



## **Minutes**

### **Botley & North Hinksey Parish Council Meeting**

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**Meeting commenced:** 19:31

**Councillors present:** (11)

Berrett (Chair)	Kay	Johnson	Keily	Gholami-Babaahmady	Barnes
Rankin	Davis	MacKeith	Spooner	Dowie	

**Others present:** Emma Gordon (Clerk) Members of the public x2, Alice Handscomb Retallack. (RFO)

**On zoom:** Cllr Judy Roberts.

**24/01: Apologies for Absence.** Cllr Bastin (at a conference)

**24/02: Declarations of Interest.**

Cllr Dowie declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as an allotment holder with reference to item 24/13.

**24/03: Approval of Draft Minutes of the - Parish Council Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

*Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Kay:* To approve the December Minutes. **Agreed** [unanimous]

**24/04: Matters raised by Members of the Public.** (Max 5 mins / question, 15 mins total)

Mr Dowie as a member of the public posed a question to the Clerk with regards to the inspection date of the 2nd February. The Clerk responded to this and his follow up questions by explaining the process behind setting the date. Mr Dowie was dissatisfied with her answers but the chair moved the meeting on.

**24/05: Questions from Councillors.** (Max 5 mins / question, 15 mins total) None.

**24/06: Reports from County & District Councillors.** (10 minutes) (District Council Report Jan24)

Cllr Judy Roberts informed the meeting that there was a £9m deficit to be solved in the county budget. She updated on the flooding, Botley Interchange and Thames Water (TW) bridge works and confirmed that Cllr Pressel and herself were following up with TW on their plans for the temporary bus shelter. **Cllr Roberts agreed to** enquire if Cllr MacKeith could attend the site visit with TW. **Clerk to** share county report with BNHPC councillors.

**24/07: Review of Action Sheet.** (Paper 1\_Action Sheet Jan24) Reviewed, two amendments proposed.

**24/08: Clerk's Report.** (Paper 2\_Clerk's Report Jan24) **Clerk to** present a quote for child defibrillator pads for Upper Louie Memorial Playing Fields at next Council meeting. A discussion followed around the need for litter picking at the Nature Reserve, which is potentially an issue for the R&A or resilience group to pick up.

**24/09: Council Motions:** To be agreed

#### **Motion 1.**

**Proposal by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Berrett:** Council agrees to update BNHPC's Standing Orders with immediate effect by inserting the following wording between 4d items vii and viii:

"The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council, ex-officio, shall be voting members of every Committee, every sub-committee and advisory committee (working group). The Chair of each committee, ex-officio, shall be a voting member of every Committee as well as a voting member of any sub-committee and advisory committee (working group) reporting to the committee that they chair."

Some discussion was had on the issue and concerns raised. There was confusion over the practicality and legality of the motion.

Cllr Gholami-Babaahmady arrives: 20:03



*Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Church:* To defer this to the next Full Council Meeting

**Cllr Rankin to share** the advice from OALC regarding the motion, and follow up conversation to happen with all councillors cc'd in.

**Motion 2.**

**Proposal by Cllr MacKeith, seconded by Cllr Jones:** That the Council authorize the Clerk to submit an appropriate Skatepark funding bid to the Police Community Fund before 29th January.

There was some discussion on this item. It was recommended not to go for more than £5k and that there are several rounds that could be applied for.

*Amendment proposed by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Church:* To remove "before the 29th of Jan" and to add "focussing on elements that can help to reduce crime."

Named vote requested by Cllr Dowie: **Agreed** [For: (8) Kay, Barnes, Keily, Rankin, Berrett, Church, MacKeith and Johnson / Against: (2) Dowie and Davis / Abstentions: (2) Spooner and Gholami-Babaahmady]

**Vote on substantive motion** - Named vote requested by Cllr Dowie: **Agreed** [For: (8) Kay, Barnes, Keily, Rankin, Berrett, Church, MacKeith and Johnson / Against: (2) Dowie and Davis / Abstentions: (2) Spooner and Gholami-Babaahmady]

**24/10: Finance:**

a) **To note RFO Report from the F&GP meeting.** (RFO Report Jan24) **Noted.**

b) **To approve Quarter 3 financial reports.** (Q3 Reserves balance 23-24 and Q3 Budget Summary 23-24)

*Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Kay:* To approve the reports. **Agreed** [unanimous]

c) **To agree 2024-25 Budget and precept request.** (Draft Budget 24-25 and Proposed Precept 24-25)

Some discussion on the issue and clarification questions answered.

*Proposal by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr MacKeith:* To agree the budget.

