

WEST HAGBOURNE PARISH

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 24th May 2016 at
Hagbourne Village Hall, East Hagbourne

Present: Cllr M. Butler and approx. 25 members of the public.

1. Welcome from the Chairman:

Cllr Butler welcomed the public to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs Sage and Mrs Pinkava

3. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 2015

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman. Minutes to be posted on the website.

4. Matters Arising from the minutes

The minutes from 2015 were reviewed and updates were provided

5. Chairman's Report

Parish Council Matters

Barry Gill, the parish clerk at the time of the last APM, resigned later in 2015. The post was advertised in the Parish Newsletter in August 2015 but no responses were received. We also advertised on a website that posts local council vacancies. We had done this previously when there was a vacancy for the parish clerk. On that previous occasion we stated that the rate of pay was £10 and we received no responses. On this occasion we stated that the rate of pay was negotiable and we received four or five responses for experienced clerks. Some investigations into the going rate paid by other councils made it clear that £10 was not enough.

Our new clerk is Andrew Wise and his rate of pay works out at £12.95 per hour, resulting in an annual increase of £537 for the same number of hours.

Councillor Jackie Bannister also resigned and Oliver Doogue has been co-opted to the council.

Parish Council Budget

The parish council budget had to incorporate the additional expense in respect of the parish clerk, and also to take into account the withdrawal of the grant we receive from SODC to cover the cost of grass cutting. These two factors have resulted in a significant increase in the precept. We aim to provide a balanced budget covering expenses we know will be incurred, with a provision for contingencies, and do not top up our reserves by a significant amount. The current reserves were built up by previous councils. These reserves are insufficient to cover the cost of any major projects but will at least provide a "fighting fund" to put towards legal and other costs if anything is undertaken.

Roundabout on A417

This is nearing completion. Some of you will notice that the works extend into the

land leased to a farmer by the Charity of William Tyrrell. This is discussed in the separate report of the Charity, but in short Oxfordshire County Council has procured some adjacent land which is being transferred to the Charity to make up for the land taken by the works. In addition, a payment is being made to the Charity.

Section 106 Funding for Traffic Mitigation

Progress has been very slow following a site meeting in the village in November 2015. However, we believe that £30,000 may be available and below there is a note provided by Oxfordshire County Council setting out measures they are considering.

1. **Background** – Development in Didcot is creating increased traffic through the village, especially as the route forms an effective 'cut-through' between South-West Didcot and the A34 at Chilton bypassing the often congested A4130. The developer, Bloor Homes, initially offered the parish block paving surfacing to the main road throughout the village – which would have been phenomenally expensive and a huge maintenance liability – but the PC declined it. However the PC do seek measures that will a) slow through traffic down, and b) make the route less attractive, especially to traffic heading from the A34 towards Didcot as those drivers will have a new alternative route which effectively forms a village bypass.
2. **Traffic Surveys** - Hagbourne Hill was closed on the day of the site visit so traffic was much lighter than usual. Once the route re-opens the PC suggest traffic surveys (volume and speed) would be useful to support their argument that flows have increased markedly.
3. **Main Street Narrowing** – the carriageway already narrows to one lane and problems can occur when vehicles meet and one has to back-up. The PC seeks measures to make the feature more obvious which will also enhance its ability to calm traffic. Measures to be considered include:
 - a. Widening existing 4" line and repainting to form a 6" line
 - b. Pull edge lines further out into carriageway to narrow the apparent width and hatch behind the lines
 - c. Add road narrowing signs on each approach.
4. **Main Street / Brook Lane Gateway** – Officers explained it would be best not to extend the speed limit but keep the signs where drivers can also see the built-up area starting as this adds more credence to the need for restricting speeds. Additionally the signs would be obscured by vegetation further out as there is minimal verge available. Measures to be considered include:
 - a. 1.2m wide white plastic Glasdon gates on each verge where the limit currently starts.
 - b. Village nameplate signs to be placed on each gate
 - c. 'Improving' existing road markings
5. **Lizard Bank Junction** – The bush adjacent to the fingerpost sign needs to be severely trimmed or removed. The new road layouts mean the mileages on the post will be incorrect and although not a priority a new post would be beneficial. William Smith manufactures such signs. MW to ascertain whether it is highway land. If it is the Parish Council would be prepared to remove the bush.
6. **Horse & Harrow Pub Approach** - The PCs main concerns are not only to reduce the speed of traffic entering the village but also to make the route less attractive to encourage drivers to use the new alternative route which bypasses the village. Measures to be considered include:
 - a) Upgrade 30 repeater signs from 300mm to 450mm dia. 30 roundels in the carriageway to accompany each repeater.
 - b) Construct a build-out with a cushion or hump approximately 50 metres west of the Horse & Harrow T- junction.
 - c) White Glasdon Plastic gates either 1.2m wide - or 2.0m wide if space permits
 - d) Dragons Teeth road markings
7. The speed cushion or hump will require statutory consultation where any objections can be considered. A narrowing without hump or cushion is not recommended as it provides little calming and opposing drivers can race each other into the narrowing. A Hump is preferable to a narrowing as although vehicle noise will be greater it gives a greater calming and therefore deterrent effect. While any vertical deflection will cause noise, in this instance there are no adjacent properties. The pub is nearest but it is not expected that noise will be an undue nuisance at this range. Localised illumination will be required but this will not be obtrusive but rather can be focussed to the feature and not diffused elsewhere. Any feature will need to allow the passage of combine harvesters so removable bollards etc. will need to be considered. Red surfacing was suggested and while there was a time when this was not acceptable due to the maintenance liability this could be re-viewed. Although it is unlikely there will be future funds to replace coloured surfacing, if it were placed on good quality blacktop it could provide a benefit temporarily and then revert to leave a traditional black surface.
8. The fingerpost at this junction will also need to be amended to reflect the new distances created by the new road network.
9. In addition there have since been some discussions about virtual footways and also the use of Imprint. These are both considered to be realistic ideas as we will be limited with physical calming given the absence of street lights and such footways could give strong visual calming hints to drivers as well as being relatively inexpensive. It would however be essential to get the design correct to ensure pedestrians were not given a false sense of security.

