Milton-under-Wychwood Parish Council

Wednesday 21 February 2024 at 1930

Milton-under-Wychwood Village Hall

Minutes

Present:
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)

Five members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence**
   Vice-Chairman Glynn Allcock (GA)

2. **Declaration of Interests**
   JH Village Hall and Planning

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

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

5. **Public session for all items related to this Agenda**
   None

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

6.1 **Chairman's report (GS)**
Nothing to report other than agenda items below

6.2 **District Councillor's report (JH)**
The application for Botley Solar Farm is meeting considerable local opposition. It will be considered by the Planning Inspectorate, not by WODC.

6.3 **County Councillor's report (LL)**

6.3.1 The County Council has passed its budget for 2024/5 with a 4.99% increase in council tax to pay for its children and adult social care responsibilities plus funding an increase in

the national living wage. More money is being put into the Highways budget to the tune of £1.5M for ditches and drains and £5.0M for potholes. However, because of the repeated squeeze on council budgets the overall highways spend is £20.0M less than is required. The 2024/5 budget includes monies for re-surfacing of Shipton Road in Milton.

6.3.2 Fix my Street app is being improved to provide more sub-categories with the aim of getting issues directed to the right department more effectively than hitherto.

6.3.3 The Council is developing mobility hubs; these could be extra bus shelters or setting up car clubs, with the overall aim of enhancing mobility while reducing car use.

6.3.4 Two studies are in hand to investigate HGV movements. The intention is to use the resulting information to plan better routing of HGVs on Oxford roads.

6.3.5 A new partnership arrangement is being set up, the Oxford Community Rail Partnership is being created to help look after stations more effectively, involving GWR, Network Rail and people from the local communities

6.3.6 JH asked when the Burford bridge will be repaired. LL does not know but will try to find out.

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

7.1 23/02664/FUL - Dashwood House (retrospective) – PR and PW tabled a note setting out in detail that the current application does not address the PC's prior objections to the fact that two commercial units have ceased to exist as a result of changes made. On the basis of that note it was recommended that the PC objects to this latest application. All were in favour of that recommendation (except JH who abstains because of his declared interest in planning)

7.2 24/00252/S73 – Vicarage Field, Church Lane (variations to conditions). PW/PR consider that the variations listed make a positive improvement to the planned properties and recommend no objection. All (except JH) in favour of that recommendation

7.3 24/00077/HHD – 31 The Sands, PW/PR have reviewed this application and recommend no objection. All (except JH) in favour of that recommendation

8. RFO report (CT)

8.1 . CT noted that:

8.1.1 The tennis nets were not purchased with S106 money, and so that item will now appear against the Recreation Ground spend

8.1.2 Going forward CT has asked RB to advise when any burials are to happen so that the RFO can issue an invoice to formalise receipt of cheque payments

8.1.3 David Van de Poll has reviewed the Q3 2023 finances and given them a clean bill of health

8.1.4 CT has changed his email address so that it is now RFO@miltonunderwychwood-pc.gov.uk, all to stop using CT's other PC email addresses

8.1.5 A reported issue with unbanked cheques has been traced to the Scouts changing their bank account without informing the PC. Now resolved and returned payments resubmitted

8.1.6 Acceptance of January 2024 income, expenditure and summary – proposed by PR, seconded by PW, all in favour

8.2 Proposal: As recommended by the auditor, the PC to purchase two external solid state drives, one for the Clerk and one for the RFO, at around £100 - £130 each incl VAT for 2TB units to enable safe storage of important documents to go along with any cloud storage used. Proposed by PR, seconded by JP, all in favour

8.3 Confirmation of Budget 2024 – 2025 – JP confirmed that although there have been one or two minor adjustments required since the budget was agreed at the December meeting, the budget as presented at that meeting still stands. PR proposed, RB seconded, all in favour

8.4 Review FinCom draft Minutes of 7 February 2024. GA has requested an update on the outstanding S106 funds. JH observed that there were some factual errors in the FinCom minutes concerning the role of the MSA and its relationship with the football clubs and that it would have been helpful if he had been invited to the Fincom meeting given his detailed knowledge of the MSA.

9. S106 Art project update (GS)

GS summarised costings for engraving the slates and associated works. After considerable three-way discussions between GS, a supplier and our art consultant a font/colour, style etc has been agreed. Unless much cheaper prices are quoted by others the PC agreed that GS can go ahead and purchase from the supplier who has provided an outstanding service so far.

Apart from purchasing the slates, the next steps are to agree a site survey date with the supplier of the stones so that he can work out how best to deliver and install each stone and we (along with respective landowners) can confirm exactly where each stone is to be sited.

10. Eco Area transfer update (GS/PA) – on 9 February the solicitor confirmed by email that the developer's solicitors have agreed a slightly revised Transfer document, incorporating amendments to the rights of access clause. The wording added by our solicitor was to make it clear that the rights of way granted in the 2010 and 2017 Transfers were to remain in force.