Named vote requested by Cllr Dowie. **Passed.** [10 For / 1 Against Cllr Dowie]

*Proposal by Cllr Rankin, seconded by Cllr Kay:* To agree the precept amount and submit this to the District Council. Named vote requested by Cllr Dowie. **Passed.** [10 For / 1 Against Cllr Dowie]

d) **To review and approve the Orders of Payment.** (OOP Jan24)

RFO advised that All in One Room expenditure should be coded to "event" line and Defibrillators expenditure to "contingency" line.

*Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Church:* To approve the Orders of Payments. **Agreed** [unanimous]

e) **Equals cards** - To authorise the RFO to top up the two expenditure cards to a limit of £500 each month.

*Proposal by Cllr Rankin, seconded by Cllr Barnes:* To agree for RFO to do this. **Agreed** [unanimous]

**24/11: Annual Parish Newsletter:**

a) **To consider and comment on articles and layout.** (Paper 3 – Draft Newsletter)

Cllr Kay appealed for more photographs. Cllrs Davis, Gholami-Babaahmady and Spooner all agreed for their images to be used in the newsletter. **Cllr MacKeith to share** the images she has from the Sprout. **Cllr Kay to circulate** the consent form to Cllrs Davis, Spooner and Gholami-Babaahmady.

b) **To consider and agree printing quotes** (Paper 4 – Newsletter Printing Quotes)

*Proposal by Cllr MacKeith, seconded by Cllr Kay:* To commission County Print Finishers quote.

Named vote requested by Cllr Dowie. **Passed.** [10 For / 1 Against, Cllr Dowie]

c) **To ask for volunteers to distribute newsletter** once it has been printed.



9 of the 11 councillors volunteered.

**24/12: Resilience and Emergency Action Plan** - To set up a working group to address emergencies and produce a Plan for future Council approval and ask for volunteers.

A working group of Cllr Berrett, MacKeith and Davis was formed.

**24/13: Allotments:**

- a) **Allotment Report** – Review the report and decide on a follow up inspection  
(Paper 5 – Allotment Report Jan24)

There was a discussion around the allotment inspections. It was agreed that the Clerk should push the inspection date back from 2<sup>nd</sup> February to early April.

*Proposal by Cllr Church, seconded by Cllr MacKeith:* To permit the Clerk to engage JK Garden Maintenance to cut the North Hinksey Lane grass path.

*Amendment proposed by Cllr Church, seconded by Cllr Berrett:* To add “subject to a limit of £200.” Agreed

Substantive motion: Agreed

- b) **Follow up inspections** - To ask for two councillors to perform inspections.  
Cllrs Johnson and Barnes put themselves forward.
- c) **Beehive Site inspection** – To ask for two councillors to be available to attend a beehive site inspection and to agree what is being inspected. (Paper 6 – Bee keeping Agreement)  
During the discussion it was agreed that Councillors would not be inspecting the condition of the plots during the beehive site inspections. Cllrs Barnes and Johnson put themselves forward for the inspections.  
Clerk is to consult not just the adjoining plots, but all plots along the North Hinksey Lane allotment section to see if they have any serious allergies to bees.
- d) **Hedge flailing along North Hinksey Road** – to approve quote. (Paper 7 – Hedge flail quote)  
*Proposal by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Berrett:* To commission the hedge flailing. Agreed [unanimous]

**24/14: Verbal reports** – from working groups, sub committees and advisory groups.

Business Support Working Group – there has been low engagement from working group members, the charity shop is still on the horizon and there has been interest from Brookes University Architecture students to do some consultation on how the area might be improved.

Skatepark Working Group – They have been investigated other funding possibilities for the larger sums.

Action Clerk to approach Canvas Spaces to find out the capacity to deliver the contract in summer 24 should the FCC grant be successful. There will be a fundraising event at TAP social on Thurs 25<sup>th</sup>. A Roller Disco event is also being explored, though insurance is a hurdle.

Green spaces working group – The Seacourt Hall is not available for the previously proposed weekend, therefore the Green Spaces Event will be divided over two weekends rather than the one. There will still be walks taking in the Nature Reserve, Raleigh Park, Oxford Preservation field and potentially also Hinksey Heights. They are considering how to also cover the playing fields and the Fenn, without making the walk too long.

Public Arts WG – The Letter of engagement progressing.

**24/15: Training update:**



- a) **Fundraising training** – To note that Cllr Jonhson and Cllr Kay have completed their training. **Noted**
- b) **GDPR** – To note that all courses have been allocated but only 5 are completed, 1 is incomplete and 8 have not been attempted. **Clerk to re-email** all those who have not completed the training with the link.
- c) **Staff Training** – To note that the Grounds keeper has completed his equipment inspection session with G. Sillman. We are still waiting dates for the OALC course. **Noted**.

