

HARPSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at Harpsden Village Hall

on

Monday 9th March 2015

Present: Cllr Kester George (KG) Chairman
Cllr Malcolm Plews (MP)
Cllr Robin Dorkings (RD)
Cllr Tony Wright (TW)
Cllr Rob Simister (RS) SODC Councillor
Cllr David Bartholomew (DB) OCC Councillor
Mr Ed Chamberlain (EC) Parishioner

In attendance: Mrs Sarah Tipple (ST) Clerk

2521 Welcomes and apologies: There were no apologies.

2522 Croft Cottage Planning Application: KG had received an email from the owner of The Old Laundry in Harpsden, Mr Andre Jolly in which he had questioned the Council's decision-making process regarding its objection to the planning application at Croft Cottage. KG replied as follows: *Andre Jolly's critique seems to me to be based on several misunderstandings. In the first place "scale and bulk resulting in loss of light" is of course one of the official criteria for judging new planning applications and, as Andre implies, is indeed a very difficult one for amateurs to measure. In this instance all members agreed that there was some force in the point and a majority felt that there was enough to justify referring the decision to the full SODC Planning Committee. To help the Committee we also suggested that the objector got a professional to measure the potential loss of light. Recognising that any such reference imposes some strain on neighbourly relations within a small village, we then went out of our way to see if we could suggest an alternative plan that would please both applicant and objector. Despite our best efforts, we could not find one and this, I suggest, is the only sadness about the matter. Accusations of cronyism are without foundation and the Minutes of our January meeting have been implemented without alteration. In summary, we did our best for both applicant and objector within the powers available to us; and as provided for in the planning rules, the decision will now be made by the SODC as the relevant planning authority.*

Although this reply met with unanimous support from the Council, Ed Chamberlain (EC), the owner of Croft Cottage, expressed his disappointment that he had not been made aware of the Council's discussion of his application and been able to explain and justify it further. He wondered if future applicants might be contacted in advance of a decision to lodge an objection. KG explained that he had indeed advised EC at some length by phone and Ed had been left in no doubt either by the objector or by the Council that neither considered his application straightforward. In these circumstances the planning system provided for the application to go to the SODC as the Planning Authority and it would be for their planning committee to decide if his application should be accepted as it stood, subject to some modification, or not at all. Parish councils had no power to dismiss objections unless they saw no merit in them and even then the objector could appeal to the Planning Authority. In short there was no way in which a planning application could go through without agreement or proper procedure and in this instance proper procedure had been followed throughout.

- 2523 Declaration of pecuniary interests and/or requests for dispensations from Members regarding any item on this agenda:** KG, TW and RS in respect of their houses and gardens in the parish. There were no requests for dispensations.
- 2524 Minutes of 19th January 2015:** The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.
- 2525 Matters arising:** There were no matters arising.
- 2526 South Oxfordshire District Councillor's Report:** The disaster recovery operation following the devastating fire at SODC's offices had been very successful but the Council was still finalising where the offices would be located in the short term. The planning department was currently operating out of one of the Howbery Business Park buildings. Regrettably RS would no longer be representing Harpsden from May and Harpsden would be represented by either Cllr Martin Akehurst or Cllr Paul Harrison. KG thanked RS for all his support for the Parish Council during his tenure and wished him well in his new post.
- 2527 Oxfordshire County Councillor's Report:** DB's full report is attached to these minutes at Appendix 1. DB urged the Parish Council to respond to the consultation on Connecting Oxfordshire, the County's new local transport plan, as the plan did not, in his opinion, have sufficient relevance to the Henley area. The transport study commissioned by Henley Town Council as part of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) process, was independent of the County's plan. In matters specific to Harpsden DB had expressed his dissatisfaction with OCC's approach to the Thames Farm appeal and had arranged a meeting between Tudor Taylor, Chairman of Shiplake Parish Council, KG, TW, Sue Scane, OCC's Director for the Environment and the Economy and Bev Hindle, the Deputy Director for Strategy and Infrastructure Planning, with the objective of improving consultation and communication in the future.
- 2528 Highways and Footpaths:** DB had received a request from OCC's Rights of Way Officer for his views on diverting Harpsden Footpath 23. KG explained that the existing path was very narrow, so the proposal to provide a wider path that would cut across an adjacent field would be a clear improvement and he was therefore happy to commend the proposed change of route.
- 2529 Extension of AONB:** John Howell MP had agreed to support the application to extend the AONB by directing it to the correct government department.
- 2530 Neighbourhood Plan (NP)**
The second draft of the NP had been published and was currently out for public consultation, although the transport study, commissioned by Henley Town Council, would not be finished in time to be included in the NP.
- 2531 Timetable for May Elections:** ST distributed to Councillors a timetable of the main statutory dates for the May elections, and pointed out that the deadline for submission of nomination papers to Abingdon was Thursday 9th April. More information would follow.
- 2532 Review of Risk Assessment and Review of Financial and Non-Financial Controls:** ST had previously circulated this document and highlighted the main changes and actions since its approval and adoption in November 2012 and its review in March 2014. KG proposed approving the review, which was seconded by MP. After a unanimous show of hands it was resolved to approve the Review document.
- 2533 Planning Matters**
2533.i SODC Decisions

