



Botley & North Hinksey Parish Council



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Minutes of the Meeting of North Hinksey Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Thursday 27th July 2023 in the Seacourt Hall and via video conference

Key

Motion passed = **Green**

Motion not passed = Grey

Actions = **Yellow**

Those Present:

Cllrs Bastin, Rankin, Johnson, Dowie, Spooner, Berrett, MacKeith and Kay
(Cllr Church arrived late at 7.35pm)

In Attendance:

In person: Emma Gordon - Incoming Clerk to the Parish Council,

(Alice Handscomb – Future RFO for Parish Council arrived late at 7:52)

On zoom: Julie Flenley - Locum Clerk to the Parish Council and Responsible Financial Officer. County Councillor Judy Roberts and 2 members of the public.

23/054: Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Barnes, Keily and Jones and District Cllr Emily Smith.

23/055: Declarations of Interest

Cllr Dowie – Registerable interest as an allotment holder and non-registerable interest as a shareholder of the Sprout.

Cllr Rankin – Registerable interest as his father's invoice is to be paid directly into Cllr Rankin's bank account.

23/056: Approval of Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15th June 2023.

No amendments suggested prior to the meeting.

Clarification question posed by Cllr Dowie on the level of detail contained within 23/042. Locum Clerk (Julie) explained her logic behind this.

Cllr Church arrives 7:35pm

With reference to Finance section B (23/048) – grant for the sprout –

Proposal by Cllr Dowie - to amended wording to say, "Cllr Dowie expressed his issues with the application and explained his reason for voting against." Seconded by Cllr Kay.

Unanimous vote for, none against. **Agreed**

A request was made by Locum Clerk to Councillors for them to get in touch to discuss concerns prior to council meetings, with the aim being to be able to approve them at the council meeting.

Proposal by Cllr Berrett - to accept the minutes with the amendment. Seconded by Cllr Kay.

Unanimous vote for none against. **Agreed**

23/057: To NOTE the latest committee meeting draft minutes:

Planning Committee (1st June 2023, 22nd June 2023)

Cllrs to note that there will soon be a DRAFT minutes DropBox.

Proposal by Cllr Rankin - to approve both sets of minutes. Seconded by Cllr Dowie

All 3 voted for none against. **Approved** (only planning committee members voted)

Both sets of minutes were signed by Cllr Rankin and handed to the Clerk at the end of the meeting.

23/058: Matters raised by Members of the Public:

See APPENDIX 1

23/059: Reports from County & District Councillors

Cllr Judy Roberts referred to her report (received at 17:20pm.) She also expanded on her answers to the adult social care question raised by Cllr Davis at the previous Council meeting and explained in more detail about the House Infrastructure Fund (HIF1) road scheme, which was refused the previous Tuesday.

Questions from the floor for Cllr Roberts:

Cllr Bastin – Enquiring as to when phase 1 of Botley road resurfacing would be finished.

Response: She has raised it at more than 2 committees. Their assumption is that the £9.7m has been spent and that there is no more planned work beyond the design phase. No response from Highways department. She will continue to lobby as there are issues with phase 3 & 4 in terms of cycle path provision that need attention.

Cllr Kay – Enquiring after an update on the path through the allotments.

Response: She has chased once, but all three departments had different opinions. She suspects the officers have recently changed in a reorganisation. She is now waiting till September when new officers are in post before chasing again.

Cllr Church – Congratulated Cllr Roberts on time spent listening to the evidence for the HIF1 road scheme and their decision that the scheme is flawed. He enquired as to whether Cllr Roberts was aware and concerned about the call in of that decision and the allegations that senior council staff may have been involved in the call-in request.

Response: She is not aware of any members asking for a call in. Though she was not surprised by it. She agreed that for staff to work against a planning committee decision would be beyond the remit of their job. She also highlighted that any expenses incurred on the project beyond November 2026 would need to be met by the County Council.

Cllr Mackeith – Mentioned that there is confusion over who is allowed to participate in the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme public enquiry. Seemingly only those affected by a compulsory purchase order can participate.

Response: She asserted that anybody could submit a comment via a link on County Council website that is sent to the person running the public enquiry, but not everyone can go to it.

Cllr Berrett - Enquired after the date for the co-creation of the Town and Parish Council Charter as we have not received anything.

Response: She recommends the **Clerk keep an eye on the inbox** and if they don't get anything by September then contact the County Council.

Referring to the District Council Report – No questions raised.

23/060: Clerk's Report (Paper 2)

Locum Clerk summarised her report. Noted that there is an outstanding declaration on the AGAR about trusts funds

that needs to be completed and signed by former chair and sent back to Moores.

