

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SHRIVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE MEMORIAL HALL, SHRIVENHAM, ON MONDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2007**

**PRESENT:** Councillor R Bartle  
Councillor Mrs S Day  
Councillor K Downton  
Councillor C Holman  
Councillor S Howell  
Councillor Mrs P Mullin  
Councillor P Saunders (Chairman)  
Councillor S Spencer  
Councillor G Tidmarsh

In attendance Mr D Pratt

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors B Watson, Mrs C Dawson

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND REQUESTS:**

Ian Jones enquired whether there was any further progress with the Martens Road pavement. County Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor was present and informed the meeting that she had met with John Beaumont from the Highways Department and that the necessary reparations would take place as and when funds were available. She explained that the County decision not to weedkill had resulted in a budget reduction from £350,000 to £150,000. She had also been informed that weeds grow well in tarmac and that the repairs were only intended to be of a temporary nature until the work could be done properly. Mr Jones reiterated that originally it had been a botched job and it was now in a poor state for a busy pavement which was used by a number of elderly people. Mrs Fitzgerald-O'Connor agreed that the job had not been done properly in the first place and that it would be completed satisfactorily. Mr Jones requested that any remedial work was not carried out at this time as weeds have stopped growing. Cllr Mrs Fitzgerald-O'Connor agreed to liaise once more with Mr Beaumont and endeavour to find out when the new surface would be laid. The next budget would be set in February and it was therefore unlikely, unless there were unspent monies, that the work would be carried out until that date. The budgets could not be set until the government grants were announced in late February. She understood that Councils would be capped after a 4½ % increase. Cllr Tidmarsh pointed out that the Parish Council had lobbied for 4½ years to have the surface replaced. In reply to a question asking whether the poor state of the path had been caused by lack of money or a consideration of green issues regarding the use of weedkilling, Cllr Mrs Fitzgerald-O'Connor replied that it was a bit of both.

Cllr Mrs Fitzgerald-O'Connor announced that a scrutiny review of the whole county was being carried out with regard to the recent flooding problems. They were working closely with the Environment Agency and also explained that the Government had not allocated additional funds to pay for the extra work carried out by Councils during that period.

Cllr Bartle questioned Cllr Mrs Fitzgerald-O'Connor regarding the Swindon expansion and its effect on the flooding issues. In his opinion neither the Environment Agency nor the County Council had put forward a strong case against building on the River Cole flood plain. Mrs Fitzgerald-O'Connor replied that she would write to the Environment Agency reminding the meeting that the flooding issue had not reached a satisfactory conclusion. Cllr Bartle pointed out that a strong defence from both the County and the Environment Agency would add weight to the arguments put forward at the EIP by the consortium of local parishes. Cllr Howell was of the opinion that neither the County nor the Environment Agency wanted to take a responsibility over new development on flood plains. Cllr Saunders pointed out that

most of Abingdon was built on floodplains. The regional authorities listened to arguments but “steamroller” their way on to developing as they think fit. There was some discussion regarding obtaining mortgages on properties built on the floodplain and whether the Government would underwrite or encourage mortgage lenders to finance house purchase. Cllr Holman informed the meeting that there were several possibilities for dealing with floods, including the building of flood storage lagoons. However, he was not sure that these would have been of much use during the July floods. In his opinion, Swindon would go ahead with the eastward development and that we should seek support from both the county and the Environment Agency to ensure a rural buffer zone was incorporated in their expansion plans. Cllr Tidmarsh enquired whether the County council could purchase land in this area to use as part of the rural buffer zone. Cllr Saunders said it would be better for the buffer zone to be on the Wiltshire side of the boundary.

#### **1438 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllrs Howell, Downton and Mrs Mullin declared an interest in item 13 “Allotment rentals”.

#### **1439 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> October were approved and signed after the following correction:

1426/1409 to read: Cllr Day suggested it could be relocated.

#### **1440 MATTERS ARISING**

**Public comments and Requests:** Further to Mrs Morrison’s request that the fallen conkers along the Chestnut Avenue be swept, an estimate had been received for hand-sweeping the path at £564. Councillors had rejected the estimate in the knowledge that the path would be swept and cleared of leaves and debris in November and December.

**1426/1409 Redundant school sign** The Clerk reported that he had been assured that this work was in hand.

**1435 Traffic Calming:** Cllr Mrs Day had attended meetings with both the school governors and separately with Lee Turner from the Highways Authority. Once the road alignment had been changed on Highworth Road, Mr Turner felt a pedestrian crossing would become viable. The street lighting was adequate and it was likely the developers would provide some funds towards the pedestrian crossing. The Chairman stated that the Parish Council should be more astute to requesting Section 106 Development Contributions for Recreation purposes. He suggested that when a revised planning application was made for the development on Highworth Road that a contribution of £2,000 should be requested towards the Recreation Ground extension. The all-weather surface proposed by the School governors across the Recreation Ground would require funding which the county would probably not finance.

**1436 Christmas Tree:** Cllr Howell explained that he had been concerned with sourcing a tree for this coming Christmas but would endeavour to look at a suitable planting spec on pumphouse green. Cllr Spencer was against the tree being planted on the Pumphouse Green as in his opinion it was too dangerous unless the roads were closed for a period of time during the carol singing.

