

Long Wittenham Parish Council meeting held on 20th June 2024

Present: Chairman Steve Brown, Cllr Steve Bolton, Cllr Ian Burton, Cllr David Corney, Cllr Mark Thompson, Cllr Liz Yuille, RFO Clifford Bosley, County Cllr Pete Sudbury.

In attendance: Martin Elliff (clerk) and 1 member of the public.

The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2024/108 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Peter Rose, District Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye.

2024/109 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- Resident Andrew Wilson had emailed to ask who is responsible for weeding and cleaning the roads at Saxons Heath and Westfield Road. Biffa is contracted by SODC to carry out this work. It has been asked to clean these roads and has advised that the work is schedule to take place.

2024/110 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Cllrs Bolton and Burton declared their interest in Long Wittenham Athletic Club and the grounds maintenance contract and withdrew from the meeting when this was discussed (section 2024/124).

2024/111 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Parish Council resolved to sign the minutes of the annual and monthly meetings held on 16th May 2024.

2024/112 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

- OCC Highways will not install 20mph signs on concrete Fieldside as it is not part of the 20mph zone. It was suggested that 'advisory' signs be purchased and installed at an estimated cost of £75. Agreed.

Actions:	Chairman to purchase and install 20mph signs on Fieldside.
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2024/113 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr Casey-Rerhaye's report for June, sent by email is attached in Appendix A.

2024/114 REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Sudbury said that when the HIF1 road is built, it is hoped that it will be possible to close the local villages to all but local traffic using ANPR. This idea is included in a paper to the OCC Cabinet concerning the funding of HIF1. Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy, is also supportive.

The planning inspector's decision on HIF1 is expected in September but it may be delayed.

2024/115 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

P24/S1476/HH Frenchs Cottage High Street LW NSV

2024/116 COMMUNITY HUB

- There is no update on the progress of the legal agreements.
- The chairman reported that he has had discussions with the PCC about the Ward's Field Biodiversity Project. Janet Haylett and Andy Duff are now working on what the PCC needs to do. The Biodiversity consultant has estimated that the project will cost between £20,000 and £30,000. The PCC will likely want to generate some



income from the project. Cllr Corney asked if it would be helpful to involve the Earth Trust.

2024/117 CIL PROJECTS

- CIL Project List
The chairman and Cllr Yuille had updated and circulate the list.
- Acklings Playground
The draft of a new 10 year lease for Acklings from Savills had been circulated before the meeting. Approved, but councillors asked the clerk to inquire if St John's College might sell the land to the council as an alternative option.
The final design for the playground had been received from Jupiter. The chairman will circulate it. The next step is to seek at least two more quotations.
It was suggested that Cllr Rose and the clerk be given delegated authority to seek additional quotations. Approved.
- Allotments Water Supply
The chairman has been given the names of companies that could quote for the well. New quotations will be sought.

Actions: Clerk to ask Savills if St John's College might sell Acklings to the council.
Chairman to circulate the Jupiter playground design.
Chairman to seek addition quotes for the allotments well.

2024/118 LONG WITTENHAM TO CLIFTON HAMPDEN PERMISSIVE PATH

Cllr Thompson reported that the written agreement for the section of the path over the Gibbs land is still awaited. Charles Campion, the Savills' land agent for the Gibbs family, has confirmed that the family support the idea, but the agreement has yet to be signed.

It is expected that Logs Unlimited will clear the verge at the start of the path by the end of June.

2024/119 CORE DOCUMENTS

New model Financial Regulations had been received from NALC. These had been amended as necessary by the chairman, RFO and Clerk and circulated along with the slightly modified Standing Orders before the meeting. Approved.

2024/120 GRANT APPLICATION – PRIMARY SCHOOL PTA

The grant application for £2,000 funding towards the cost of twenty Chromebooks was approved.

2024/121 FIELDSIDE ROAD NAME SIGNAGE

It was suggested that SODC should be asked to install a road name sign at the Didcot Road end of Fieldside track.

Actions: Clerk to ask SODC to install a road name sign on Fieldside track.

2024/122 FOOTPATH WARDEN

Cllr Corney has stepped down as parish path warden (PPW). The post has been advertised on the village website but it is not known if there have been any responses, as candidates were asked to contact the PPW Area Network Coordinator David Tole. The chairman thanked Cllr Corney for his service in the role.

Actions: Clerk to ask David Tole if there has been any interest in the PPW role.

