

Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Council held on Tuesday 03/03/2020 at 7.30pm at the Community Centre, Kiln Lane, Risinghurst OX3 8EY

Councillors present: Councillors (Cllrs) D. Taylor (Chair), Smith, Fuller, Drummond, Philpott, Adams and Merritt.

Staff present: Bev Field (Parish Clerk)

Members of the public present: 3 including Cllr Phillips (Oxfordshire County Council).

An apology was received from Cllr Munkonge (Oxford City Council)

7.00pm Membership of the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC): The County Officer and president of the OALC gave a short presentation to explain the support provided for member Councils. 94% of Parish Councils belong, including all the other Parish Councils in Oxford. Legal advice is offered to keep Councils in line with legislation e.g. web accessibility, GDPR and audit regulations. The National Association for Local Councils (NALC) represent Councils to government and provides monthly updates and training on relevant areas e.g. finance, roles and responsibilities and planning. A customised session can be arranged. Advice is provided to members through the Chair or Parish Clerk and the annual fees are £7.17 per elector. They do liaise with Community First Oxfordshire but are a separate organisation. OALC have an HR advisor and a finance/VAT advisor and attend a quarterly briefing with the monitoring officer with every tier of local government.

The meeting opened at 7.31pm

Question from a member of the public: A question was allowed by the Chair.

Q. Footpath Access: Has the Parish Council pursued the access rights with evidence for the footpath by Rectory Farm, Forest Hill? As residents from Forest Hill, they will attend the meeting of Forest Hill Parish Council on Thursday to follow this up.

A. Cllr Adams replied that he has followed this up and is awaiting a response from the Chair of Forest Hill Parish Council regarding advice sought from the Environment Agency. He will support the action, and it was noted that the path is not in the parish of Risinghurst and Sandhills.

39/030320 Apologies: Apologies were received accepted from Cllrs Naylor, Amin, Purbrick, L. Taylor and Ham. It was noted that meeting was quorate with a minimum of 4 Councillors present.

40/030320 Declarations of interest: Cllr Smith declared she is a member of East Area Planning Committee and will not participate in item 45/030320

41/030320 Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 04/02/20 were approved and signed as an accurate record, with the correction of "Adams" not "Adam" in item 37c(v)/040220.

42/030320 Matters arising: None (see working group reports)

43/030320 Finance:

a) **Report:** The RFO finance report for income and expenditure to January 20 was received and noted.

Bank balances: on 03/02/20: Santander £44,210.86 and NS&I £52,135.36

Book-keeping: Due to setting up new accounting software, all transactions have been entered afresh from 01/04/19 with monthly bank reconciliations. Each payment has been traced and the invoice identified. There is one outstanding payment to evidence which appears to be from South Oxfordshire County Council for council tax. One payment needed an invoice, and the replacement invoice showed a £592.90 overpayment plus the unclaimed VAT. Fantastic Firework have agreed to reimburse the Council for the overpayment.

Audit: The auditor has started examining our governance already and recommended we have support for the year-end because this is the first governance audit, and the year has 2 people's work in it. A remote session (which reduced costs by £200.00) with RBS Solutions is booked for 05/06/20 and the internal audit will be completed after that date.

Budget: Cllr Adams and the RFO met to review the budget for 2020/21 and the new nominal codes in the RBS accounts. All income from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is reserved for the Pavilion project.

Resolved: The RFO to:

- (i) Move unspent budget from 2019/20 for legal costs, biodiversity, and pavilion fund into an earmarked reserve (EMR).
- (ii) Re-allocate £13,000 from legal costs to drainage project.
- (iii) Increase the budget for tree works to £3k in consideration of recent damage.
- (iv) Combine the nominal codes for the 3 play spaces and memorial into one code for play parks.

b) **Bank provider:** Santander do not offer a 2-person authorisation option for online payments. Options include the Co-Operative Bank who offer dual authority payments with £10.00 pcm charge and no viewing-only option, Barclays Bank facilitate 2-3 signatories (maximum) but require 2 signatories to attend an interview at the Cornmarket branch, and charge £6pcm plus transaction fees. Lloyds Bank offer no limit to the number of signatories and a limited access option. Lloyds charge £6.50pcm after an initial free 18 months with free electronic payments plus a cheque fee 65p.

