

HARPSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held at Harpsden Village Hall

on
Monday 16th July 2012

Present:	Mr Kester George (KG)	Chairman
	Mrs Odette Moss (OM)	
	Mr Malcolm Plews (MP)	
	Mrs Karen Tross Youle (KTY)	
	Mr Robin Dorkings (RD)	
	Dr Peter Skolar (PS)	County Councillor
	Mr Rob Simister (RS)	SODC Councillor
	Mr Barry Wood (BW)	Chairman of United!
In attendance:	Mrs Sarah Tipple (ST)	Clerk

2287 Welcomes and apologies: KG welcomed Councillors to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to RD, who he was hoping would be willing to be coopted onto the Council. There were no apologies.

2288 Declarations of interests: KG, OM, RD, PS, RS in respect of their houses in Harpsden and KTY in respect of her house and adjoining field in Harpsden.

2289 Discussion with Barry Wood (BW) of United!

BW explained that United! had held its first meeting in March 2012 and that 68 households had joined the organisation, all of whom had paid a £20 membership fee. United! had a committee and a constitution, which stated that the organisation's purpose was to seek the best outcome for the whole Henley area. United! advocated the establishment of a Henley Area Development Group comprising representatives from local parishes, local businesses, the clergy, Henley Historical Society, the Town and District Councils, and other volunteers. This group would work cooperatively to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for Henley, with 'Henley' being defined as a circle whose radius was 7km from Market Place, which would be fit for a referendum by 2014. BW had recently met John Howell MP, who had stated that the Henley Area referred to in the Core Strategy was ill-defined and needed clarification. BW cited the five areas which had already been mentioned as potential development sites, four of which had huge implications for the Harpsden side of Henley, for example the already over-subscribed schools and the problems associated with more traffic along Gillotts Lane. BW was of the opinion that Harpsden Parish Council, the residents of Harpsden and United! had joint purpose and interests and invited Harpsden Parish Council to join his group. He thought that a joint Neighbourhood Plan could offer Harpsden greater protection than if Harpsden decided to produce its own and that Harpsden could still opt out of the plan at any time in the development process or indeed prior to a referendum taking place. KG thanked BW for his report and invited questions from Councillors. KG asked why SODC were under the compulsion to build all these extra houses, and BW explained that it was a Central Government directive and SODC had to feed Central Government requirements into its own Core Strategy. BW mentioned that 44 houses would be built at the redeveloped Townlands Hospital site, which left 356 sites to find, most of which in his opinion, could be located in the town itself, some on greenfield sites, some on brownfield and some as a result of moving businesses and infrastructure around: the Youth Centre, the BT works and the allotments were among those he mentioned. He

also suggested that extending housing along the Marlow Road by perhaps moving the Rugby Club elsewhere, might alleviate some of the problems with oversubscribed schools as children from the Marlow Road would fall into the catchment area for the currently undersubscribed Badgemore School. United! had produced a plan with suggestions for development sites within the town itself and would put this in the public domain in due course. KG reiterated his proposal of moving infrastructure and businesses out of Henley to the Highlands Farm site in order to make room for houses in Henley itself. If Highlands Farm were to be developed, PS was of the opinion that OCC might be amenable to the issue of Gillotts Lane becoming one-way. RS reported that the Harpsden sites already under discussion were only 'suggested' sites and it was by no means set in stone that they would be used; the figure of 400, however, was a definitive one. PS cited Henley's high pollution levels as being of major concern, although building additional houses in the centre of Henley might mean less use of residents' cars, hence less of a potential increase in overall pollution. KTY enquired about the nature of the relationship between United! and Henley Town Council (HTC). BW explained that United! should be considered as a think-tank, not as a pressure group and that HTC had welcomed United!'s opinions so far. He further commented that Henley's Neighbourhood Plan was currently being led by Councillors Will Hamilton, David Nimmo-Smith, Martin Akehurst and Dieter Hinke. PS and RS were of the opinion that Harpsden should draw up its own Neighbourhood Plan and had been reassured by John Howell MP that it should not be a costly procedure. RS was concerned that if Harpsden joined Henley's Neighbourhood Plan and opted out of it at the referendum stage, Harpsden could still remain vulnerable. He also went on to explain that a Neighbourhood Plan was by no means a complete safeguard: a Neighbourhood Plan would serve as a guidance document for SODC, but it would never undermine its ultimate authority.