2024/123 INSURANCE

Cllr Yuille had circulated the updated insurance asset valuation list. Agreed. She will now seek renewal quotes in time for October.

She suggested that the council, as a party with an insurable interest, should hold a copy of the Village Hall Committee (VHC)'s insurance policy for the village hall.

Actions: Clerk to ask the chair of the VHC for a copy of the Insurance policy schedule.

2024/124 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Cllr Bolton, on behalf of Long Wittenham Athletic Club (LWAC), for whom he is a committee member, explained that he wished to tender for the contract at the end of the year. With Cllr Burton, who is the chair of LWAC, also on the council, there is concern among the rest of the council that, although this is not illegal, there might be a perception of favouritism if LWAC were to tender. Risks 11 and 12 in the council's Risk Register highlight the potential risks (see Appendix B). The Chairman explained the idea for LWAC to tender for the contract had come from a discussion between him and Cllr Bolton. Following extensive discussion of the options and risks it was agreed that the best practical way forward would be for Cllrs Bolton and Burton to step down from the council in the near future if they wished to tender for the contract. It would then be feasible for them to tender for the contract at the end of next year as they would no longer have a perceived advantage. Alternatively, they could both remain on the Parish Council and refrain from bidding for the contract.

Actions: Chairman to advise Cllrs Bolton and Burton of the council's decision.

2024/125 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

None.

2024/126 ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS

- Outdoor Gym Equipment
Cllr Thompson asked if the council wishes to proceed with this. It was suggested that he gets two or three specific quotations for consideration and that the clerk writes to local parish councils that have such equipment to try to find out how well it is used.
- High Street Chicanes
Cllr Thompson proposed that the council should proceed with the replacement of the chicanes in the High Street with road humps or cushions. Agreed. There is funding for this in the CIL Project List so it was suggested that the Clerk asks OCC Highways for an estimate of the cost.

Actions: Cllr Thompson to seek outdoor gym equipment quotations.
Clerk to email local parishes asking for information about gym equipment usage.
Clerk to ask OCC Highways for an estimate of the cost of replacing the High Street chicanes with humps or cushions.

2024/127 MATTERS ARISING FROM CHAIRMAN

- Neighbourhood Watch
Resident Jim Brown had suggested by email that the footage from doorbell cams and CCTV cameras might be helpful when criminal incidents occur in the village. It was felt that this would be better part of the role of a Neighbourhood Watch group.

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- South East Strategic Reservoir Consultation
The chairman asked if the council should formally respond to the consultation. It was agreed to not do so at this time.

Actions: Clerk to post on the website asking for anyone involved in a Neighbourhood Watch scheme to come forward.

2024/128 FINANCIAL REPORT

- 2023-24 Internal Audit Report and Internal Audit Report AGAR Statement
The RFO reported that the Internal Audit Report had been received and that it contained no negative findings. The report and statement were approved by the council.
- Income during May

03/05/2024	OCC Verge Cutting Grant	£857.21
08/05/2024	HMRC (VAT Repayment)	£6,376.93
23/05/2024	OCC CPF Grant	£1,234.00
	May Income Total	£8,468.14
- Expenditure during May

08/05/2024	OCC Inv 3920718336 (Speed Survey)	£228.00
08/05/2024	Logs Unlimited Inv 240032	£1,511.79
01/05/2024	Scribe Inv INV-6001 (DD)	£36.00
16/05/2024	Clerk's Salary May 2024	£344.95
16/05/2024	Elliff Expenses (Website anti-spam software)	£10.80
17/05/2024	James Brown Inv 1014 (Allotments Clearance)	£539.00
22/05/2024	HMRC (VAT Refund Overpayment)	£6,376.93
29/05/2024	Brown Expenses (Allotments & Verges)	£393.93
29/05/2024	James Brown Inv 1015 (Various Grounds Maintenance)	£220.00
	May Expenditure Total	£9,661.40

2024/129 ANY MATTERS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

The chairman asked councillors to review the CIL Project List and identify any projects on which they would like to take the lead.

Meeting Closed at 9:30pm.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 18th July 2024

Signed:

Stephen Brown

Date:

18-7-24

APPENDIX A

District Councillor Report June 2024 Sam Casey-Rerhaye

Greenspace Survey

Land use experts at LUC are supporting the council to gather information about greenspaces in the district. As part of this LUC are asking residents and organisations to complete a short online survey to understand how they use greenspaces in their local area. This ranges from parks and recreation grounds to natural spaces like woodlands and meadows.