## 1441 ACCOUNTS

The Accounts paid in September and for payment were approved, with the addition of the following:

Supplier	Date	Item	Amount	Cheque
VBT	November	Office rental	2,000.00	2500
DB Design	November	Web pages	50.00	2501

## 1442 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ATTENDING MEETINGS ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL

Cllr Holman, together with Councillors Bartle and Watson, had attended a planning seminar in Didcot. It had been an interesting meeting with plenty of information and food for thought. The overwhelming message of the seminar that the speed of processing planning applications was more important than accuracy as the Government required district authorities to lessen the turnaround time for applications and that the landowner took priority over objectors. Cllr Holman had looked at the round-robin system adopted by this Council to consult with planning committee members but had decided against email as this would preclude large-scale plans. He also believed members should become aware of the planning conditions affecting the majority of applications dealt with by the committee. He agreed with the chairman that S106 monies should be looked into and that whilst these were complex issues, Councillors had to become more professional in their approach to planning matters. Cllr Saunders explained that in future officers would deal with up to 90% of future applications.

## 1443 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had attended the recent liaison meeting with the Defence Academy and had strongly urged that Beckett Gate be closed to vehicular traffic during busy periods. He had been promised a reply once information had been gathered.

He had had a meeting with Mr McKay from the Environmental health Department of the District Council regarding the schedule for street cleaning carried out by Cleanaway in the village. He had been informed that the vehicle should be in the village once a week. He had requested a schedule so that this service could be monitored. Cllr Spencer pointed out that this would assist the village handyman in his onerous duties if he were aware when to expect the street cleaning visit.

**Policing.** The Council had received a number of emails complaining about the lack of police presence, the recent outbreak of anti-social behaviour. He explained that the ultimate sanction was a vote of lack of confidence in the Police Force. He was reluctant to take this action until there was no other option. Councillors were concerned that the telephone numbers given by the police were rarely efficient and sometimes no reply at all. Despite assurances that PC Jenkin would never be taken from his rural duties, he was now carrying out duties in the Faringdon area. County Councillor Mrs Fitzgerald-O'Connor undertook to make a report to the councillor with the Community Safety Portfolio. Cllr Tidmarsh was concerned about the lack of reporting incidents to the police and hoped that the Council would build up a portfolio of incidents. Cllr Spencer enquired whether ASBOs which were commonly issued in other areas were not used as commonly in the village. It was agreed to make this an agenda item for next month, particularly with regard to lighting the multi-use games area. This should also be discussed by the Trust. The Clerk read an email from the police stating they were unable to attend the Council meeting as all police personnel were on a "rest day".

#### **1444 FARINGDON ROAD PINCHPOINT**

Councillors had been circulated with a letter from Watchfield Parish Council requesting Council to consider for the pinch point to be removed as in their opinion this created a certain amount of traffic chaos whenever traffic was diverted off the A420 through the village. Cllr Spencer believed there was a strong case as the routes through the village was designated an official diversion route and close by, at the Longcot Road junction, there was a raised mini-roundabout. This acted as a vehicle speed reducer. Cllr Mrs Day felt it was a waste of money to replace the bollards so frequently and suggested widening the road and extending the traffic calming hump. Cllr Tidmarsh stated it could be construed as the lesser of two evils. Cllr Spencer pointed out that the pinch point did not stop College traffic. Cllr Holman believed that a good compromise would be to keep the traffic hump. County Councillor Mrs Andy Fitzgerald-O'Connor pointed out that a previous parish council had strongly lobbied for the pinch point as they had considered that that area was a danger because of the narrowness of the road by Wisteria Cottage. Two large vehicles would be unable to pass each other at that point and that without a sign indicating which vehicle took precedence, the problem would remain. Cllr Spencer proposed that the Parish Council consult with the Highways Department and should they agree, the pinch point be altered. The College should be asked for a contribution.

#### **1445 REQUEST FOR GRANT FROM VBT**

A letter from the Chairman of the Trust requesting a grant of £6,000 towards staff costs was read and unanimously approved under the powers to assist Village Halls.

#### **1446 OTHER REQUESTS FOR GRANTS**

Councillor Howell proposed that £50 be granted to South and Vale Carers. Cllr Tidmarsh, seconded by Cllr Mrs Day, proposed an amendment that £100 be given. On the casting vote of the Chairman, it was resolved to make a grant of £100 under the powers of S137.

A request from the Citizens' Advice bureau in Abingdon was rejected.

At the request of the Clerk, Council considered a request from the NSPCC for a continuation of the arrangement to pay for the rental of the Hall for their annual fair. After some discussion, it was unanimously resolved to continue the arrangement as a monetary grant would be lost in the coffers of the central office.

#### **1447 ALLOTMENT RENTAL**

Cllr Tidmarsh proposed, and Cllr Mrs Day seconded that there be no increase in next year's allotment rental. Cllr Spencer proposed, seconded by Cllr Bartle, that the late payment penalty be increased from 12p to 14p per sq metre and it was unanimously resolved.

#### **1448 AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Cllr Holman reported that there would be a delay in the construction of this development until after March 2008. Recent soil analysis had revealed strong background trace elements which would probably result in some areas of top soil being removed during construction. Cllr Saunders reported that the District Council were analysing the survey results and would probably make a grant towards any additional costs involved.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **1449 NORTHFORD CLOSE**

Cllr Mrs Day reported that the District Council enforcement officer had received a report concerning recent developments described as "ancillary" on two properties that were being let as flats. Further information was being gathered prior to action.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm