

# **SOUTH LEIGH AND HIGH COGGES PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES**

25<sup>th</sup> April 2022

at 20.15 in the Village Hall

## **Councillors Present**

Nicky Brooks (Chair) (NB)  
Lysette Nicholls (Deputy)(LN)  
Rita Sawrey-Woodwards (R. S-W)  
David Auger (DA)  
Dick Pears (DP)

Additionally present – Andy Goodwin – District Councillor

A number of parishioners were present, particularly from High Cogges who spoke in relation to Shores Green but there were other helpful comments from others on a number of items

1. Apologies – Dan Levy and Carl Rylett – County and District Councillors sent their apologies
2. Declarations of interest – no declaration of interest
3. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as being a true record of the proceedings - approved
4. Constitutional matters – NB referred to the local elections where there was a vacancy to represent Eynsham and Cassington ward (including South Leigh). Anne and Russell Cherry after many years of being the parish footpath officers had decided to vacate the role which the PC understood but regretted and were grateful for all their work over the years – so a volunteer or volunteers were invited to consider taking on the role. A volunteer was also sought to join the Lower Windrush project and R.S-W would consider whether she had time to commit to it. NB to discuss role with R.S-W.
5. Opportunity for any parishioner to raise a matter of concern - John Alexander commented on the extensive amount of work that was being carried out at Shuttles Cottage - NB indicated that the extent of the work was in accordance with their grant of planning permission

6 Opportunity for any County Councillor and / or District Councillor to update the Parish Council – Cllr Andy Goodwin indicated that he and other District Councillors for Eynsham and Cassington were supportive of the efforts of the PC in attempting to get compensation from Thames Water. The garden village was progressing slowly because of infrastructure issues. He indicated that the area had agreed to take 273 Ukrainian refugees of which 77 were children.

7 Report on the liaison between the Parish and the Parishes of Stanton Harcourt, Sutton, Standlake and Eynsham PC – there was nothing specifically to mention but all of the parishes were having the same problems with Thames Water.

8. Payments to approve. There were a number of payments approved – such as the cost of Dog poo bins which amounted to a fee of £3.24 per week per bin in order that they be emptied – R. S-W thought there needed to be more than one bin and suggested an additional one near the station junction and possibly one at Church End. It was decided that initially there should be one more at or near the station junction with the extra cost added to 22/23 budget.

The payment for the parish council's share of last year's election amounted to £536.99.

The invoice for the printing of the newsletter was £173.

The cost of cutting the football pitch – there had been a number of quotes which were very high – one had been £3,000 but the quote that had been accepted was £780 for 6 cuts max – with the grass being lifted for the first cut only. The work was all an aspect of what was going to be part of the process of regeneration of the playing field area.

There was a discussion about how the village hall garden could be consistently cut because recently the contractor had come at a time when there were events going on at the weekend in the village hall and he could not cut it without disturbing the event. John Ashwell said he would liaise with the contractor to try and deal with the situation

There was a discussion about the emergency generator for the village hall and that it might be possible to get a grant and there were grants that could amount to as much as £10,000 but in order to apply there needed to be quotes for the connection but also an opinion from an electrician as to what power input was needed and therefore what size of generator to provide enough power for the power ignition and pump of

the central heating, the power for lights, refrigerators, ovens and sockets etc to recharge phones. John Ashwell and LN to progress.

Greg Murphy suggested that it would make sense to have a force majeure clause in the letting terms for the parish hall.

There was discussion about the receipt for the grant for planting of trees from TOE, a Vat reclaim which would largely benefit the village hall and the receipt for the grant in respect of Jubilee celebrations. Notice Boards had been discussed at the last meeting. Martin Spurrier had offered to refurbish the one by the pub and look into supplying 2 others, one for Church End and one for the bus shelter.

9. End of year Parish accounts - These will this year have to be more fully audited accounts because there have been receipts of more than £25,000 – there was no way of avoiding this and the auditors fees will be £750.

There will also have to be both a Parish Council Annual Meeting as well as a Parish Annual General Meeting where a parishioner can ask whatever questions they wish.

A draft budget was put before the PC showing receipts of £8834.70 and itemised payments of £6993.08

There were no reserves and there was discussion about the cost of employing a clerk that amounted to or would amount to £5,000 or so per annum which in the present state of finances could clearly not be afforded.

10. Website – Search engine was beginning to bring up the new Parish website when one started typing “South Leigh...”. The website had now been registered with Google as a business and the consequence was that it should appear more quickly as one started to type. The website for the village hall could also have greater visibility for its website on search engines if £100 fee was paid and John Ashwell agreed on behalf of the village hall committee to pay the sum.