P14/S3899/HH

Bolney Court, Bolney Road, RG9 3NR

Removal of existing four bay garage. Creation of new 4 bed garage building with recreation space to the room above.

PERMISSION GRANTED

P14/S3888/FUL

Pumping Station, Bolney Road, RG9 3NZ
Installation of a pumping kiosk as part of an upgrade scheme
PERMISSION GRANTED

2533.ii Outstanding Applications and Appeals:

APP/Q3115/A/14/2217931

Thames Farm, Reading Road, Shiplake, RG9 3PH
Outline application for up to 110 dwellings

P14/S3909/HH

Croft Cottage, Chalk Hill, RG9 4HN
Raising of roof and erection of front canopies. Demolition of existing annexe and replacing with two storey annexe with single storey link to dwelling.
Despite some changes to the original plan, Councillors still felt that the modifications would deprive a neighbouring property of a significant amount of light and had objected to the plans.

P14/S4032/HH

Yew Tree Cottage, Harpsden Bottom, RG9 4HS
Erection of a single storey rear extension
Following a site visit Councillors had no objection to the plans.

Pre-Submission Consultation

Richard Bossons from Hunts Green Barn had sought KG's advice at the pre-planning stage for a wooden shed he wanted to build in his garden. As it would not be visible from the road or the neighbouring property KG could see no reason to object and advised him to put in a formal application.

2534 Financial Matters

2534.i Bank Balances and Reconciliations

Community Account: £500.00
(OCC grant for defibrillator box still to be transferred to the John Hodges Trust)
Business Saver Account: £2,907.56
ST had previously circulated by email the bank reconciliations for two months to 19th February 2015 for the Community Account and one month to 19th January for the Business Saver Account and both were now approved by Councillors and signed by the Chairman. They are attached to the minutes at Appendix 2 and 3.

2534.ii Approval of Payments

ST tabled the following payments for approval:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Power</u>
John Hodges Trust – transfer of OCC grant for defibrillator box	£500.00	
Clerk's salary and expenses	£676.25	
Clerk's PAYE	£165.00	

The payments were authorised by a resolution of the Council and signed by the Chairman and are attached at Appendix 4.

2534.iii Budget vs Actual Expenditure: This was circulated by ST and approved by Council and is attached to these minutes at Appendix 5.

2535 Plans for APM: It was agreed that KG would invite Dieter Hinke, Chair of the NP Governance Committee, to speak at the Council's APM in April.

2536 AOB ST circulated to Councillors the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule which was now out for consultation.

2537 Dates of next meetings:

Annual Parish Meeting (APM): TBC once Dieter Hinke's availability had been confirmed

Monday 18th May 2015 7.30pm

Monday 20th July 2015 7.30pm

Monday 21st September 2015 7.30pm

Monday 16th November 2015 7.30pm

Approved:..... Date: 18th May 2015

Kester George, Chairman