Milton under Wychwood Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 17th January 2024, 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)

County Councillor Liz Leffman (LL)

RFO Chris Trotman (CT)

Clerk: Lara Jacques (LJ)

4 Members of Public

1. **Apologies for absence**
   None

2. **Declaration of Interests**
   JH- Village Hall & Planning

3. **Proposal to approve the minutes of the December meeting**
   JP proposed
   GA seconded
   All in favour

4. **Matters arising from the December meeting**
   None

5. **Public session for all items relating to the agenda**
   None

6. **To receive the following reports:**

6.1 – Chairman's Report (GS)
None other than items on the agenda

6.2 – District Councillor's Report (JH)
JH provided an update reference the 26 High Street planning application. This has been approved.

Regarding the application for 8 houses on Church Road this has been refused by DC.

The application regarding a variation to conditions for Vicarage Field has been refused. It was deemed the design and siting of the variation would have an adverse effect on important open space in the area. There would also be an impact on nearby listed buildings.

6.3 County Councillor's Report (LL)
Electric buses are coming to Oxford. All buses in the City will soon be electric. Oxford will be the first county to have so many electric buses under the Zebra Scheme. Traffic in Oxford will be restricted by filters applying to non-residents. Residents will have passes to enable them to use their cars.

There will soon be a decision on the future of County Hall. There is a potential site for the Council on Speedwell Street which is being explored. Funding from the sale of County Hall will be invested in the new building.

There was substantial flooding in some areas but the Fire and Rescue Service have a good relationship with the Environment Agency and assisted in as much flood alleviation as possible.

Work in the Evenlode Catchment Area and Windrush resulted in reduced flooding. Magpie Farm in Chipping Norton is being used to allow the river to overflow on to flood plains to prevent damage to residential areas. CT referenced the beneficial effect of woody damns on Littlestock Brook.

The County Council will be agreeing the budget on 22 Februuary, but are stil having to make reductions of circa £900K. Some Government funding has not materialised. There is currently no additional money for Highways although Shipton Road is on schedule for repair this financial year.

WODC continue to work with Thames Water but there isn't much optimism that much will change.

7. Planning (PW/PR) 7.1 – 23/03410/HHD Heather Lodge - the Planning Sub-Committee recommended that the Council object to the application based on the materials being used. A change from timber cladding material to stone would result in no objection. Allin favour of that recommendation.

7.2- BMAG - Elaine Brittan has done a great job along with Pat Ward in getting BMAG up and running, 'recruiting' others to help with the project and liaising with a range of potential partners.

It was agreed that the BMAG will apply for 90 metres of hedge planting by Calais Cottage field drainage pond to try and keep wildlife in there.

Further work continues including implementing bird boxes for swifts, Barn Owl boxes, RSPB birdwatch and a summer butterfly count. PW confirmed this work is taking place with landowners permission.

8.RFO Report (CT)

8.1 – Acceptance of December & Q3 income, expenditure and summary
GA proposed
JP seconded
All in favour

CT stated Kevin Grant's grass cutting contract ends on 31/12/24 but PR has received an update that he is retiring.

CT is applying for an Amazon business account which will provide CT with a VAT receipt for anything purchased on Amazon which will allow an easier VAT reclaim.

The mystery of the £100 refund in November is from a BACS transaction that was never completed.

The documents relating to the transfer of land from MARC to the PC for the burial ground have been submitted and received and now forwarded to the Land Registry. Likely legal costs circa £400. The LR requires the original documentation although the PC do not have any original documents. CT awaits an update.

CT will add a line in the cashbook for 'Contracts' as the Library payments amount to a Contract.

CT has contacted Robert Montgomery re a follow up on the repairs to the Church wall as none appear to have taken place. Awaiting an update.

CT has set up a DD for PAYE payments to facilitate a faster payment.

9. S106 (GS/GA)

GS confirmed there is not enough room on the stones to allow for an inscription so the Council will need to revert to the original plan of placing a slate panel at the side of the stone carvings. GS is awaiting quotes and will aim to table them for discussion at the February meeting.

Julia Sorrell is drafting an article to go in the Spring edition of the Wychwood magazine regarding the Art project.

