

EYE & DUNSDEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Virtual Meeting held on October 20th 2020 at 7.45pm on Skype

Present Cllrs Richard Berkley, David Woodward, Clive Leeke, David Bartholomew (OCC + SODC) and Leigh Rawlins (SODC)

132/20 Apologies for absence Naomi Baylis, Ian Pringle.

133/20 Declarations of interest None

134/20 Minutes of the last meeting The minutes from the virtual meeting on Tuesday 15th September were adopted. Adoption was proposed by Richard Berkley and seconded by Clive Leeke. All agreed.

135/20 Matters arising from the minutes,

124/20 The work at Mill Farm Yard continues to cause concern with sound nuisance. According to a local resident, SODC have accepted that the third unit and an extension to the main building were incorrectly allowed under permitted development and a full planning application is expected.

127.01/20 The phone box floor will be fitted and leaflet boxes will be affixed ASAP.

(Cllrs Woodward and Berkley to action)

127.02/20 The slippery steps from footpaths leading down to the A4155 opposite the Flowing Spring have now been cleared and visibility is much improved.

127.03/20 The replacement bus shelter is now erected with new hardstanding opposite and the notice board in the shelter was put back by the contractor. Richard Berkley was thanked for overseeing the work.

136/20 County Councillor's report Cllr Bartholomew's report will be attached to the minutes. On local matters he reported that, after yet another accident on the B478, OCC had added fluorescence to the chevrons and more Vergemaster posts were installed.

Richard Berkley expressed concern about the misuse of the road layout at the Caversham Park traffic lights. Cllr Bartholomew had previously had a traffic officer look at this issue but the report stated that the layout was satisfactory so there was nothing to be done at present without specific evidence.

137/20 District Councillor's Report Cllr Rawlins briefly introduced aspects of his report. His full report is attached to these minutes. A brief discussion about the Govt. proposed planning changes took place and Cllr Rawlins stressed the importance of responses.

The many concerns about application P20/S3501/FUL were discussed and a copy of the PC response is to be copied to Cllr Rawlins.

138/20 Public Question Time/Correspondence No public presence or correspondence.

139/20 Financial Position

139.01/20 The financial situation had been previously circulated.

139.02/20 The October accounts were presented for payment. Invoices to the value of 10,619.31 (including the invoice for the new bus shelter) were agreed. David Woodward proposed the accounts be paid. This was seconded by Richard Berkley. All agreed. **(Clerk to action)**

139.03/20 The Clerk salary was reviewed in the light of clerk scale changes. The Clerk was moved to Scale 25. The Clerk expressed her thanks. Budgetary implications will be investigated.

(Clerk to action)

140/20 Planning Matters

a) Consultation on Govt planning changes. David Woodward will make some notes on the consultation and send to Councillors for further comments. The response is to be made by October 29th. **(Clerk to action)**

b) Reading Golf Club application. This consultation has now closed but there was a substantial response from local people.

c) Noise from Isis Water Ski Club. Loud music is being played often by noisy water-ski boats including on Sunday afternoons. This is causing a nuisance to local residents in both Playhatch and Sonning Eye. The Clerk was asked to contact the Club to let them know of

the concern before SODC is contacted. **(Clerk to action)**

New Applications

P20/S3501/FUL Change of use of an established lake for recreational and sports purposes
North Lake Caversham Lakes Henley Road near Reading RG4 9RA

The work that has already taken place at this site prior to the application being submitted has caused much local concern. A response to this application will be made. **(Richard Berkley & Councillors & Clerk to action)**

Applications Granted

141/20 Eye & Dunsden Village Hall

The Hall is running a few exercise classes but is quiet. The fireworks evening and Christmas fair have been cancelled due to Covid. There have been some enquiries about future weddings.

142/20 Neighbourhood Development Plan

142.01/20 David Woodward proposed that the terms of Reference of the NDP Steering Group were adopted by the Parish Council. The proposal was seconded by Richard Berkley.

142.02/20 All current grants requested are either paid or in process of being paid.

142.03/20 The draft landscape appraisal, part of the evidence to be collected, has been received and is being reviewed. All councillors invited to comment.

143/20 Highways, Footpaths & Open Spaces

143.01/20 The markings that have appeared on Furleigh Path are probably made by Openreach.