BW thanked the Parish Council for the opportunity to attend its meeting and left at 8.30pm.

During discussions that followed BW's departure, it was generally agreed that United! and Harpsden shared many concerns. OM reported that at a recent meeting with senior planners at SODC, she had been reassured that Harpsden's status as small village offered it protection from development, although she reiterated her opinion that Harpsden should form its own Neighbourhood Plan as the Core Strategy was due to be finalised sometime in September. This was an opinion shared by John Howell MP. KTY was concerned that a Neighbourhood Plan could never be a definitive document because so much of it relied on whether or not local landowners were willing to sell, but RS said that a Neighbourhood Plan would give some idea of what the community as a whole wanted. He also mentioned that several villages in South Oxfordshire had been given or had applied for help in drawing up a Neighbourhood Plan and he would chase John Howell MP for his list of resources and weblinks which might be of use to Harpsden. PS mentioned that the Big Society Fund might be able to offer financial assistance to the funding of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Action: RS to ask John Howell to send him his list of resources available to Harpsden to help it draw up a Neighbourhood Plan.

Action: PS to check if local Neighbourhood Plans can be funded from the Big Society Fund.

In conclusion it was agreed that Harpsden would not join United! at the moment but would stay in touch, mainly through KTY's attendance at its meetings.

2290 Minutes of 18th June 2012: The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.

2291 Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

2292 Oxfordshire County Councillor's Report

2292.1: The proposed new Police Commissioner had not been elected because he had been involved in a snowball fight in his youth which had been considered a 'prisonable offence'.

2292.2: PS's Area Stewards Fund would be funding temporary experimental parking restrictions in Shiplake to alleviate the traffic problems caused by commuters parking along Station Road. A review would take place after six months and Shiplake Parish Council would be consulted.

2292.3: Plans for the new Townlands hospital development had still not been submitted to SODC for approval.

2293 Highways and Footpaths:

2293.1: Approval had been given to clean local road signs and cut back foliage. PS needed a list of signs that needed attention in Harpsden.

2293.2: PS would pass any pothole complaints to the relevant department in OCC.

2294 South Oxfordshire District Councillor's Report

2294.1: SODC had recently won an award in recognition of being one of the most efficient councils in the country for sharing services, such as waste disposal and planning.

2294.2: In the event of any development taking place in Harpsden, RS urged Councillors to keep in mind the new 'Community Infrastructure Levy' (CIL) which had replaced section 106. This meant that a proportion of the cost of any new infrastructure had to be paid by the developer to SODC and this money could be spent in the local community.

2295 Planning Matters

2295.1 SODC Decisions

Ref: P11/E2116 Lower Bolney Farm, Shiplake, RG9 3NN. Replacement polo stables, tack, hay and feed storage and associated permanent workers' accommodation and landscaping. GRANTED.

Ref: P11/S0096 Harpsden Court, Harpsden, RG9 4AX. Replacement of all rotted timber in the east facing section of bay window and restoration of the Crittal metal glazing frames and casements. Refitting in new hardwood window frames to match original sections and details. GRANTED.

Ref: P12/S0654 1 Gillotts Hill, Harpsden RG9 4HP. Demolition of five garages to create additional parking. Reconfiguration of area south of garages with associated works. GRANTED.

Ref: P12/S0746/FUL The Lodge, Gillotts School, Gillotts Lane, RG9 1PS. Change of use of former caretaker's house to education use. GRANTED.

2295.2 Outstanding Applications

Ref: P12/S0464 Beechwood Cottage, Harpsden Woods, RG9 4AF. Extension of time for implementation for planning permission P08/E1213. NO OBJECTION.