**24/16: Local issues:**

- a) **Council to review and agree proposed responses on the Joint Local Plan Proposal** (Paper 8 – JLP Proposal)

There was some discussion on this item, there was satisfaction that the neighbourhood plan priorities had been addressed in the response. Though it could be stronger on the wastewater element.

*Proposal by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Dowie:* For this to go to the next Planning Committee Meeting prior to final submission. **Agreed** [unanimous]

- b) **Solar Farms:**

- i. **Red House Farm** - To note planning objection already sent and to discuss and agree a follow up objection subject to an extension of time from the District Planning Authority.  
(Folder - Red House Farm docs)

There was a lengthy discussion on the topic with most of the councillors taking the chance to share their views. It was noted that the public interest in Botley Parish was significantly lower than in Cumnor but that there would be some impact on the parish in terms of the works required to connect it to the grid. While there was support for the climate agenda and the need for biodiversity and decarbonisation solutions there was also concerns around the impact of the connection on the parishioners and the green belt status being maintained after the solar farm was removed. It was noted that this was only one of three solar farms planned for the area and not all councillors were convinced it was the correct site for this scale of infrastructure. The councillors then proceeded to workshop their response to the application.

*Proposal by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Barnes:* To object, but not in the strongest possible terms.

**Not Agreed** [For 5 / Against 7]

*Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Johnson:* To submit a comment rather than an objection.

**Passed** [9 For]

*Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Kay:* To suspend the Standing Orders to continue the meeting for no more than 30 more minutes. **Passed** [By majority]

The following changes to the wording to the District were suggested:

- Keep the first paragraph.
- Amend the second paragraph to include “we have the following concerns.”
- Keep item 1.
- Amend item 2 to replace “likely” with “possible” and add that “we would like to see a condition that once solar panels are removed the site is returned to green belt status.”
- Remove items 3,4 and 5.
- Keep item 6.
- Remove last paragraph.

*Proposal by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Berrett:* To adopt the suggested changes. **Passed** [majority]

**Cllr Rankin to update** the response accordingly and share with the councillors for agreement on Friday, prior to **Clerk submitting** it to the Vale.



- ii. **Botley West Solar Farm** – Update following Cumnor Parish Council meeting and the public information event at Seacourt Hall on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> at 1-5pm.

Cllrs Berrett, Church, and Dowie attended. There were around 50 attendees as well as the developer, architects, and consultation providers. Low Carbon Hub (LCH) were also there taking questions. The consultation is still open for comment until the 8th of February for anyone to comment.

**24/17: Policy Review:**

- (a) **EDI Policy** - To agree the recommendation of the Personnel Committee that the new EDI Policy should incorporate the use of Equality Impact Assessments “for every decision, policy, practice and event that the council undertakes.” So that those processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation and do not disadvantage any protected groups under the equalities act.

*Proposal by Cllr MacKeith, seconded by Cllr Davis. To postpone this to another meeting. Agreed*

- (b) Review progress on overall Policy Review programme.

*Cllr Davis undertook* to consider the proposed dates of 15<sup>th</sup> February and 18<sup>th</sup> March for another Personnel Committee meeting.

**24/17: Other**

- (c) **Statement from Cllr Davis** – She has recently resigned from the Labour Party and so will now be sitting as an Independent Councillor. **Noted.**

- (d) **Human rights festival** – Cllr Davis to share details with Council.

Member of the Public Pat McLoughlin presented the plan for a local Human Rights Festival in the summer in the West Way shopping area and the TAP. It was early days, but the initial response from collaborators had been overwhelmingly positive, though they were struggling to get Savills to respond. The event will be spearheaded by Botley Socialist League, but she stressed that it is non-political and open to all. Currently they are not looking for funding from the council, just support, but the offer to apply for a grant from BNHPC was extended by one of the councillors.

- (e) **Accepting gifts** – A reminder on the process and rules around accepting gifts as a Councillor.

Reminder that any councillors receiving gifts in their capacity as councillor over the value of £50 need to declare it to the Clerk within 30 days.

**24/18: Exclusion of the Press and Public** - The Council is required to pass the resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Section 1, extended by the Local Government Act 1972, Section 100, as the following item is considered confidential.

Cllr Dowie refused to leave the meeting at this point despite the item being in relation to the allotments for which he has a Registerable Pecuniary interest. As a result, Cllr Berrett suspend the item and closed the meeting.

**24/19: Plot holder behaviour review** – Consider the behaviour and actions of a plot tenant and decide on what course of action to follow. **Not addressed.**

**Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024

Meeting adjourned: 21:56.