

# **SOUTH LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

## **15th November 2021, at 19:30 in the Village Hall**

Present were:

- Nicky Brooks (Chair)
- Lysette Nicholls (Vice Chair)
- Graham Soame (Parish Councillor)
- Rita Sawrey-Woodwards (Parish Councillor)
- David Auger (Parish Councillor)
- Dick Pears (Parish Councillor)

Carl Rylett and Dan Levy - District and County Councillors were present throughout the meeting. Andy Goodwin sent apologies and we would like to wish the family a speedy recovery.

Members of the Public Present - Caroline Auger, Claire Shestopal (for the meeting up to and including item 10).

Nicky Brooks related that Melody England had resigned as Parish Clerk for personal reasons that the Parish Council all understood and sympathised. Nicky Brooks noted that an additional reason was she had not herself been able to offer sufficient time to be able to train Melody. It is to be noted that the Parish Council has now tried to fill the post three times since John Ashwell resigned.

1. Apologies - no apologies.
2. Declarations of interest - Dick Pears declared an interest re. Bluefield Solar and will not participate in any decisions or votes relating to the Solar Farm.
3. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as being a true record of the proceedings - Approved.
4. Opportunity for any Parishioner to raise a matter of concern - a villager had raised the issue of tyres on grass verges not belonging to the village - the advice of the highway authority has been taken and its advice is that they should be removed as they are a hazard and various discussions were had about how to achieve that.
5. Opportunity for any County Councillor and / or District Councillor to update the Parish Council on any matter of relevance or concern. Further information was given about the progress of the A40 - Dan Levy was having a meeting with Tom Shuttleworth shortly and he agreed he would let us know the result.
6. Report on the liaison between the Parish and the Parishes of Stanton Harcourt, Sutton and Standlake. Lysette Nicholls was coordinating meetings with Thames Water and it is hoped there will be greater cooperation about common issues such as flooding, mobile signal, building and development. For instance, Stanton Harcourt and Sutton have the same sewage discharge issues as South Leigh. Standlake and Aston have sewage backing up into residents' homes and gardens together with discharge of polluted water into the Thames at Northmoor.
7. Constitutional -
  - a) Proposed change of Parish Council name to the 'Parish Council of South Leigh and High Cogges'.

Dick Pears proposed the change of name on the basis that it would mean greater inclusivity and ensure that organisations recognise that the Parish Council represents High Cogges as well as South Leigh. Graham Soame seconded the proposal and the resolution was passed unanimously. All the feedback had been positive save for one villager who objected but the objection related to High Cogges not having a church and therefore a misunderstanding of the relevant local government legislation from 19th century. The MP had been informed of the proposal and approved and two district councillors were present to note the vote. It was agreed that the following procedure would be adopted in the light of the resolution (1) The resolution would be posted (i) on the village notice board (ii) on the village website (iii) on Facebook and (iv) via the village email list - inviting any views within 28 days to the Chair of Parish Council (2) Notice of intention to make the request in the light of the resolution to be given to WODC, in particular the three relevant WODC councillors and Democratic Services of WODC, OCC and the MP. In the absence of significant opposition, the Chair of the Parish Council should make the request pursuant to section 75 of the Local Government Act 1972 to WODC for the change of name copying to the three relevant WODC councillors, the OCC and the MP.

- b) Parish Council representative for South Leigh Charity. There has been discussion about the involvement of a Parish Councillor with the charity as part of the continuing process of having a Parish Council representative on all committees and sub-committees.

8. Payments to approve. Those were itemised by the Chair and approved.
9. A40 and Shores Green - Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) have agreed to do a study on the possibility of closing the Barnard Gate road as well as restricting the flow of traffic through the village as a consequence of the proposed A40 works. The Parish Council insisted on being given OCC's letter of instruction to the experts as councillors were concerned about its remit, range, cost, timing and duplication of work. The letter of instruction which is confidential has now been received and seems a sensible document, albeit with issues which have been raised. Further Nicky Brooks raised the significant problem that whilst planning permission was shortly to be lodged - the Parish Council had no information about lighting, tree planting, embankments, noise pollution protection, bio-diversity etc.; a significant issue that the Parish Council have raised with the MP and county councillor.
10. Proposed solar farm at Tar Farm. There had been a number of meetings and exchanges of emails, with the Parish Council pushing back on the initial proposals as a result of the issues raised by villagers and the councillors themselves. For instance, there was concern raised at the position of the solar farm still so near the village at the north-east, the noise of the converters, the visual effect in the area around the footpaths particularly by the disused railway and the proximity of fences or panels to footpaths generally. Carl Rylett will call the scheme in so that it is discussed at the Lowlands Planning Committee rather than decided by officers. There was discussion about what part the Lower Windrush group have played and there was technical advice and offer of investigative assistance from David Auger.

Rita Sawrey-Woodwards felt, and it was agreed, that the Parish Council should arrange a visit to one of Bluefield's established sites and it was agreed that Claire Shestopal should be kept informed.

However, there had been some movement by Bluefield (but not enough) and the further proposals included:

- Widening of the footpath in the northeast part of the scheme to a minimum width of 13.5 metres, broadening out to 29.5 metres as the view opens out towards the village. A zig-zag fence line on the west side of this footpath with an expanded area of planting has been introduced following Parish Council suggestions.
- Further planting along the south side of the disused railway line.
- A widened footpath to the northwest of the site with an average width of 12.5 metres.
- Biodiversity enhancement areas (two to the northeast and one to the south east).
- Woodland planting to the south.
- Further tree and hedgerow planting throughout site.
- A community benefit package was under discussion.