143.02/20 The Remembrance service is to take place on Dunsden Green this year. David Woodward will lay the wreath. **(Clerk to action)**

143.03/20 The permissive path at Caversham Lakes is still blocked. The Clerk was asked to check again with Open Spaces for advice on working with landowners of turning such paths into rights of way. **(Clerk to action)**

144/20 Allotments The Clerk reported that all plots at both allotments were tenanted and rents paid. An up to date plan will be sent to Richard Berkley. **(Clerk to action)**

The trees at the rear of the allotments at Spring lane need cutting back. A contractor will be sought. **(Clerk and Chairman to action)**

Richard Berkley has been offered some barrels that could be used on the allotments. **(Clerk to investigate at Spring Lane)**

145/20 Community Orchard Nothing to report at present

146/20 Minerals/Liaison Group A meeting took place on October 1st. Chairman commented that a map of the permissive paths was promised but as yet not delivered. He was hoping to arrange a meeting to discuss treatment of Himalayan Balsam.

The PC is concerned about the work that has taken place at the Caversham Swimming Lake without permission. A meeting is to be arranged between Savills, Tarmac and the Cosmonaut Leisure Company.

147/20 Standing Orders These have been read and need some amendment for E&DPC. The Chairman has made a start and the Clerk will continue to look at this and ask OALC about the inclusion of byelaws. **(Clerk to action)**

148/20 Matters for future consideration website, flood alleviation scheme, swimming centre

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

Date of next meeting: November 17th 2020

REPORT TO EYE & DUNSDEN PARISH COUNCIL OCT 2020

FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

OXFORD EDGES TOWARDS A RED ALERT AS CORONAVIRUS CASES DOUBLE

Residents are being urged to be extra vigilant to avoid local control measures as Oxford sees a sharp rise in coronavirus cases. The latest figures for the city show a doubling of cases to a rate of 43.9 per 100,000 of the population – putting the city on amber alert but edging closer to a red alert level. Oxfordshire as a whole is currently on yellow alert, with cases at 18.1 per 100,000.

The cases are across all parts of the city, with the majority among 18-24-year-olds and cases per 100,000 are now at their highest level in Oxford since May. Ansaf Azhar, Oxfordshire County Council's Director for Public Health, said: "My plea is a simple one – keep your distance, wash your hands, wear a mask, and ensure you are adhering to the rule of six."

RETURN TO SCHOOL AND COVID-19: PARENTS, PUPILS AND TEACHERS PRAISED

Parents, carers, pupils, teachers and school support staff are being praised by OCC's public health and education teams for their commitment to ensuring a safe return to classroom education, despite the continued national challenges of COVID-19. Pupil attendance in all Oxfordshire schools is currently significantly higher than the national average: For Oxfordshire maintained schools, at the end of September, it was 93.3% compared to 88.7% across England.

Schools are working hard to carefully manage their COVID-19 safety measures. They are regularly communicating details to parents, carers and pupils by letter, social media and online virtual meetings giving parents confidence to return their children to the classroom, maintain attendance, and enhance their children's wellbeing. Head teachers and members of the Council's public health and education teams have put in place robust processes so that schools, colleges and early years settings can respond quickly and appropriately to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

OXFORDSHIRE TO RE-OPEN MORE LIBRARIES

More Oxfordshire libraries opened on 28th and 29th September and work progresses for more to open in early October. The changes mean that Sonning Common, Faringdon, Watlington and Goring libraries have now reopened and work is progressing for, Chinnor, Woodgreen, Charlbury and Wychwood libraries to be open early October. OCC has previously successfully reopened 20 libraries including Abingdon, Banbury, Berinsfield, Bicester, Blackbird Leys, Carterton, Chipping Norton, Cowley, Didcot, Eynsham, Headington, Henley, Kidlington, Summertown, Thame, Wallingford, Wantage, Woodstock, Witney and the Oxfordshire County Library in the Westgate Centre. Please check Oxfordshire Libraries website for the current opening hours as they may not be the same as pre-Covid-19 and may be subject to change.

'YOU CAN ADOPT' CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES IN OXFORDSHIRE

Oxfordshire is playing a key role in the national #YouCanAdopt campaign, which explores what the adoption process involves and highlights the need for more adopters. Since early April, there has been a 14% increase in enquiries to adopt with Adopt Thames Valley. However, considerable delays to court processes due to COVID-19 means there will be many more children who will need adopting come the autumn. Oxfordshire desperately needs more adopters from across its diverse communities, who can offer children a permanent safe and loving home. The adoption process has evolved over the last few years; it is simpler and quicker than it has been previously and there is a lot more support available. To find out more visit www.adoptthamesvalley.co.uk

SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR EYE & DUNSDEN

SONNING QUARRY LIAISON COMMITTEE

A virtual meeting was held Thursday 1st October. Minutes were circulated on Tuesday 6th.