Resolved: The RFO to change bank provider to Lloyds Bank to enable online banking with unlimited number of signatories, dual authority payments and the option of a viewing-only access.

44/030320 Payments: The payments schedule was authorised to include an invoice from Graham Honour to ensure prompt payment.

45/030320 Planning and licensing applications: Representations to be made to Oxford City Council were considered for the following planning application:

59 Green Road OX3 8LD application 20/00245/FUL for the demolition of the existing garage, erection of a single-storey rear extension and erection of a rear conservatory. The formation of a rear dormer in association with a loft conversion, new boundary treatments and associated landscaping.

Cllr D. Taylor reported on the application that there are no obvious grounds for objection.

Resolved: Cllr D. Taylor to report "no objection".

46/030320 Parish Clerk report: The report of the Parish Clerk was received and noted.

Vacancies: The Parish Clerk made enquiries with Oxford City Council about the high number of seats for the Parish Council, which has resulted in long-term vacancies. This affects how areas are represented and whether the Council can declare the General Power of Competence or achieve the Local Council Award Scheme which aims at demonstrating good practice. A community governance consultation could be undertaken to review the number of seats following the May elections.

Term of Office: The Parish Clerk reminded members that the term of office for Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Council ends in May 2020 for elected and co-opted members. Anyone wishing to continue will need to be nominated, which the Clerk will provide support with.

Parish Clerk contract: The Council has not recorded a resolution to employ the Parish Clerk, nor provided a contract. The SLCC provides a template for a Parish Clerk contract with supporting information to understand the various aspects of the role. It will help to access the NALC legal advice note on the NJC pay scales.

Cllr Adams proposed that the Parish Council joins the National and Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils for one year to access the advice, guidance, training and templates and assess the benefits in one year.

- a) **Resolved:** The Parish Clerk to join the National and Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils at a cost of £7.71 per elector.
- b) **Agreed:** The Employment working group will meet to agree a contract for the Parish Clerk and bring a recommendation to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

47/030320 Groundsman report:

- a) **Report:** Two reports were received and noted from the Groundsman regarding the new car park and drainage and flooding on the playing field in consultation with Graham Honour. It was noted that the car park is a big improvement and that further advice is needed regarding drainage. Cllr Drummond has discussed the drainage with the Groundsman, and the Clerk has requested quotes for a drainage survey from Oxford Direct Services and Oxfordshire & District Building Services.
- b) **Landscape maintenance services:** a quote was considered from Matthew Welch Gardening Services, who has discussed the work with the Groundsman. Cllr Fuller litter-picks the Richards Way ball court and Cllr Philpott litter-picks at Downside Dip play area.

Resolved: Parish Clerk to commission Matthew Welch Gardening Services for 2.5 hours per week (according to seasonal variation). To undertake a pre-cut litter-pick and then mow/strim the grass once a fortnight in Downside Dip play area and Richards Way ball court. To liaise the work through the Groundsman.

48/030320 Reports from Members working groups:

- a) (i) **Pavilion:** Cllr Smith was offered free kitchen flooring with underlay from Howdens as a charitable donation. Howdens were thanked for this generous offer.
- (ii) **Health and Safety:** Cllrs Philpott and Drummond completed the PAT testing on the Pavilion. The microwave is inaccessible and any portable equipment brought in by users should be PAT tested. The fridge had an exposed live wire and incorrect fuse. A report will be sent to the Parish Clerk.
- Fire equipment:** Quotes are still being sought for testing the fire equipment and for a handwash sink at the Pavilion.

Agreed: The Parish Clerk will give Pavilion access to Minibuild on Friday to quote for the handwash sink.

Agreed: The Parish Clerk will write to Headington Youth Football Club to advise them of the report and request PAT testing of portable equipment that is used, but not stored, in the Pavilion.

- b) External meetings: None reported

49/030320 Reports from Ward Councillors:

Cllr Phillips (Oxfordshire County Council): Redbridge Household Waste Recycling Centre will be closed 10th-11th March for deep cleaning. Please do not go there on these dates. Cllr Phillips continues to receive comments on the Sandhills controlled parking zone (CPZ) due to an Oxford Mail article stating that 9 CPZ's are going ahead. This is not correct; an informal consultation has been completed and feasibility work is being planned with a formal consultation to take place in May 2020. No decision has been made yet. Cllr Phillips suggested the Parish Council considers taking responsibility for grass-creting the verges since the City and County Councils will not undertake this work. However, Parish Councillors stated that there are residents able to take responsibility for the damage they are causing, and that Councillors do approach builders to request they reinstate the verges after construction work is complete.