Ref: P12/S0968 Perseverance Farm, Mays Green, Harpsden RG9 4AP. Proposed alterations to existing barn and part change of use to form a plant room for approved swimming pool and a garden room incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house. NO OBJECTION.

Ref: P12/S0897 Walton House, Northfield Avenue, Lower Shiplake, RG9 3PD. Erection of single garage. NO OBJECTION.

It was noted that the Cricket Club's application to move the cricket square further away from the road was still outstanding. MP reported that at approximately 3.30pm on Sunday 8th July 2012, a cricket ball had smashed the windscreen of the car parked next

to him, while the driver was in the car. It was agreed that the health and safety concerns arising from flying cricket balls made the Cricket Club's application even more pressing.

2296 Financial Matters

2296.1 Balances as at 16th July 20

Community Account: £0.00 Business Saver Account: £4,636.35

2296.2 Approval of Payments

ST tabled the following payments for approval

Chiltern Society Subscription	£25.00
JNP Associates – Internal Audit	£90.00

ST explained that whenever the Parish Council was considering making payments it had to be aware of the powers under which it intended to make those payments. She further explained that Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 allowed a local Council to spend a limited amount on activities for which it did not have a specific power, but which the authority considered 'would bring direct benefit to the area, or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants'. The amount in 2012-13 was set at £6.80 per elector and with 421 registered electors in Harpsden, the total permissible Section 137 expenditure in the current financial year amounted to £2,862.80. It was considered that the subscription to the Chiltern Society was an item of expenditure covered by Section 137 as the Chiltern Society was able to offer valuable advice on planning matters. This needed to be approved by special resolution: MP proposed approving the Section 137 expenditure and OM seconded it. The payment to JNP Associates for its internal audit was also approved.

2296.3 Bank Reconciliations

ST had previously circulated the bank reconciliations for the Community and Business Saver Accounts and these were approved by the Council. These are attached to the minutes as Appendix 1 and 2.

2296.4 Budget vs Actual Expenditure

Following a recommendation by the internal auditor, ST had produced a document comparing the accumulated expenditure with budget. The document also stated the permitted Section 137 expenditure of £2,862.80 and it was agreed that the donation to the Harpsden Fete in recognition of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee should also be a Section 137 expenditure although no resolution was passed at the time. Actual expenditure currently stood at £1,611.93 against the total annual budget of £5,637.00. The document is attached to the minutes as Appendix 3.

2297 Approval of Internal Auditor's Report and Recommendations

ST had previously circulated the internal auditor's report and recommendations and reassured the Council that action would be taken before the end of the current financial year to comply with the recommendations. She mentioned that Jean Nunn-Price had been very helpful, thorough and had been a pleasure to deal with. The report was approved.

2298 New Register of Interests' Forms Councillors submitted their signed forms to ST and she would send them to Legal and Democratic Services at SODC. The Councillors stated that they had all read the new Standards Document.

2299 AOB

2299.1 KG had received a complaint from Richard Bossons, who had traditionally cut the grass at Hunts Green that Mr Munson had decided to mow it himself this year, but this was before some of the wild flowers had finished blooming. Hunts Green constituted part of the Manorial Waste (ie land left over when the rest of the Harpsden Court Estate was sold in the 19th and 20th centuries) to which Harpsden Parish Council had laid claim in accordance with a Government directive some ten or more years ago. It was agreed

that KG should write a carefully worded letter to Mr Munson explaining that the arrangement was for Mr Bossons to mow the grass at a time which allowed the wild flowers to flourish the following year, but that if Mr Munson was concerned about the length of the grass, he should contact ST.

2299.2 KG explained that Darryl Grant had withdrawn from the Council because of work commitments but he wanted to remain as a consultant if needed. He had recommended that Mr Robin Dorkings should be considered for co-option.

2300 The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 17th September 2012 at 7.45pm in the Committee Room of Harpsden Village Hall.

Approved:.....
Kester George, Chairman

Date: