



Minutes of the Botley & North Hinksey Parish Council Thursday 22nd February 2024

Meeting started: 19:32

Present: Councillors Bastin, Kay, Dowie, Rankin, Barnes, Johnson, Spooner, Berrett (Chair) [Quorate] Cllr Jones arrived at 19:35

Other: Emma Gordon (BNHPC Clerk), Rob Goacher (Jessop and Cooke Architects), Alice Hutchcomb Retallack (BNHPC RFO),

On Zoom: Cllr Judy Roberts (Oxfordshire County Council) Cllr Emily Smith (Vale of White Horse) and 1x member of the public.

24/20: Apologies for Absence.

Cllr Davis, (illness), Cllr MacKeith (funeral), Cllr Keily (illness), Cllr Church (delayed on a train)

24/21: Declarations of Interest.

Cllr Dowie declared a pecuniary interest as an allotment holder but informed the Council that he would not be leaving the room for items 24/32 a, b & c, and would insist on saying something as a point of order at that time.

24/22: Approval of Draft Minutes of the - Parish Council Meeting held on 18th January 2024

Clerk confirmed amendments that had been included.

Proposal by Cllr Berret, seconded by Cllr Kay: To approve the minutes subject to the minor typo corrections.

Named vote requested by Cllr Dowie: **AGREED** [6 for (Cllrs Kay, Rankin, Barnes, Johnson, Spooner, Berrett), 1 against (Cllr Dowie) 1 abstention (Cllr Bastin)]

Cllr Jones arrived at 19:35

The Chair informed the Council of a revision in the order of the agenda. Items 24/34a to be next and item 24/33a to be after Item 24/29.

Item 24/34a: Notice of the passing of Ann Dykes – To acknowledge and pay respect to former councillor Ann Dykes who passed away recently.

Cllr Berrett acknowledged Ann Dykes passing and her service in the Parish Council. She was on the Council from 1991 until last May, having served 32 years and was also the District Commissioner for the Girl Guides. Several Councillors attended her funeral. Councillors extended their condolences.

24/23: Matters raised by Members of the Public. (Max 5 mins / question, 15 mins total) None

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

24/25: Reports from County & District Councillors. (10 minutes)

(District Council Report Feb24)

Cllr Judy Roberts (Cllr JD) expanded on her report with information that had been requested at the recent Botley Traffic Advisory Group Meeting. This primarily revolved around easy access to the information listing various road works. She brought attention to the following links: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/roadworks/major-current-roadworks> and <https://uk.one.network/communicate/onenetwork-map> as well as the <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/made-tro>. She brought attention to the fact that the A34 flyover round about works are due to be complete by the 29th February and street lighting works there will be completed the following day. She has reported the North Hinksey Lane potholes on Fix my street, and also contacted the



district officer and the officer directly responsible, but has had nothing back. She has been chasing the issue of the allotment pathway, but still no progress. With regard to the new zebra crossing at Mathew Arnold School, she confirmed that this has been authorised, the finances have been approved. It is now a question of getting the team there to do the work, however they are the same team as are rolling out the 20 mile per hour speed limits, so this is taking up the majority of their time.

Cllr Emily Smith updated on the Ward boundary review, the Vale have not suggested any amendments to Botley and Sunningwell boundary. The Budget was passed the previous night, and she was pleased to report that the Vale are in a good position and are not at risk of section 114 and there will not be a cut to front line service. Council tax bills are due to rise by £5 per band D property. She explained that the Vale was opposing the 6% rise in water bills because of Thames Waters' bad service, and that they were considering writing a letter to the Secretary of State highlighting this. She also shared that herself and Cllr Hallett would be at the Missing Bean on Saturday for a surgery. **Action clerk** to share this.

24/26: Review of Action Sheet. (Paper 1_Action Sheet Feb24)

Work relating to the Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) summary, benches, Remembrance Day wash up meeting and invitation for Cllr MacKeith to attend the Thames Water meeting were discussed. It was decided that the FAS Summary would be reviewed at the Planning meeting and then be given to the "Webmaster" Cllr Berrett to put onto the website in the planning section and as a news article. The Thames Water meeting has gone ahead, but no councillors were invited.

24/27: Clerk's Report. (Paper 2_Clerk Report Feb24) Reviewed.

24/28: Council Motions: To be agreed:

Motion 1.

Proposal by Cllr Dowie, seconded by Cllr Kay: B&NHPC agrees to authorise the Clerk to write to the Environment Agency to ask what specific works are proposed for Parish Council land which forms part of Seacourt Stream to the East of North Hinksey Lane (Plot interest 04/004) for the purpose of delivering a Flood Alleviation Scheme and why the proposed works may require a 4-6 year agreement period.

Cllr Dowie explained the reasons for his motion. **AGREED** [unanimous]

Motion 2.

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

"Shall permit certain Councillors identified below who are not already members of a standing committee, sub-committee or advisory committee (working group) to attend a meeting of the relevant body with full voting rights as ex-officio substitutes for absent members on the following basis:

- The substitute Councillor(s) will be selected from the pool of permitted Councillors below by the Chair of the relevant body holding the meeting, or in their absence by the Vice-Chair of that body.
- The pool of permitted ex-officio substitute Councillors do not count towards the calculated required quorum for any meeting, however any Councillor attending as an ex-officio substitute will count towards achieving the quorum for that meeting.
- For standing committee meetings the Councillors permitted to attend as ex-officio substitutes are the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council, and the Chairs of all other standing committees.



- For meetings of sub-committees and advisory committees (working groups) the Councillors permitted to attend as ex-officio substitutes are the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council, and (where relevant) the Chair of the standing committee that the sub-committee or advisory committee (working group) in question reports in to."

Cllr Kay explained the background work involved in forming the motion and why the wording was as it was. It was noted that while perhaps excessive and wordy OALC has advised BNHPC to review their Standing Orders, which will happen in due course and it could be revised then.

Named vote requested by Cllr Dowie

AGREED [7 For (Cllrs Bastin, Kay, Jones, Rankin, Berrett, Barnes & Johnson) / 1 Against (Cllr Dowie) / 1 abstention (Cllr Spooner)]

24/29: Staff:

- a) **Groundskeeper recruitment** – To consider options and agree the steps for replacing the Groundskeeper, including a revised Job Description and a budget for advertising, following receipt of one-months' notice received on 1st February.

(Paper 3a – Groundskeeper recruitment options and Paper 3b – Groundskeeper JD Revised Feb24)

Cllr Dowie raised a Point of Order, recommending that this item be discussed at a Personnel Committee meeting. Cllr Berrett agreed that was the ideal but as the Clerk and 2x Councillors had already requested for one to occur and the Chair of the Personnel Committee had not called one, the matter needed to be discussed here. It was noted that Cllr Berrett has written to the chair on this matter. There was some discussion on the topic of what had occurred and the Job Description paper. Cllr Jones informed the council that the Groundskeeper was currently reconsidering his position. Councillors agreed that as he was undecided it was prudent to agree steps for recruitment at this meeting, while the Job Description revision should go to a Personnel Committee meeting. The councillors present who were also on the Personnel Committee (3), called for a Personnel Committee meeting, which the Vice Chair of the Committee will convene for 29th February.

Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Kay: To agree the following steps in this order:

1. To offer the job to the runner up candidates first.
2. If the runners up could not take on the position, then to go out for recruitment and to approve a £200 recruitment advertising budget.

AGREED [unanimous]

It was agreed that the recruitment panel would be: The Clerk, Cllr Rankin and Cllr Kay

- b) **Training** – To consider and agree for Clerk to attend the OALC Parks Play Areas and Equipment, Sport, and Fitness training for £110 on 6th March.

Proposal by Cllr Rankin, seconded by Cllr Jones: For the Clerk to attend. **AGREED** [unanimous]

The chair then moved the meeting onto item 24/33a, before returning to item 24/30 below.

24/30: Finance:

- a) **To review the RFO Report.** (RFO Report Feb24)

The RFO expanded on her report. There were some discrepancies in the CIL report that have been ironed out. There were some questions in relation to our Standing Orders from the interim auditors. She is preparing a response and has this in hand. She warned that the Financial Regulations will need to be revised in the May meeting to tighten up areas that she has identified as lacking in detail. She reminded councillors of decisions made



at previous meetings. She is in the process of mapping the budget into a structure that can give reports based on budgets relating to each committee.

b) Interim Audit for 23-24 – RFO will brief the Council on this. (BNHPC Interim Audit 23-24)

Cllr Kay explained that it is Cllr Keily rather than the chair who needs to sign off the bank statements and reconciliation. Cllr Kay highlighted some issues with the 23-24 CIL report and that the Ear Marked Reserves figures aren't flowing through in the internal reporting. Cllr Kay and RFO agreed to resolve this outside of the meeting. Cllr Johnson had concerns about the time limit on expenditure of CIL Money. RFO believed the Council had sufficient plans to spend this within the timeframe but would check and raise the issue if she was a concerned.

c) PayPal Account – To agree to an account being set up for the purposes of fundraising.

PayPal fees are 1.5% plus 10p per transaction in comparison to Just Giving, which is 1.9% and 20p per transaction.

Proposal by Cllr Rankin, seconded by Cllr Kay: To approve this being set up. **AGREED** [unanimous]

d) Virements – To review and agree RFO suggestions (Virements Feb24)

Proposal by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Rankin: To approve the virements. **AGREED** [unanimous]

e) R&A Expenditure requests

i) Pollarding tree work to the Hutchcomb Copse - as per Ox Ecology Quote (Q11015-OxEcology)

This would be the culmination of several years of tree works and must be completed before the end of February. For subsequent years it will be possible for people with hand tools rather than chainsaws to pollard the trees on a 5-year rotation.

Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Rankin: To approve the quote. **AGREED** [unanimous]

Safety and improvements list resulting from ROSPA and Quarterly inspections.

(Refers to items in virement paper)

Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Rankin: To allow Clerk to action these works. **AGREED** [unanimous]

f) To review and approve the Orders of Payment. (OOP Feb24)

A clarification questions was asked by Cllr Dowie

Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Rankin: To approve the quote. **AGREED** [unanimous]

g) Bank signatories - Council to authorise Councillors Berrett and Kay to act as signatories for the Barclays

Bank accounts alongside the Clerk and RFO, with the RFO to action any required changes.

Proposal by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Bastin: To amend this motion to the following wording. "Council to authorise the Chair (Councillor Berrett), Vice Chair (Councillor Kay), and Chair of the Planning Committee (Councillor Rankin) to act as signatories for the Barclays Bank accounts alongside the Clerk (Emma Gordon) and RFO (Alice Handscomb Retallack), with the RFO to action any required changes. **AGREED** [unanimous]

The substantive motion was then voted upon **AGREED** [8 for / 1 abstention]

24/31: Council business:

a) Annual Parish Newsletter Distribution – To confirm the distribution allocation (Paper 4 – NL Distribution) and to give out the hard copies to all councillors for distribution.

Councillors were asked to collect their newsletters before they left the meeting and to be sure to distribute them within the next 10 days.



- b) **March Annual Parish Meeting** – Opportunity to suggest agenda items and agree roles and responsibilities.
Set by the parish – anyone can suggest an item –

Cllr Kay left the room 20:57

Items suggested by Councillors included: Compensations for the Botley Road Closures, the problems with litter, Skatepark and Pavilion items, the exit of Brookes from the Harcourt campus, a police report and progress on pedestrianisation of Church Way.

Cllr Kay returned to the meeting 20:59

There was discussion on how to engage parishioners (via socials and the newsletter), and on the technicalities of the meeting room booking. It was agreed that the back room of Seacourt Hall would suffice.

Policy recommendations from the Communications Committee – Consider and agree.

- i) Email and Communications Policy (Paper 5 – E&CP 2024)

Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Kay: To agree the policy. **AGREED** [unanimous]

- ii) Press and Media Policy (Paper 6 – P&MP 2024)

Cllr Kay highlighted some numbering discrepancies on the policy for the Clerk to correct.

Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Kay: To agree the policy, subject to Clerks revising the numbering.

AGREED [unanimous]

- iii) Social Media Policy (Paper 7 – SMP 2024)

Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Barnes: To agree the policy. **AGREED** [unanimous]

- c) **Meetings Schedule for 24-25** – Consider and agree meeting dates for all Council related meetings in the following year. (Paper 8 – Meeting Schedule 24-25)

The following revisions were discussed.

R&A and F&GP meetings moved from 2nd Jan to 12th December. Remove F&GP on 5th December. Full Council meeting moved forward from 23rd to 16th January. May 2023 – Change AGM from 23rd to 16th

Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Kay: To agree the timetable, subject to the above changes.

AGREED [unanimous]

- d) **Personnel Committee Policies** – Update on progress of Policy Review Programme. No progress to report.
e) **Responsibilities of Chairs of Committees** – To discuss the requirements and responsibilities of Chairs of Committees and to consider attending the OALC Chairmanship training session at £110 per person on the 14th March 9:30-4:30pm. (Paper 9 – Chairmanship training)

Cllr Spooner invited Clerk to be in touch to discuss how to improve collaboration on R&A. Cllr Kay offered mentoring as he has been on the council for many years. Cllr Berrett expressed a desire to attend the training.

Proposal by Cllr Rankin, seconded by Cllr Johnson: To send Cllr Berrett on the Chairmanship course.

AGREED [unanimous]

24/32: Allotments: Cllr Dowie refused to leave the room despite having a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

- a) **Allotment Report** – Review report. (Paper 10 – Allotment Report Feb24) Reviewed.
b) **Clerk request** – The Clerk would like the council to agree at this meeting that she has the Delegated Authority to manage the allotments as per the following:



- i) The authority to organise initiatives for the good of the plot holders, for example community seed swaps, clean up events, engaging community groups to do free of charge work or organising contractors to do paid work on behalf of plot holders.
- ii) The authority to issue surveys as and when appropriate.
- iii) The authority to apply and enforce the stipulations of the tenancy agreement, in consultation with two nominated Councillors.

Cllr Dowie attempted to raise a point of order, but was denied by the chair. Support for the Clerk's request was expressed by Cllrs Rankin and Bastin.

Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Barnes: To grant the Clerk's request for delegated authority on items i) and ii) **AGREED** [7 for / 1 abstention]

c) **Councillor nominations** – To agree the two nominated Councillors should the above request be granted. Councillors Johnson and Barnes put themselves forward for this.

- d) **Rent rates for 2025-2026** – To consider whether to apply a nominal increase to the rent rates for 25-26. There is a stipulation to give 12 months' notice for any rent increase, this will be a notice sent out at the end of March.

Cllr Dowie left the room.

There was some discussion as to how much. 10% or in line with the precept were floated. The Allotment budget was consulted. **Action Clerk** to prepare a paper for the next meeting to include figures for this year, and a budget for the next.

Cllr Dowie returned to the room.

Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Kay: To suspend the standing orders and extend the meeting for a further 30minutes. **AGREED** [8 for / 1 against]

24/33: Working groups, sub committees and advisory groups: Updates and resolutions.

a) Pavilion

- i. To receive an update on the current planning status from Cllr Berrett.

Cllr Berrett updated on the status of the Judicial Review. There was an appeal heard on the 1st February, but due to the court running late, no verdict was issued due to the late running of the court and will come later. We are still waiting to hear the result.

- ii) To receive an outline from Jessop and Cooke Architects on required next steps.

Rob Goacher(RG) of Jessop and Cook Architects gave an outline of the work that is outstanding and the next steps. He explained the importance of progressing on discharging the planning conditions and extrapolated on what they were. They have already gathered most of the information and the fees for the Ecologist have already been approved at a previous council meeting. He explained why the cost plan needed revision and what was entailed in the proceeding with the technical design elements. As the revised costing for the technical design had only been provided to Cllr Berrett that day the council had not the chance to review them, however RG explained that while some fees had increased, they had managed to cut back on other element due to there being less planning conditions stipulated than previously and that they now had the expertise to bring the timber frame consultancy in house. **Cllr Berrett will** circulate the technical design costs for consideration at the next Full Council Meeting.

- ii. To consider the following motion proposed by Cllr Berrett, (still in need of a seconder):
The Council approves to move forward with expenditure on the following items:
 - 1. Initiate Cost Plan (£950) based on planning drawings and outline specification.
 - 2. Approve moving forward and submission of Discharge of Conditions.



3. Initiate technical design (RIBA Stage 4)

There was a discussion and clarifying questions were posed to do with timeline on the technical design elements.

Proposal by Cllr Berrett, seconded by Cllr Bastin: To only approve items i) & ii)

Named vote requested by Cllr Dowie. **AGREED** [8 for / 1 against (Cllr Dowie)]

- b) **Public Arts** - To receive an update and to consider commissioning the West Way Art Proposal.

(Paper 11 – WWArt)

Proposal by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Bastin: To commission the proposal.

Named vote requested by Cllr Dowie. **AGREED** [8 for / 1 abstention (Cllr Dowie)]

- c) **Skatepark** - To receive an update from Cllr MacKeith and to consider agreement of the following:

Cllr Johnson gave an update on the fundraising activities in the pipeline and people presently involved.

- i. To name the fundraising campaign “Botley Sk8s”
- ii. To approve the new logo for the fundraising campaign. (Logo will be presented on the day of the meeting)

Cllr Johnson confirmed that £30 had been donated for the design of the logo.

Proposal by Cllr Johnson, seconded by Cllr Barnes: To agree items i) & ii). **AGREED** [8 for / 1 abstention]

- iii. To note the new dedicated fundraising page for the skatepark on the BNHPC website.

This will now have the newly approved paypal QR code and logo added and will be used for publicity and fundraising purposes. **Action RFO** to resend URL for the QR code to Cllr Berrett.

Seacourt Hall Committee Group – Cllr Church has decided to step down from his position on the Seacourt Hall Committee. Would any other councillor like to take his place on the committee? **No volunteers came forward.**

- d) **Other updates.** None.

24/34 Local issues:

- a) **Notice of the passing of Ann Dykes** – To acknowledge and pay respect to former councillor Ann Dykes who passed away recently. Brought forward to beginning of meeting.
- b) **Great British Spring Clean** – To consider if the Council would like to participate in the Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean which will run from the 15 March to 31 March.
(Paper 12 – Great British Spring Clean 2024)

BNHPC committed to promoting it online and Clerk offered support if anyone could be found to lead the event. The item could also be added to the Parish meeting.

24/35: Other:

- a. **OCK Catchment Farmer Cluster** – To consider and agree to take out an informal or formal membership.
(Paper 13 – OCK Membership)

Proposal by Cllr Bastin, seconded by Cllr Barnes: To take up a formal membership. – formal membership

AGREED [8 for / 1 abstention]

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 21 March 2024

Meeting finished at 21:50