B478 ACCIDENT BLACKSPOT

Despite the surface retexturing there had been another accident. As a result, OCC has now replaced 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 has also provided an additional chevron assembly and a couple more Vergemaster posts at the apex of the bend.

SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR EYE & DUNSDEN

Nothing to report.

SODC WARD COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – EYE & DUNSDEN – 20TH OCTOBER 2020

Covid-19

Covid cases are now showing strong resurgence and impacts have been seen in Oxford and Reading. For now the south of England is faring better than the north, but there is no space for complacency. The government have today announced a new 3 tier approach to local restrictions. Powers have been devolved to allow more local council input to track, trace and enforcement. SODC has adopted these and will work with the County council and others in a common endeavour. These powers are in place to enable response as local circumstances may develop. SODC is involved in the financial measures announced for support to businesses and individuals affected by local lockdowns.

Local Plan 2035

The closing date for responses to the main modifications consultation is 2nd November.

Planning White Paper consultation

The first stage on shorter-term changes being the :- • Standard Method • First Homes (taken from affordable housing provision) • 'Temporarily' raising the affordable housing threshold from 10 to 40 or 50, and • Extending the Permission in Principle system to Major developments (10+ homes) Closed on the 1st of October. The consultation on the second much more radical stage closes on 29th October.

Determination of Planning applications in SODC

Earlier in the year SODC adopted changes to the routing of planning applications to help deal with the exceptional Covid situation, the refusal of the secretary of state to make any allowances in deadlines, and the backlog caused during lockdown. It was intended to review this system in October. However the present reality is that there remains a backlog of 70 applications for planning committee and it is the case that, despite best endeavours, the virtual meetings are only able to clear about 4 cases per meeting. Under these circumstances and with the current Covid situation not looking promising SODC's council agreed to extend a changed and temporary approach into 2021, to be reviewed no later than 31st July 2021, but hopefully sooner. There are some small changes to the revised approach. The most significant being that if a district councillor calls in an application (and does not withdraw it, if subsequently satisfied by advice, changes or conditions imposed) then it will automatically go to committee without any other triage or review. So under this system, objections by a town or parish to a Minor application (1-9 homes) would not send it to committee – unless supported by a district councillor call-in. (This was always the case for small "Other" applications (incl householder ones). Major applications and large-scale major applications will continue as previously (that is Major ones (10+ homes) go to committee if contrary to the town or parish view, and large-scale majors (200+ homes) go automatically anyway. It is regrettable that this extension is necessary, but given the intransigence (yet again) of the secretary of State it is the only option to avoid undue Appeal costs and at the extreme special measures arising from non-determinations.

District finance – revised budget

SODC has agreed a revised budget for 2020/21 with an increase in the budgeted deficit of £1.1 million. This mostly arises from covid-19 but also from some other unavoidable costs. Given the stretch on staffing during Covid – with the situation becoming more threatening – there is very limited scope to make offsetting savings. Reserves are held against such rare "rainy day" exceptions and they will be used accordingly in this year. Of course, the situation for the autumn/winter part of the year until March 2021 remains uncertain with the current Covid risks. The revised budget is based on best estimates of what is known so far, but is based on the assumption of mild conditions; it does not seek to cover the risk of more extreme scenarios.

Corporate Plan

SODC has adopted the new Corporate Plan. It enjoyed the largest and most positive response ever known for one of these in South Oxfordshire. Details of work programmes and measures will now be refined.

Council constitution

SODC's council has reviewed its constitution and agreed a number of practical changes. Amongst these – via an amendment in council – it was agreed to let district councillors on the Planning Committee to debate and vote on applications in their own ward. I opposed that change since it could open up scope for challenges to decisions and to the extent that councillors might be more sympathetic to cases from their ward might introduce less confidence in the fairness of decisions.

Motions

SODC's council heard and supported motions on Neighbourhood Plans, action on foul river pollution, action in favour of diversity and contrary to ethnic discrimination and finally, action to improve the Cornerstone arts and cultural centre.

Council offices

SODC's cabinet has reviewed options for its new council offices in the wake of Covid and changed patterns of home-working. Council staff have indicated that they believe patterns of home-working are efficient and will endure. In the light of this – and together with Vale of White Horse council (who share offices and staffing with SODC) – the decision in principle has been made to progress new offices at the Didcot Gateway site. The Didcot site is opposite the railway station and the offices will be on council-owned land. Other options will now be considered for the previous office site at Crowmarsh, where there was a fire caused by arson in January 2015. The current offices in Milton Park are extremely expensive and there are sound financial benefits from moving back to owned offices. Accordingly, the intent is to move forward at pace.

Leigh Rawlins

District Councillor