Locum Clerk reminded Cllrs to please attend training they are booked on. As it costs the Parish even if they don't attend. Locum Clerk will change Clerk Report wording to read hedge trimming as opposed to hedge removal.

23/061: Council Motions

None

23/062: Finance

a) Review 1st Quarter Reports

Cllr Kay highlighted some issues in the reports and suggested that they would be unable to approve them at this meeting. He identified anomalies of double accounting in the earmarked reserves public art, the reserves balance not reducing and memorial garden payments allocated to a different budget line. The Locum Clerk has been working with Scribe to address the issues with the reserves balance.

There was an energetic debate about how the money from Minns should allocated. A number of opposing views were aired. Where Cllr Kay was looking for re-confirmation on a previous decision that the memorial garden maintenance should be funded from the earmarked reserves rather than the full budget. Cllr Dowie asserted that there was not adequate evidence that the funds were specifically for the Memorial Garden rather than the Nature Reserve as a whole.

Proposal by Cllr Kay- that we confirm that these funds, as marked out in the earmarked reserves for the memorial garden, are used for the memorial garden solely, as was agreed in the budget meeting where we put no other budget for the memorial garden" Seconded by Cllr MacKeith.

3 votes for: Cllr Kay, MacKeith and Rankin, 1 against: Cllr Dowie, Abstentions: Bastin, Johnson, Spooner, Berrett and Church. Motion carried*

**Note from the Clerk*

A council can only lawfully make decisions on items that have written notice and are on the agenda. As this proposal was not already on the agenda, this vote should have been deferred to a subsequent meeting. Therefore in this instance the vote cannot stand and the item will be added to a subsequent Full Council Meeting Agenda once adequate supporting information has been gathered. This is to give Councillors enough information to inform their vote and to give the public notice that the item will be discussed.

b) Approval of Receipts and Payments since last full Council meeting (Paper 3)

Cllr Kay noted some anomalies in the budget year reference, grant disbursements, audit cost centres and sundries budget lines.

Actions arising - Locum clerk, who as of 1st August will be Locum RFO will:

- Correct budget figure by referencing the 23-24 budget on website.
- Grants and Donations – Assign £3000 to Major Grants
- Locum Clerk expense for auditing to go to Auditing line
- Sundries expense to be reallocated elsewhere
- Income grants and donations. Acer Trust should be under other income.
- Stationary Printing and postage – wrongly allocated

Request from Locum Clerk that if money comes in from somewhere that is NOT a grant, please can someone let her know. She also noted for Cllrs benefit and new RFO, that finance budget line allocation is at the RFO's discretion.

Cllr Kay to summarise the above actions and send to the Clerk.

Proposal by Cllr Church - to agree the orders of payment. Seconded by Cllr Bastin.

8 votes for, none against. Cllr Rankin abstaining because of registerable interest. **Approved**

c) For Council to CONSIDER and DECIDE the s.137 grant application from North Hinksey Conservation Volunteers

Cllr Dowie asks if there are other types of funding available to apply for grants?

Response: One can either use section137, or General Power of Competence(GPC). However GPC travels with the Clerk, so when Julie leaves this parish will no longer have GPC.

Proposal by Cllr Church – To approve the grant. Seconded by Cllr Rankin.

Unanimously agree. **Approved**

- d) Purchase of Clerk's laptop. For approval of expenditure £800 plus £200 technical support for a new laptop from Office Equipment, Phone and Broadband budget line. Zoom Laptop to be passed to the RFO. Old Clerk laptop to be used for Zoom.**

Cllrs Rankin had some concerns about the specification of the models.

Proposal by Cllr Church – To approve the expenditure of £800+200 for a new laptop and technical support.

Seconded by Cllr Kay.

Unanimously agree. **Approved**

- e) To APPROVE the quote from Kitson consulting on website and email works to reflect the change of domain name to 'Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council' as recommended by the Communications Committee Paper in Dropbox.**

Proposal by Cllr Church – To accept quote. Seconded by Cllr MacKeith.

7 votes for: Cllrs Kay, Church, MacKeith, Berrett, Johnson and Bastin. 0 votes against. 3 abstentions: Cllr Spooner, Dowie and Rankin. **Approved**

- f) To approve quotes from tree surgeons for urgent work on dead tree on allotments. Paper in Dropbox.**

Discussion - around whether the tenant of the plot would be contacted. Clerk (Emma) outlined their plans for contacting plot holder and those in the area that may be affected as well as to find out if they would want the wood from the chopped down tree.

Discussion - around the process by which the Cllrs decided to cut down the tree, as the tree was not highlighted in the 2020 tree survey. Members of the public had reported it as a danger and Cllr Church and Clerk have visited the tree and agreed that it is dead and poses a risk.

