d. Car park re-surfacing – Cllr G Smith updated the Councillors on repeated email exchanges with WODC to understand the rationale behind their refusal to consider potential S106 funding for re-surfacing the Village Green car park and to install solar panels on the Village Hall roof. A further email had been sent on 03/09/24 requesting the detailed logic behind their decision given the

wording of the Transfer of Undertaking which set out the original S106 funding position. A response is awaited.

e. Discussions with the Charity Commission (CC) – Cllr G Smith reported that he had been in discussion with the CC about the charity associated with the Village Green. To date no document had been found which casts light on the purpose of the charity, why it was created and under what conditions. Given that position the CC had been asked why the charity continues to exist. They have been supplied with numerous documents, including ones which state that the PC is the owner of the Green. The CC is carrying out its own investigations, the results of which are now awaited.

24/071 MSA new lease – A copy of the proposed new lease and associated rider document had been circulated prior to the meeting for Parish Councillors to consider. Cllr J Haine wishes to comment on both documents and will send his comments to the Chair.

24/072 Biodiversity plan

a. The hedgerow planting is planned to start in November 2024 through to the end of February 2025.
b. Updated biodiversity policy and plan – It was noted that comments on the PC's previous Biodiversity plan were received from Wild Oxfordshire; they have been accommodated in the revised version circulated prior to the meeting, which also has updates to the action plan at the end of the document. The updated version of the Biodiversity plan was received and unanimously approved by the Parish Councillors.
c. Sarah's Meadow – To discuss and agree next steps- Toby Swift of the Wychwood Forest Trust made a series of recommendations at the June Parish Meeting. Cllr P Ward and Cllr G Smith had now measured the Meadow to enable production of a scale plan, and had been exploring how best to implement some of Toby's suggestions. With the help of a digger (offered by an attendee at the June meeting) the PC can start to implement some of Toby's recommendations including a base line survey, a bird count coordinated with one done in the Bruern area, setting up beetle banks, establishing reptile hibernation pits and potentially extending the range of plants grown to encourage ones which produce seeds for birds. Cost estimates/quotations for any of the above work would be brought to subsequent PC meetings before any work is undertaken.
d. Cllr G Allcock noted that no action would be taken on further work for the grass cutting contractor in the churchyard until the Chair and Liz Watts had met to agree a biodiversity plan for the churchyard

24/073 Waste Bins

Following WODC's agreement that the PC's linesperson could continue to empty the Village Green bins into the trade waste bin (which will have a re-designated SIC code to allow that waste), Cllr G Smith has printed labels for the bins showing that they are the responsibility of MUW PC and showing the Clerk email for contact if necessary. This would now lead to a significant reduction in the charges from WODC.

24/074 Salt Bins and Salt

Cllr G Allcock agreed to check the salt bins in the village and if need to be topped up with salt, to notify the Clerk. The Clerk would then notify OCC of the quantity of salt required. Cllr Allcock will also check with Groves if they still hold a supply of salt on behalf of the Council

24/075 Public session for non-Agenda items

a. Cllr G Smith agreed to check with Cllr R Blackman regarding when the cones would be removed from around the tree stump in Elm Grove.
b. Cllr G Smith was following up with WODC if Section 106 funds could cover the funds to resurface the car park and to install solar panels on the village hall. District Cllr A Clements to follow this matter up with WODC as well. If there is likely to be a long delay in getting an answer on the S106 funds then the Village Hall Committee will be advised to apply for a S137 grant to cover their funding shortfall

24/076 Any Other Business

a. It was noted that for Dashwood House no update is available on the enforcement officer's actions. Cllr P Rawlins speculated on the value of the Parish Council's planning responses if an issue like Dashwood House went unresolved
b. The cemetery hedge was in need of being cut on both sides. Cllr R Blackman to action.

c. Cllr P Ward will attend an online meeting of the Parish Transport Committee on 19th September 2024 when dates will be discussed for a formal handover of the new bus
d. The Oxfordshire Conservation Volunteers have agreed to help plant the hedgerows noted earlier in the meeting.
e. Confirmation had been received that the delivery of a few fruit trees and the supply of tree whips was on schedule for delivery. Cllr P Rawlins requested of Cllr P Ward that no action should be taken in respect of additional fruit trees for the Community Orchard until the Welfare Trust Committee has had a meeting at which the future of the Orchard will be considered
f. An update is needed on planned works for the Oxfordshire Right of Way paths. Cllr J Pratt to seek an update
g. Cllr G Smith referred to a quote received from Treetech to conduct a survey of all the trees which are the responsibility of the parish Council. Because the cost is above the relevant threshold three quotes will be required, and it would be a good idea to have a three year contract rather than just one year. The Chair will liaise with Cllr R Blackman
h. Cllr G Smith also noted an issue raised by a member of the public concerning the ramp down to the Village Green form the gate opposite the vets; the ramp makes it a hazardous entrance for wheelchair users. Cllrs Smith, Rawlins and Allcock to investigate when they complete repairs to the rope bridge
i. The RFO asked about payment of an outstanding invoice for weed control, Cllr P Rawlins confirmed that the work had been carried out and the invoice can be paid.
j. A Finance Committee meeting is to be arranged for early November 2024, prior to finalising the budget for 2024/25.

24/077 Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 16th October 2024.

The meeting closed at 21.03pm.

RFO Report - September 2024

July and August Report

July Income:
We received £100 from the fair and three lots of funeral expenses!
July Payments:
The payment to Muddy spades was for the month of June. There will be a double payment for July and August
The S137 grant to WOCT (West Oxon Community Transport) was to help with the payment for the bus service.
The payment to Zurich Insurance is the last in the present three year policy discount scheme.

July Balances carried forward:

Current Account	£32,795.39
Investment Acc	£36,703.43 (Quarterly interest £369.59 added)
Bmm Acc	£ 0.03
Total	**£69,498.85**

Jeff Haine has kindly reviewed the cashbook for the first quarter of the year and found them to be in order.

August Income:
Just the income from the Burger Van
August Payments:
Several payments to Kingham Garden Services due to late arrival of invoice and a holdover due to confirmation of satisfactory work. All good this month.
There were a few updates to the Village Stones Project website.

August Balances carried forward:

Current Account	£31,418.78
Investment Acc	£36,703.43 (no interest, added quarterly)
Bmm Acc	£ 0.03
Total	**£68,112.24**

Section Balances
As of 31/08/24 balances in the Sections Account, not including recent transactions

S137	£16000 budgeted;	£5849 spent;	£10151 remaining
S145	£200 budgeted;	£0 spent;	£200 remaining
S19	£1000 budgeted;	£154 spent;	£846 remaining