The survey runs from **Thursday 30 May to Sunday 30 June 2024.**

You can take part in and help share LUC's short survey here: .

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse GI and Open Space Public Survey

If you have any questions about the survey, please email the LUC team at SouthandValeGI@landuse.co.uk.

General Election information

The council have now published new General Election 2024 pages, including information for candidates and agents, on the website – everyone can access these by going to southoxon.gov.uk/GeneralElection2024

Here's a reminder of the key dates residents will need to know in the run up to polling day on 4 July:

- You must be registered to vote by midnight on Tuesday 18 June 2024.
- Postal vote and postal proxy vote applications – by 5pm on Wednesday 19 June 2024. Everybody who applies for a postal vote should receive their ballot pack by 28 June and we are not able to issue replacements before then.
- Changes to existing postal and proxy vote arrangements – by 5pm on Wednesday 19 June 2024.
- Voter Authority Certificate (voter ID) applications – by 5pm on Wednesday 26 June 2024.
- New proxy vote applications – by 5pm on Wednesday 26 June 2024.

New SODC Cabinet

Councillor David Rouane, Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, confirmed details of the council's new Cabinet on Thursday 16 May. There are 3 changes to the previous cabinet; I am now in Cabinet, the member for Corporate Services, so most of the internal workings of the council. Details can be found on the council website.

Latest round of Rural England Prosperity Fund now open

The next round for Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) applications has now opened and organisations can apply for the scheme on the council's website:

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/business-and-economy/advice-for-businesses/rural-england-prosperity-fund/>

The fund offers up to £75,000 of capital funding for small businesses and community infrastructure projects that help to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities. Applications close at midday on Monday 1 July.

Funding categories are:

- Capital grants for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas
- Capital grants for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation
- Capital grants for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups

£1.2 million boost for local infrastructure in South Oxfordshire

Over the last six months, the council has transferred over £1.2 million to invest in vital infrastructure delivered by the council, town and parish councils and other community organisations.

Investments have ranged from improved play areas and adding accessible features in a community swimming pool to improving public transport and extending a local rugby clubhouse.

As the local planning authority, South Oxfordshire collects financial contributions in the form of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (S106) – this is the funding from housing developers to support the growth of the district when new developments are created.

S106 funding transferred between 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024 has totalled £244,690. During this six-month period the council has also transferred £996,479 of CIL to town and parish councils that have experienced CIL liable development in their area. Follow this link for a breakdown of S106 funds have been approved and paid out and CIL monies transferred for South (the document should download automatically).

The Rural Crime Partnership is bringing together Thames Valley Police, local district councils and the Community Safety Partnerships to tackle crimes such as fly-tipping, burglaries and theft in rural areas. There will also be more support for local communities on crime prevention as well an increase in the gathering and sharing of information about rural crime.

Initiatives include:

- New covert cameras to be used by the Police's Rural Crime Taskforce alongside off-road bikes to target criminals in hard-to-reach areas.
- Working with farmers to improve security. Farms will be eligible to sign up for security checks and will be given DNA marking kits for agricultural machinery. These kits include property marking labels to deter theft, and where theft happens enable machinery to be tracked back to the farm.
- A new Rural Crime Advisor will work to promote rural crime prevention and engage with rural communities, industries, farms and organisations such as Young Farmers and the National Farmers' Union, to help them become harder to target for criminals.
- New surveillance equipment will help district councils catch fly-tippers and tackle hot spot areas.

Planning for an emergency

There is a new government website for emergency preparedness. We have added the site to the emergency pages on the councils' websites. The new prepare campaign is not based on any imminent intelligence, just designed to help people prepare for emergencies, be more informed about hazards, and get involved in activities to support themselves and their community before, during and after an emergency. <https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk>

Contact me at: sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk or call 01235 635566.

APPENDIX B

Extract from LWPC Risk Register

	Risk	Impact	Risk	Gravity	Internal Controls	Review Cycle	Alternate Trigger/ Internal Audit Assurance	Responsible person
11	Council becomes dominated by 1 or 2 individuals or cliques form.	Conflict of interest. Pursuit of personal agendas. Decisions made outside Council.	M	H	Clear Standing orders regarding conduct of meeting and conflicts of interest. Leadership.	Ongoing	Adverse publicity. Complaints. Incidents at meetings	All Parish Councillors
12	Councillors benefiting from being on the Council	Loss of reputation Conflicts of interest	L	H	Declaration of interests. Clear Standing Orders.	Annually	Adverse Publicity	All Parish Councillors