GS has provided a PC email address and address for Land Registry purposes and asked for confirmation of the process and timing for signing the Transfer document, which will be signed by GS and PW.

The term Eco Area is not a terribly attractive one. People are invited to propose something more appropriate and descriptive.

11. Village green

11.1 Weed killing to play areas (PR) – PR outlined his discussion with Complete Weed Control on extra spraying by the play equipment at a cost of £80.00 per spray. Spraying to be done on a schedule of three sprays in year one, and then reduced frequency in subsequent years. PR proposed going ahead with the spraying, JH seconded, all in favour.

PR also noted that there is a considerable amount of grass growing around the play area. CT suggested adding cutting that to the overall grass cutting contract (see below).

Finally PR also observed that the area by the toddler swings has become eroded and is very muddy and slippery. CT suggested laying a grid similar to that by the entrance gate nearest to the play area. PR agreed that would be a good solution and is something we councillors could do when the weather improves sufficiently.

11.2 Repairs to the pot holes on the driveway (JH) – JH noted that repairs will be carried out within the next one to two weeks; he will pass the invoice to CT.

11.3 Car park re-surfacing (GA) – In the absence of GA further discussion of the proposed tarmac solution wasn't feasible. GS has a contact for the Hare so will email them to ask for a contribution to any resurfacing work. PR will talk to the Coop on the same basis.

11.4 Re-draft of MSA lease (GS) – Following initial discussions with a commercial lawyer GS is using a model lease agreement provided by that lawyer to produce a draft as a basis for discussion within the PC and then with the MSA so that we can put in place a lease which is up to date and reflects the needs of the parties involved. GS to circulate the draft as soon as possible.

11.5 Grass cutting contract – GA and CT have a meeting with a potential supplier on 28th February. GA is to place an advert in a local paper inviting tenders for the work.

12. Footpath improvement proposal, Cotswold National Landscape – site visit (GS) – the site visit has been agreed for 1430 on 22nd February; GS, PR, JP and PW to attend, meeting at the Village Green. The primary focus will be the Lancut Lane where several councillors have concerns about the feasibility of the proposed work.

13. Archived PC material update – The History Society has removed a range of materials from the cupboard in the shed, reviewed them and discussed with the Oxfordshire History Centre (aka Oxfordshire Archives) about taking on the material in their temperature-controlled environment. They already hold material for Shipton and Ascott. Once those discussions have come to fruition the History Society will provide to the PC a complete inventory of the material and where it will be archived.

14. Annual PC meeting

The PC AGM has to be held in the 14 days after the councillors take office following the May elections, ie between 6th and 20th May. The 15th May is the third Wednesday in the month, so it is proposed that it be held on that date, albeit GS will be on holiday.

An Annual Parish Meeting also needs to be held this year. To avoid overload in May it is proposed to hold that on the first Wednesday in June (subject to Village Hall availability) and then have the usual PC meeting on the third Wednesday in June.

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

15.1 It was noted that when the pavilion was first bult on the Village Green a lot of the labour was provided by people from the village

15.2 A concern was raised about erosion and collapse of the banks of the Littlestock Brook towards the far end of the footpath away from the allotments. CT will contact the EA to request remedial work.

15.3 A question was asked about why the PC continues to hold so much money in its current account rather than holding more in the investment account to earn extra interest. CT will investigate what more could be held in the investment account without causing any issues for required spend.

15.4 On the topic of the Village Green car park surface it was suggested that the firm which carried out the previous resurfacing should be invited to review the surface and make good where the pot holes have occurred. It was thought that the work was done in 2019 at a cost of £16K. GS agreed to find copies of relevant paperwork, and subsequently confirmed that the work was done in the summer of 2021, less than three years ago, at a cost of just over £19K.

15.5 A request was made to know what quotes are going on the slates as part of the Art Project. JH kindly read out a selection of quotes.

16. **AOB.**

16.1 JH confirmed that there will be a Village Fete in 2024, currently scheduled for Saturday 13 July

16.2 PR advised that he had cut the grass on the Southern corner of the Sands, but it is a very uneven surface and would benefit from being included in the grass cutting contract so that regular cutting improves the quality. PR also noted that the grass on the Village Green will need cutting very soon, although the current weather makes that not tenable for the time being

16.3 PW proposed that some remedial work be undertaken to the start of the footpath in the Eco Area from just beyond the bridge over the stream (immediately beyond the gate to Calais Field). The soil has been eroded to produce a significant dip which has become very slippery and PW has already witnessed one person slipping and falling. Once the Area has transferred to PC ownership the PC should consider his proposal.

16.4 RB referenced some work the History Society is doing to enhance its web site. The Society may well request funding form the PC to assist with the development. JP suggested that S137 funds could be used and that the sooner an application is made the better. GS asked RB if it would be feasible for those doing the History Society work to also help develop the PC site in connection with the Art Project if we are unable to find a student wanting to take it on. RB will check.