Point 9 relates to a system that has been seen at Stoke Row, described by the council as the “creation of virtual footway along south side of main street (at road level) – visually narrowing carriageway, but enabling over running if necessary (e.g. for deliveries, passing of large vehicles etc.). (Light grey small cobble with faux kerb imprint). This might be applicable to, for example, the stretch from the pond to York Road, where there is no pavement.

There will be further discussions in June, we hope, when the person responsible returns to the office.

Planning

We have objected to two major developments – one to a development behind the Horse and Harrow (which has since been withdrawn) and one to the west of the Horse and Harrow, before Scotlands Ash, which has been refused by SODC. It is interesting to look at some of the grounds for refusal of the latter application:

“The site lies outside the built up limits of West Hagbourne, which is classified as one of the "other" villages in the district: It is not identified for development in the Development Plan. The proposal does not represent infill development as defined by the Core Strategy and it is unsustainable as it has poor access to essential services and facilities and poor links to the main body of the village. The application does not accord with the district's strategy for growth and necessary infrastructure. The district does not have a 5 year housing supply but for the reasons set out the proposal is unsustainable and therefore contrary to the NPPF, NPPG and policies CSS1, CSR1, CSM1 and CSI1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy.”

“The proposal would amount to an unwarranted encroachment into the countryside detracting from the rural character, landscape setting and natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the landscape setting of West Hagbourne. The development is therefore contrary to policies CSEN1 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, saved policies G2, G4, D1 and C4 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and does not represent sustainable development as outlined in the NPPF.”

This is a promising approach to development in the village. The land behind the Horse and Harrow, however, is in the parish of Upton and the Vale of White Horse district council. I have asked SODC for an indication as to whether Vale would take the same attitude as them. I have received the following response from a person in Planning:

“From a fairly quick look I think the refusal reasons we have used would be equally relevant for the site to the rear of the Horse and Harrow and I think the Vale planners would be likely to share that view”.

I thus feel that there may be little inclination of SODC or Vale to permit these sorts of developments – although infill in the main part of the village may be a problem. A recent planning application for a small house between two other houses in York Road was accepted.

Given the recent decision of SODC to refuse the planning application for a significant development in the green gap between Didcot and East Hagbourne,

and the new status of Didcot as a “Garden Town”, there may be less risk of more development towards West Hagbourne from Didcot.

In any event the Parish Council will continue to oppose planning applications for developments that will affect the character of the village and its rural setting.

Michael Butler
May 2016

6. Village Maintenance

- WHPC to report dangerous corner leading into Park Road caused by overgrown grass to Keith Stenning @ OCC Highways
- WHPC to report flooding problem in York Road to Gordon Hunt @ OCC and cc Cllr Greene
- If villagers spot dirty water in the brook to ring environmental health hotline on 0800807060
- Chair to take up issue of Bloor Homes pumping water into brook with Cllr Murphy to ask her to ask officers to remind Bloor Homes that they have already been told not to continue with the act of pumping water into local brook and field
- WHPC to raise issue of footpath in Main Street that runs from Pond to square on Fix my Street website
- Clerk to obtain a quote for the hire of a general skip for provision in 2016-17
- Cllrs to have a site visit in Foxglove Lane in November and if necessary form a working party to carry out running repairs as in previous years

7. Open Forum

- Cllr Brownsword provided an update on the provision of buses through the village
- Cllr Lewis updated the meeting on the provision of high speed broadband in the village and reported that BT were planning to install a new cabinet by Dec’16
- Clerk to obtain a quote on the provision of Dog Waste Bins and emptying in various parts of the village

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 9:00 pm.

Signed..... Dated.....