

EYE & DUNSDEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Virtual Meeting held on Tuesday 15th September 2020 at 7.45pm on Skype

Present Cllrs Richard Berkley, Naomi Baylis, Ian Pringle, David Bartholomew (OCC + SODC) and Leigh Rawlins (SODC)

116/20 Apologies for absence Cllrs David Woodward and Clive Leeke

117/20 Declarations of interest None

118/20 Minutes of the last meeting The minutes from the meeting on Tuesday July 21st were adopted. Adoption was proposed by Ian Pringle and seconded by Richard Berkley. All agreed.

119/20 Matters arising from the minutes,

114/20 The response to the Reading Transport Strategy was submitted last month. The Clerk was asked to check whether this had been sent to Ian Hudspeth. If not, Richard Berkley suggested that it should be sent with a covering letter prepared by the Chair & Vice Chair. **(Clerk to action)**

120/20 County Councillor's report Cllr Bartholomew's report will be attached to the minutes. On local matters he reported that a) complaints about the alleged building work in Sonning Eye have been received but SODC do not have the capacity to investigate at present b) local work on the B478 mentioned last month is booked but there is still a delay due to Covid-19. Naomi Baylis added that signs had fallen and also needed replacing. This was noted.

121/20 District Councillor's Report Cllr Rawlins briefly introduced aspects of his report. His full report is attached to these minutes.

122/20 Public Question Time/Correspondence The Clerk reported that a resident had complained about the increased amount of fly tipping that he attributed to the cost of travelling to the allotted refuse site and the charges now being made at the site. Parish Councillors strongly endorsed this opinion and stressed that the phenomenon would continue to deteriorate as a direct result of the restrictions on disposable items and charges now being imposed by Local Authorities, at their respective Household Waste Sites. Cllr Rawlings agreed that there was a problem with the present system but pointed out that the Household Waste Sites, serving residents in South Oxfordshire, were the responsibility of the County Council.

123/20 Financial Position

123.01/20 The financial situation had been previously circulated.

123.02/20 The August and September accounts were presented for payment. Invoices to the value of £1,265.35 were agreed. Richard Berkley proposed the accounts be paid. This was seconded by Naomi Baylis. All agreed. **(Clerk to action)**

124/20 Planning Matters

a) Consultation on Govt planning changes. If an initial response is to be made it is due by October 1st and other responses by October 29th

b) Reading Golf Club application Deferred

New Applications

Concern was expressed about the removal of a number of trees at Caversham Lakes to provide a swimming centre. The Centre has been developed without planning consent, but David Woodward has been advised that a retrospective application had been made for a change of use for the Site. The Parish Council has not received any notice of a planning application having been submitted so the Clerk was asked to contact Paul Lucas at SODC Planning to ascertain the present situation and which officer is dealing with this. **(Clerk to action)**. Some Residents have complained about the piped music and voice of the DJ heard at weekends as far away as Playhatch.

The work at Mill Farm was also discussed and was causing concern as there has been no planning application made. The enforcement team has a backlog, but the issue will be pursued.

Applications Granted

P20/S2190/LB The installation of glazed screens for formalize the residential use of the Midstrey (threshing door/cart horse) entrance. The French Barn Frizers Farm Sonning Eye RG4 6TN

P20/S2195/FUL Temporary Portakabin Building required for 1 year. The Sherriff Boathouse
Henley Road Caversham RG4 6LP

P20/S2454/LB Alterations to window 2 Mill Farm Cottages Sonning Eye

125/20 Eye & Dunsden Village Hall

The Hall has reopened with the new Bookings Manager is in place. Social events will be limited but classes can take place.

126/20 Neighbourhood Development Plan Richard Berkley reported that roles were appointed, reports were being prepared and that grants had applied for and been awarded.

127/20 Community Matters

127.01/20 The phone box floor will be adjusted and fitted. The leaflet boxes will be affixed after Covid-19. At present it is being used as a small library. **(Cllr Berkley to action)**

127.02/20 Footpath 9 & 11 leading down to the A4155 These steps opposite the Flowing Spring are dangerously slippery with poor sightlines. Cllr Berkley will contact Adrian Beales of Savills, which represents the Landowner, to suggest a permissive path be provided along the inside of the hedge as far as Playhatch. **(Cllr Berkley to action)**

127.03/20 Milestone Wood Sale Item deferred as Chairman not present

127.04/20 Notice Board in Bus Shelter The bus shelter is to be replaced at the end of this week. Richard Berkley said that he would unlock the notice board so it could be removed. The Clerk will forward his telephone number to the contractor. **(Clerk to action)**

128/20 South Oxfordshire Local Plan Examination in Public 15, 21, 23/7 Item deferred in Chairman's absence.

129/20 Allotments The Clerk reported that all plots at both allotments were tenanted. Most tenants have now paid their rent. Others will be sent reminders. **(Clerk to action)**

130/20 Standing Orders This was deferred until next month. The e-mail will be resent. **(Clerk to action)**

131/20 Matters for future consideration Planning changes, flood alleviation scheme, land by Clayfield Copse, swimming centre

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Date of next meeting: October 20th 2020

REPORT TO EYE & DUNSDEN PARISH COUNCIL SEPT 2020 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND CHILDCARE PROVIDERS WELCOME CHILDREN BACK

Schools, colleges and early years providers have been working closely with OCC to make sure that all children are welcomed back safely in September. Education and childcare providers are following guidance from the Department for Education, Public Health England and the County Council. Risk assessments have been carried out and hygiene measures are in place across all education and early years settings. All Oxfordshire education settings, including our special schools, will be open in September. Arrangements will vary, as what is needed in a small primary will be different from a large secondary or upper school. Classes may be different as measures, such as teaching children in separate groups or 'bubbles', may have to be put in place to help keep children and staff safe. Childcare providers' arrangements may also vary, as what is needed in a childminder's home will be different to a larger nursery or preschool.

BRAKES COULD BE APPLIED TO OXFORD'S LOCKDOWN EMERGENCE AS COVID CASES RISE

Measures that could put the brakes on Oxford's gradual emergence from lockdown have moved a step closer as a result of another week of uncomfortably high rises in COVID cases in the city.

The number of cases in Oxford in the week ending August 21 was 41 – which is 26.9 cases per 100,000 and sees the city moving ever closer to figures in parts of the country that have been labelled by central Government as areas of concern or that require intervention.

REPORT INTO OXFORDSHIRE COUNCILS REORGANISATION

Management consultants PwC have taken a fresh look at the different options for local government structures that could emerge for debate among communities and councillors in Oxfordshire as the nation awaits a Government blueprint for the future. During the Autumn the Government will publish a White Paper on recovery and devolution, which will act as a guide to setting out how local government structures may be reorganised across the whole country – taking into account the changed landscape following the COVID-19 pandemic. Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council recently commissioned a piece of work to look at the various options that may be viable in the county. This followed a motion unanimously agreed by county councillors in July. Both councils asked experts at PwC to complete the work. PwC are currently acting in an advisory capacity to Government and other local authorities undertaking similar pieces of work. The options reviewed are:

1. Optimising the existing two-tier collaboration
2. Establishing a new single unitary authority
3. Establishing two new unitary authorities, based on a 50/50 split of the population to meet Government criteria around size.

The report can be downloaded from the OCC website.

READING TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2036 (INCLUDING THIRD READING BRIDGE)

I emailed all clerks in my Division on 17th May to advise that Reading was consulting on its Transport Strategy 2036. Several proposals would have major impacts on South Oxfordshire. I urged all parish councils in my Division to respond to the consultation and am delighted that most have, either individually or as part of a cooperative effort led by Kidmore End PC.

OCC and SODC have also submitted their responses. OCC states:

"We are opposed to the Plan in its present form, as we do not agree with the proposed schemes and measures it includes for cross boundary travel between Reading and Oxfordshire. We are particularly concerned about the approach proposed to developing large-scale 'multi-modal schemes' to the north of Reading, in particular the proposed Thames Crossing, Reading Orbital Route and North of Reading Park & Ride sites."

The full response is available on the OCC website here: <https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/response-to-readings-local-transport-plan/> SODC states:

"We are particularly concerned about the approach proposed to developing large-scale 'multi-modal schemes'

to the north of Reading, in particular the proposed Thames Crossing, Reading Orbital Route and North Reading Park and Rides. We believe that development and delivery of these major schemes is inconsistent with the objectives and many of the policies of the plan, they will not be effective in managing cross-boundary travel movements, and are likely to have significant negative impacts on South Oxfordshire.”

SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR EYE & DUNSDEN

SONNING QUARRY LIAISON COMMITTEE

A reminder that a meeting is to be held 1st October 3.00pm. Zoom invitations have been issued.

B478 ACCIDENTS CONTINUE

Despite the surface retexturing there has been another accident. The latest vehicle to leave the road has removed one of the ‘back to back’ chevrons and post as well as a ‘Vergemaster’ reflective post which will be replaced. In addition, OCC intends to replace all the chevrons with versions that have a fluorescent surround rather than a yellow surround. The fluorescent material can be very effective in drawing attention to signs that are mounted below overhanging trees. OCC also intends to provide an additional chevron assembly and a couple more Vergemaster posts at the apex of the bend. I have been advised the works should be completed prior to the autumn.

SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR EYE & DUNSDEN

P17/S1627/FUL MILL FARMHOUSE SITE, SONNING EYE

Complaints have been received about alleged unauthorised building work but SODC do not have the capacity to investigate at the moment.

SODC ward councillor’s report – Eye & Dunsden – 15th September 2020

Covid-19

After a summer of growing relaxation, Covid cases are now showing some resurgence. Schools have returned and pubs and restaurants have resumed – benefiting from the “eat out to help out” support. It remains to be seen how much Covid cases will grow, in the short-term it appears that hospitalisations and deaths are not spiking sharply, but of course continued vigilance and care is called for. As the autumn winter season of flu and viruses develops there are reasons for concern and for expectations of new challenges. More powers are being devolved to local government to effect “local lockdowns” where necessary. Government is beginning to revise guidance – including the “rule of six” to limit the scale of gatherings. The Covid support structure across Oxfordshire remains in place with South Oxfordshire council ready to respond as may be required.