11. Cycling - Dick Pears suggested this item was removed from the agenda until such time as there were any concrete proposals.

12. Mobile phone signal - the matter had been raised with Robert Courts at the meeting that Nicky Brooks and Dick Pears had had with him last week and he would make inquiries about the Oxford Hill mast.

13. The Green agenda post COPD26 - this idea was discussed in general and the viability of an electric car port. It was agreed that Rita would write an article for the newsletter with easy/small ways that anyone can decrease their carbon footprint (ie using less packaging etc). We would suggest setting up another village Whats App group for people share their ideas.

14. The Lymbrook. a) Nature and b) Pollution

It was reported that a meeting with the representatives of Eynsham Park Estate (Savills) had been held. This was a generally positive meeting. Savills reported that the running of the estate has passed to Michael Mason (son of David). Michael was keen to improve communication with the Parish and to work closely together through their agents. Areas of discussion included:

- The renegotiation of the lease for the football pitch and possible widening of the terms to allow more activities.
- The work needed to the Estate's land to prevent flooding, in particular the entrance to the field opposite Shuttles Cottage, the banks of the Lymbrook on the field behind Shuttles, and the Lymbrook outside the pub.
- The Estate is going to take back control of the Margery Cross field and will be returning it to grazing quality. They are also going to re-fence / mend the boundaries of the field behind Shuttles Cottage to stop the cows escaping and to protect the gardens.
- There was discussion about the A40 and the proposed dualling - the Estate are having follow-up meetings with the County Council as are the

Parish Council - it was agreed that we would liaise as our interest are much the same.

- It was agreed that the Estate would produce a map of the footpaths including some extra permissive paths which, they requested, once agreed with the Parish Council, would be adhered to by residents. They are appreciative that people are using the countryside more than in the past but this increases the need to stick to the allotted paths.

We thanked the Estate for the additional tree planting agreements for the forest restoration project.

Further, whilst phosphate levels in the brook had reduced due to the sewage being pumped into lorries, Rita Sawrey-Woodwards, as a resident of Lymbrook Close, had received a letter from Thames Water (the Parish Council had not been informed) that extensive remedial work was going to have to be continued into next year because of lack of parts and therefore pumping was going to be continued.

The Parish Council thought this was not acceptable, and Dick Pears volunteered to write a letter to the CEO of Thames Water which would be shared with interested parties.

15. Flooding. Lysette Nicholls had been chasing for a resolution to the flooding at High Cogges and has now been advised that the problematic area is on private land. The Council are informing the home owners. The area by Shuttles Cottage still has a blocked pipe and the relevant owners will be contacted.
16. Facilities - updates (items in bold are the only ones to be reported on at this meeting, unless raised elsewhere).
  - a) **Village hall.** Christmas lunch is on 5th December in the village hall. The Parish Council has been asked to take responsibility for the defibrillator. This was agreed.
  - b) Village green.
  - c) Playground.
  - d) Football pitch.
  - e) Bus shelter.
17. Responses to any planning matters - No planning matters.
18. Speed Watch / "20mph is plenty" scheme. Lysette Nicholls explained in the light of observations that had been made on the informal survey on the village website. Speed watch would continue and there needed to be volunteers - numerous people wanted the current speed limit to be enforced but seemed unwilling to assist. Any further reduction in the speed limit would not be at the cost of enforcing the limit there already was, as it will take time for any initiative actually to be implemented even if the County Council agree that South Leigh should be selected. In assessing people's views the County Council were clear that it did not need to be a formal survey - just fact finding and Lysette Nicholls was of the view, supported by the other councillors, that the position had been made clear after her investigation and house visits that the majority of villagers were in favour of restricting speeding. After all, there is no street lighting and no pavements. The current council initiative would

only involve roads where there is already a 30 mph limit (there would not be further street furniture therefore). The initiative will be steered by the Parish Council. The survey will report next week but it would already appear that the majority of responses are in favour of the initiative.

19. Representations to the Boundary Commission on the Parliamentary Constituency. Representations had been made and Robert Courts, MP and District and County Councillors were aware of the village's view but, Dick Pears suggested, and it was agreed, it should not appear on the agenda until further action was required.

20. Meeting dates for 2022

17th January (date for agenda 3rd January)  
21st February (date for agenda 7th February)  
21st March  
18th April  
16th May  
20 June  
18th July  
15th August  
19th September  
17th October  
21st November  
12th December

Further dates for Agendas will be diarised so that agendas can be published in due time.

AOB - North Leigh newsletter - Nicky Brooks explained that the North Leigh newsletter was sometimes delivered to South Leigh because North Leigh used the Post Office to deliver and the Post Office were sometimes over enthusiastic.

Voluntary link up - Nicky Brooks had experience of this organisation and at this stage did not think it was appropriate to join.

It is with great regret that the Parish Council then heard a personal statement from Graham Soame saying that for professional and personal reasons he felt that he was not able to devote the time to being a Parish Councillor that was required and felt he had to resign but offered himself as someone who would give ad hoc assistance on planning, planting and environmental issues.