10. S137 Scouts Tent Funding (GS)

JH proposed providing 50% of the S137 funding request for Scout tents with the view that 1st Wychwood Scouts can apply to Shipton and Ascot PC for the additional 50% funding. A 50% grant would total £435.
PW seconded
All in favour

11. Eco Area transfer update (GS/PW)

This continues. There was a requirement to amend some wording within the document. GS calls the Solicitors fortnightly for an update and the Council await a conclusion.

12. Village Green (JH/PR/ GS)

12.1 – Verta draining of the football pitches

JP updated the Council that it was decided at the November FinCom meeting that because the PC currently pays for all grass cutting, strimming and tree maintenance it concluded that the PC should recommend against also paying for pitch spiking unless there is evidence elsewhere to the contrary. The Council are awaiting an update from Charlbury Town Council regarding their approach to football pitch costs. JP will follow up with Charlbury Town Council.

The PC (excluding JH) supported FinComs recommendation.

12.2 – Repairs to pot holes on village green driveway

Robin Perry has been asked to repair the pot holes but is waiting until the frosts have finished before carrying out the work. JH will advise when it is to take place

Car park resurfacing

GA tabled two quotes provided by Hickmans for car park resurfacing. £15790+VAT for Bitumen repairs and £25000 including VAT for tarmacking the area outside the gates and laying grids and filling with stone.

JP stated that in his view given the precept requested for 2024/5 and the budget carry forward projected beyond 2024/5 it would not be possible to use PC funds to pay for a capital project of this expense. The only way this would be possible is to save up like the PC did for repairing the Church wall. The PC have applied for a reduced precept and opportunities for a project of this scale won't arise until the PC area able to increase the precept by 15/20% for two years running.

GA and GS will explore the possibility a shared approach to the costs between parties like the Hare (whose customers park there), the MSA (some of whose customers park there and its supplier vans and refuse lorries drive over the car park), the football club, the PC representing members of the public who park there whether to shop or make use of the recreation ground. JH stated he did not think the MSA would be willing to contribute to the costs of re-surfacing. GS noted that the current licence between the PC and the MSA states that the MSA is entirely responsible for upkeep of the car park. Once a position has been established on shared costs then a bid for S106 funding might be feasible on a matched funding basis.

12.3 – Redraft of MSA lease - GS outlined the progress to date. GS has obtained a copy of the original lease along with copies of a 2020 re-draft (never used) and associated

correspondence. He has contacted a commercial lawyer to guide the PC through a re-draft, so that redundant clauses can be removed, out of date ones updated, and new ones added as necessary. In the first instance it will be discussed at Fincom and then a revised draft circulated to the PC for review.

13. Footpath improvement proposal, Cotswold National Landscape – site visit (GS)

JP, RB, PW, GS and PR would like to attend. GS will make contact and schedule a date.

14. Public session for non-Agenda items

None

15. AOB

JH received an email from a Milton resident requesting support to explore local energy initiatives and creating a green energy hub in Milton. The PC were more than happy to support and will invite the resident to speak at the next PC meeting. JH to action.

PR stated the Village Green is being well used. There are lots of weeds on the walkways and growing through slabs. Contact with CWC may be required.

PR received an email from Kevin Grant who has announced his retirement. CT to provide GS with the existing contract to aid putting the contract out to tender.

GA said that he will contact the WODC Leisure Project Officer about potential funding to improve the village green playing area.

JH stated there is no further update on Dashwood House. It is likely to go to appeal.

CT will purchase printer paper for those who need it.

PW has received a complaint from a resident regarding the mess and overgrowth on the corner of Frog Lane and the Sands. GS will write to Cottsway.

JP advised the PC that a letter has been received from our MP in relation to the joint letter sent by the Wychwood PCs to Thames Water.

GS – Sharon Ellison has invited GS to a meeting on 6th March regarding the elections and the need for the PC Annual meeting in May.

GS has circulated outstanding actions to Councillors. Items in red require updating.

David Barham will be cleaning a seat by the Cemetery in the next few weeks as a test of the process to get other seats cleaned/renovated.

GS stated there is now a vacancy for a Councillor as CT has stepped down and a potential replacement is too busy with work to join the PC at the moment.

Meeting closed 2052 hours.