Local Plan 2035

The Inspector has issued an interim letter following the Examination in Public. He has agreed that the plan period should extend to 2035 – with an additional year of housing requirements for SODC. He has approved the housing requirements as submitted – including the high SHMA numbers both for SODC and its obligations to meet unmet housing need from Oxford City. He did not choose to take account of the much lower household projections now released by ONS based on the 2018 base which show much lower numbers – particularly for Oxford. In addition he has shockingly approved ALL the strategic sites, mostly in the Green Belt but also including the Chalgrove site with its isolation, safety issues and real questions concerning its availability. The result is a very high requirement for housing and a plan supply with a vast amount of “headroom” above that requirement – both in terms of numbers and site areas; if built this must mean a sharp increase in the number of households – which the housing formula approach will then use to project even more housing “need”. The Inspector is indicating support for stronger policy on Climate Change, revisions to the submitted policy on density and more emphasis on special housing for the elderly – including extra care. He did not support demands for more development around Reading or in the market towns and villages but is making policy for infills and windfalls more permissive. In due course, after some drafting exchanges with the district planning policy team, a further consultation will take place over a six-week period on the “Main Modifications” proposed by the Inspector; these will include those changes which he judges of greatest materiality – rather than simply details of drafting. Under the Secretary of State’s diktat or “direction” he seeks to have a local Plan adopted by the end of December 2020.

3rd Reading Bridge and Reading Transport Strategy

The consultation period has now closed. Oxfordshire councils and local parishes have strongly challenged the draft strategy, but indicated a willingness to engage on finding proportionate measures for mutual benefit.

Consultation on South Oxfordshire Corporate Plan, 2020-2024

The consultation on this has closed. The response levels were higher than in the past and overall very positive. They are

now being analysed.

National Planning changes

The government have announced proposals for the most radical change in planning since the 1947. Local Plans would be “simplified” and planning policy be set by Whitehall. Plans would include zones for Growth, Renewal and Protected areas. In Growth areas developers would already enjoy effective “outline” planning permission automatically. In Renewal areas developers could assume rights to demolition and development up to a “gentle densification” limit by area, but widely suggested to be at least 4 storeys in urban/suburban areas, In Protected areas developers would face constraints – unless particular needs apply. It is suggested that these new simple plans could get done in 30 months rather than 60 months. It is suggested that planning applications would in future be determined according to black and white “decision rules” – without democratic interpretation. It is suggested that this would make life simpler and less costly for developers, simplify workloads for local government and reduce or remove the input of aging councillors and their Nimby residents. Whoopee! Any input to review of a planning application would be digital and the intent is that rules would be crisp and simple. There is also a promise that enforcement of breaches of these easy rules would be firmer to increase public confidence! The above is for consultation under the Government’s “Planning for the Future” document :- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907956/Planning_for_the_Future_web_accessible_version.pdf Before then more Permitted Development is proposed to make it easier to change uses from commercial property and shops to homes. A radical change of Planning Use classes came into effect on 1st September :-

https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use Use classes A, B1 and D are revoked and replaced with changed new classes E and F with a changed “Sui Generis” group. The “Standard Method” formula for calculating “Local Housing Need” has been radically changed. It will now use the most recent ONS household projections (presently those on the 2018 base) but these will also be subject to uplifts according to the median house-price earnings ratio and how that have increased in the Local Planning authority over the past 10 years. These latter uplifts provide a very strong uplift in areas with high house prices – like the South East. In the rare event such as in Oxford City where household projections actually fall there is a default based on a percentage of the housing stock – but this is still subject to uplifts for the earnings ratio. Under the old method the figure for SODC would have been 608 per annum (using the ONS 2014- base household projections). Using the more current 2018 base household projections that would have fallen to 522 per annum. But the new formula forces that up to 723 (whilst using the 2018 base household projections). This great increase is because of the uplift factor for the earnings ratio. In future – as the effects of the Local Plan 2035 cut in and vastly increase the SODC household numbers then this figure is likely to go sharply higher yet. It is questionable whether such increased housing will in fact reduce house prices in this district; rather they are simply likely to attract more people moving out of the infinite demand represented by London. So it would appear that the new formula will dramatically increase development in South Oxfordshire in future.

District finance

The government have announced further support for local government as regards certain types of losses of income. They will not compensate for lost commercial or investment income. However, they will make a contribution to other losses. For such 5% of loss is disregarded and then the government will compensate 75% of the rest. This, together with other compensation for Covidrelated costs, has helped to staunch district losses. However there remain risks to come in autumn/winter.

Car parking charges

After a very long period without increase (2007 and some minor changes in 2012) the charges in SODC car parks are set to increase by 20p for 2 and three hours. From February 2021, to give 1 hour’s free parking in Henley - in line with other SODC car parks in other towns and to start charging on a Sunday. Leigh Rawlins

Leigh Rawlins
District Councillor