Clerk explained quote proposal and the intention to use a combination of both contractors to remove tree, if allotment holders would want to keep the wood. **Clerk to check if contractors would be happy to partition the contract.**

Proposal by Cllr Church – To delegate power to the Clerk to make all necessary arrangements with the plot holder and to discuss with quote presenters to agree the most effective solution. Seconded by Cllr Dowie.

Unanimously agree. **Approved**

23/063: Building Projects

- a) Pavilion Project Update For P22/V2377/FUL for the Louie Memorial Pavilion – to note the Vale of the White Horse District Council's planning committee outcome from 26th July 2023.**

Cllr Rankin reported back from meeting that it has been approved subject to 15 conditions, some of which are already satisfied and noting a good level of support. **Next steps are to move forward with a fundraising working group meeting.**

- b) Skatepark Project Update For Council to note any updates of Planning Application P23/V0842/FUL for the new skatepark in the Upper Louie Memorial Playing Field which was due to be determined by 28th June 2023.**

Still undecided. Cllr Debbie Hallett is chasing.

23/064: General

a) To NOTE and ADOPT proposed changes to the Website Policy as recommended by the Communications Committee. (Paper in DropBox)

Proposal by Cllr Church – To adopt the policy. Seconded by Cllr Kay.

8 votes for: Cllrs Kay, Church, MacKeith, Berrett, Johnson, Bastin, Spooner and Rankin. 1 against: Cllr Dowie. **Adopted**

b) Public Arts Project Update – Progress report from Cllr Berrett

i. Westway mural update – Nor – paper in DropBox

Cllr Berrett and Cllr Kay gave a history of the process and community involvement that led to the final design. They were asking for feedback from the councillors at this point. From the floor there was a general sense that the artist has not managed to capture what they had hoped. That they had not incorporated the feedback from workshops, nor translated the themes that they felt were important, such as the nature themes. The councillors did not feel the design was representative of Botley and agreed that they would not be approving this design and would be pursuing a different artist to build on the community consultation work already done. **Cllr Berrett to go back to Nor with the feedback.**

ii. Turner Drive public art update –Paper in Dropbox and budget request for up to £200

Cllr Berrett outlined activities so far and next steps in community engagement. Asking for a small budget to assist in publicity to be able to call a public consultation session in September.

Proposal by Cllr Church -To approve the £200 spend for publicity. Seconded by Cllr Berrett.

8 votes for: Cllrs Kay, Church, MacKeith, Berrett, Johnson, Bastin, Spooner and Rankin. 1 abstention: Cllr Dowie.

Approved.

c) Allotment Inspections – Cllrs Church to report on date agreed for inspection.

The date will be the 4th of August.

d) To NOTE the Flood Alleviation Scheme Compulsory Purchase Order – BNHPC's position remains unchanged.

No change

e) To NOTE the Air Quality Action Plan response which has been collated by the Planning Committee and due by 27th July 2023.

Was submitted today (27th) There is a PDF of the survey on DropBox **and the Locum Clerk will circulate the responses to the survey via email** to all councillors.

f) To REVIEW the RoSPA safety Inspection Report on the play equipment at the Louie Memorial Playing Field.

The 4x reports were briefly reviewed and discussed. It was noted that some of these remedial works had already been approved previously and was awaiting action.

Proposal by Cllr Church – to request the clerk to produce a short spreadsheet identifying all the risks. To delegate the clerk to work with Graham Silman to action the alleviation of all the high and medium level risks, where action is not currently being taken. To assess the low risks, and where appropriate get quotes for them. Seconded by Cllr MacKeith

8 votes for: Cllrs Kay, Church, MacKeith, Berrett, Johnson, Bastin, Spooner and Rankin. 1 abstention: Cllr Dowie.

Approved.

g) Lime Road Bridleway Works (to take place at the end of July 2023 / early August). Council to review risk assessment and insurance cover and confirm arrangements. Papers in Dropbox.

No papers on drop box. Cllr Kay has sent insurance docs from the contractors. They have provided risk assessment and insurance details which are now on file.

h) Allotment footpath update. Subject to receipt of a report from the County Council.

Cllr Roberts still waiting for a response.

i) Basketball hoops (from Recreation & Amenities Committee)

The resident is currently on holiday. Cllr MacKeith and the Clerk took measurements, and the Clerk has issued a report with comparative basketball standards to Cllr Spooner and Dowie. The next step is to await the residents return and **get their feedback on the report.**

j) Councillor training update.

There are still some councillors who need GDPR training. NHBPC have some credits for these. May need to buy more. **Clerk to arrange completing these sessions with outstanding councillors.**
Request for Locum Clerk to follow up on slides from completed training sessions.

k) Community Liaison meeting 10th August

Have received an email with the date, but not yet received an official invitation. Cllr Berrett has noticed that the Seacourt Hall has been booked for the occasion and is happy to represent the on the day.