Cllr Munkonge (Oxford City Council): Cllr Munkonge sent his apologies through Cllr Fuller. He sent an update that there is serious damage to the path and verge at the property under construction on the corner of Downside Rd and Kiln Lane. A Planning Officer will inspect the site on 04/03/20. Allocating Ward monies for play equipment could be deferred until after the election in May 20.

Cllr Smith (Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council) Cllr Smith has requested a pedestrian barrier for the A40 Risinghurst traffic lights and had a positive response. Sadly, following the Autumn planting, no spring bulbs have come through yet. The OxClean litter pick took place last weekend and Cllr Smith litter-picked alongside Cllr Adams. There were heavy pieces of exhaust pipe along A40, and cans/bottles in the ditch behind the London Rd bus stop. Cllr Smith also picked outside the Stansfield Park area along the eastern bypass in the Parish. This was mostly McDonald's rubbish and dog waste. Cllr D. Taylor litter-picked on Sunday and found a ditch with discarded lunch boxes.

Oxford City Council Tax was increased by 1.99%

Hedgehog Day event is on 21st March with a talk by Hugh Warwick on the importance of hedgehogs for biodiversity and there are also family events.

Connected Communities Week will be in the first week of June following the Headington Festival. Could the Parish Council consider supporting an event? This will be considered on the next agenda.

50/030320 Parish Council Meeting Times:

Resolved: To start all Parish Council meetings at 7.00pm and amend the Standing Orders accordingly. To include a 10-minute public participation session at the start of every meeting, and then to convene the Parish Council meeting to follow on.

The Clerk advised that during the Parish Council meeting public participation is not allowed, except by the consent of the Chair.

51/030320 Pavilion Health and Safety: Quotes for Food Hygiene courses at levels 1&2 courses for users of the sports Pavilion were considered to improve Health and Safety standards. Level 1 costs £15.00 online and level 2 costs £75.00 for a 2-day course provided by Oxford City Council.

Resolved: To pay for Pavilion hirers to attend the level 2 Food Hygiene course and require this as part of the contract. Parish Clerk to invite funding through a grant application.

52/030320 Fireworks Display on 14/11/20 Low-noise fireworks were considered which can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2B18JPgC-GE> to reduce the distress to children and pets.

Resolved: To approve increased expenditure of £530.00+VAT for low-noise fireworks provided by Fantastic Fireworks on 14/11/2020 for a single year, and then to review the effectiveness.

53/030320 Request to borrow/hire the marquee: A request from Headington Action to use the marquee for an event during 'Connected Communities Week' was withdrawn.

Resolved: Not to loan/rent out the marquee to ensure it is maintained and stored in good condition.

54/030320 Request for tree works: A request from a resident to undertake works to trees on the verge between Kiln Lane and Olive Jacks Field that are a hazard to traffic and service cables was considered. This was discussed with Cllr Naylor and the Groundsman who are aware of the problem. The verge is not owned by the Parish Council, but it was considered a neighbourly action to undertake the works, since the branches are a hazard. The further request for speed restrictions is not in the remit of the Parish Council. Cllr Smith can offer some speed-watch signs to the residents on request. Cllr D. Taylor identified another tree in the spinney behind the Pavilion which has a broken branch that is hanging down and needs removing.

Resolved: Parish clerk to commission Oxwood Tree Surgery to reduce the branches of the trees on the verge between Olive Jacks field and Kiln Lane and the tree in the Spinney with a hanging broken branch, in consultation with the Groundsman to a maximum cost of £500.00

55/030320 Items for the next agenda:

- support for an event for Connected Communities Week (Cllr Smith)
- Request a report from the Fete committee on the plans for the use of the playing field.
- Renewal of the core documents to include Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Other essential policies will follow in subsequent months.
- Parish Clerk appointment.

Date and time of Next Meeting: Tuesday 07/04/2020 at the earlier time of 7.00pm at the Community Centre, Community Centre, Kiln Lane, Risinghurst OX3 8HA

The meeting closed 9.00pm



25-03-2020
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