23/065: Questions raised by Councillors:

None

23/066: Other Documents & Letters Received:

There have been a few emails about the Botley West Solar Farm. As there is no formal consultation taking place at the moment, holding emails have been sent.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 14th September 2023 at 7.30pm

APPENDIX 1

Questions from member of the public A

1. Can I first ask if Cllr Church ,as proposer of the motion you refer to, declared non registerable interests at the meeting as he had been invited to speak at the Oxfordshire Community Action for Nature Recovery event on the following Saturday, as spokesperson for Friends on the Earth(co-organisers of the event) on the topic of Parish Councils and Communities- towards effective collaboration. The event was organised by Oxfordshire CAGs and Oxford Friends of the Earth .Were other Councillors aware of this before the vote was taken?

ANSWER: Thank you for your question. Cllr Chris did not declare a non-registerable interest on the fact he was invited to speak at the event you refer to. As you state, he was speaking on behalf of Friends of the Earth, not as a representative of Botley & North Hinksey Parish Council, so no declaration was required. Details of the event were shared with PC members. One member did book but did not actually attend on the day.

2. Does the Environmental Action Plan mean that NHPC will now work with local conservation groups and experts, as well as the local community? Will local groups and experts- NHCV, the LM Working Group ,OBG and Adam Bows, fen expert be consulted in the future before decisions are made? No local groups were consulted when memorial trees were planted in the lower LM Field contrary to the terms of the original covenant. No local experts or groups have been consulted about plans to develop the Upper Field and the potential impact on the rare fen and wildlife corridors. Indeed there has been no contact with OBG, as neighbouring landowners, about the proposed building plans and impact on green corridors to the LWS and the ancient woodland (old Hutchcomb Copse). Both Adam Bows and OBG have requested an ecology report on the proposed skatepark as there are concerns about the environmental impact of the increase in built footprint on the catchment area of the fen and the fragile ecosystem of the LWS. Rather than protecting irreplaceable habitats and Green Belt, open spaces, many believe that NHPC, through their plans, are putting them at risk.

ANSWER: Thank you for the question. I cannot see any requirement in the Louie Memorial Deed to consult with specific groups but it is always our intention to consult with volunteer groups on matters relating to the fields. It is not correct that “no local groups were consulted when memorial trees were planted”. The Hinksey Heights Trail Volunteers group were actively involved and contributed valuable time, skills and effort to the planting and to subsequent maintenance.

The original motion on the Local Environment Action Plan included a point in to “seek the active and collaborative engagement of local voluntary organisations”. The motion was also amended in the meeting to add the following: “To take the lead in developing a Local Environment Action Plan (LEAP) in the parish based on recognised good practice with the input of local volunteer organisations and the wider community. Also to provide input into the Southern & Vale Air Quality Action Plan”.

I hope that reassures you that local volunteer groups will be consulted and able to input to the LEAP. Thank you for reminding us of some of those groups and we will ask the Environment Working Group to ensure these groups are among those included.

Questions from member of the public B

1. In the July 2023 issue of the Sprout there was a request by the Trustees of the 4th Oxford Scout Group for help in finding a new home for their extensive activities. Careful examination of the plans for the proposed new pavilion on the upper Louie Memorial Field (P22/V2377/FUL) show that the site of the former Scout Hut is almost untouched by the new proposed development except for a small sliver of the car park, which could easily be adjusted. If the Scouts were to accept the offer of either the Scout Hut plus the site on which it sits, or the site alone, together with a suitably long lease to justify their expenditure on refurbishing the old Hut or building a new one, this would save the project the substantial costs of (a) demolishing the Scout Hut (if this were agreed) and (b) the provision of the suitably serviced storage containers. Will the Parish Council therefore, in its own interest and in those of the Scouts and their many supporters, please undertake negotiations to achieve this objective, and if not, why not?

ANSWER: Thank you for the question. As you may be aware, the plans for the new pavilion were approved at the Vales’ planning meeting last night (26th July). The Parish Council intends to move forward with those plans now permission has been granted. The question asks if we would offer the 4th Oxford Scouts the existing hut or the site on which it sits. The Scout Hut itself is not fit for occupation or refurbishment. I refer you to the Planning Officer’s report on the application, points 5.25 to 5.27 including the statements that: “it should be noted that the Scout hut is in a poor condition and has an Energy Performance Certificate rating of G, which means it cannot currently be used.”

In terms of the site the current Scout Hut sits on, in the new approved plans this space will not only accommodate part of the car park but also contributes to an enhanced wildlife area. Putting a building on that site would increase the footprint on greenbelt and that has been a concern for a number of objectors so would not be advisable.