11. Conservation area – DP updated the PC – The heritage consultant was preparing an amended report based on the observations of Phil Shaw of WODC and when received would be brought back to the PC

12. Jubilee celebrations – Martin Spurrier had sent a document in advance of the meeting setting out the proposals for the Queen’s Jubilee

celebration in May/June and referring to the receipt of £1,239 Lottery money grant. He sought approval for the costs of bunting, contribution towards the float and bus shelter decoration, contribution to the village hall for refreshments, posters and the cost of a local musician. All approved

Subsequent decisions were also needed on three items (1) date of the next pub quiz and whether it would coincide with the Jubilee weekend (2) whether there would be a battle recreation and (3) the position about a potential concert by Andrew Bernardi

13. Moors Lane - Sharon James and R. S-W raised serious concerns about Moor Lane and the condition it had been left in. A villager had decided to do work on it and had left it in a dangerous and unsightly condition and there had been a number of complaints from villagers. Moors Lane even without the intervention was frequently very muddy and not in a great condition. It was felt that it was not something that a lay person could tackle without land management expertise. It was pointed out that the land over which the footpath ran was owned by a landowner who it was doubted had been contacted in advance of the work being done. It left a very bad impression of the village to the increasing number of walkers. R. S-W felt there should be a proper system put in place where a person who was going to do something in the village should seek permission and be accountable for the work that was done. There had been other instances where work had been half done or started and not finished – such as hedges cut and what has been removed just left. DP did not want to stifle village initiative and NB wondered how such a system of permission etc could be set up. There was also discussion about Bond's Lane where at one point it floods so to become impassable for a number of months and indeed both Bonds Lane and Moors Lane had drainage issues. No decision was taken on any system to regulate or police activity on land within the parish but it was certainly felt that in relation to any large-scale work no villagers should embark on it without seeking PC permission. In relation to Moors Lane and Bond's Lane – DP agreed to contact Nick Pain of Savills

There was also a problem that had been raised by the footpath officers in relation to the footpath that runs near Homan's Farm – DP will write to owner of Homan's Farm to seek information.

14 Newsletter – The newsletter had gone out

15. A40 dual carriageway planning application – There were continuing meetings between PC and the team at OCC dealing with A40 dualling.

NB outlined some of the main characteristics of the current plan but also the issues that PC were having and raising inc (1) the risk of rat run when there was access to village via both Shores Green and Barnard Gate Road (2) provision of sufficient planting and sound barriers such as fencing and bunts update. She also indicated the discussions that were being had about closing the Barnard Gate road which currently OCC were opposed to but also traffic calming in the village which OCC were now coming round to and were indicating that on some roads they were not suitable for a mixture of traffic – ie motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. There had been a Freedom of Information request to OCC to get base line figures about the flow of traffic through the village so that when the work was completed there was a baseline to monitor the change in traffic flow.

16. Shores Green planning application – one parishioner indicated that she was having a meeting with Anna Herriman of the OCC planning team and she felt strongly as others in the village hall felt that (1) there was a huge amount of detail which was difficult to discover from the large quantity of documentation that had been uploaded (2) the length of time for consultation was ludicrously short and (3) the study area from which information had been taken and statistics gathered was too limited. There was an inquiry about whether the PC were intending to oppose the junction root and branch because a number of the parishioners thought that should be the position. However NB indicated that as it was a constituent part of the local plan the chances of defeating it were next to none. She had always thought that battles that could be won were the ones to choose and that this was not a battle that could be won but the PC were trying to achieve the best result that was possible. John Alexander thought the present scheme and the proposed junction was a disaster for safety with pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles compressed into a small area. There would also be an unacceptable increase in traffic noise particularly in High Cogges and other parishioners thought there would be unacceptable effect on wildlife and bats. There was discussion about what increased “connectivity” would mean in relation to further development both in the village and along the A40. The PC indicated that an exhibition in the village hall was proposed with plans etc displayed and DA thought that it would be a good idea for the plans to be “dropped on” Google earth so that one could see the effect of the plans on the present environment and NB agreed to ask them to do that. There were further discussions about footpaths being diverted and possible alternate footpath routes into Witney. NB commented that the PC would fight just as hard for mitigation at Shore’s Green as they had for the dual carriageway.

17. Traffic calming – NB indicated that it looked like OCC were now offering traffic calming in the village but clarity over its extent was being sought. Further there was some discussion about what might be installed and what could not be installed such as chicanes, speed bumps. At some stage there would be a village poll but it was agreed that LN would investigate and prepare a draft plan with suggestions in advance of any village poll.

18. Thames Water – DP gave a progress report in relation to potential compensation and of the letters sent to the non-executive directors of Thames Water and the potential approach to both investors and the holders of Thames Water debt.

19. Flooding at High Cogges – LN reported on the meeting that she and DP had had with the landowner in the light of the prior meeting she and DP had had with two of the residents of High Cogges whose land and road outside was adversely effected by flooding. The landowner had agreed to carry out some remedial work in the autumn which it was hoped would address the issue and or allow a view to be taken as to whether a junction/access point under John Alexander's land need investigation or work carried out.

20. Anaerobic Digester – LN and DP had had a discussion with the landowner who confirmed that the AD was not the result of the landowner applying to site an AD on his land but as the result of an approach made by OCC. It was a potential site but he had had no recent news about progress and any surveys that had been spotted had not been commissioned by him. One parishioner noted the landowner could always withdraw permission for the site to be used.

21. Update on solar farms

– in relation to 12 Acre Farm – the developers (Low Carbon) had been approached and they had informed the PC that there was delay in the solar farm being commissioned for a number of reasons such as an issue with OCC over connections as well as supply and logistical problems. So the farm would not be producing electricity before December/January which would mean that any community fund money would not be received until at least December/January

- in relation Tar Farm – Bluefield had been contacted and confirmed that they were still in dialogue with WODC about archaeology and the amount of trial trenching that was required and ecological and landscape issues which were being delayed by slow responses from WODC but

they were hoping that it would go to committee in June although that is by no way certain

22. Responses to any planning matters – there were no planning applications

23. Fly tipping – concern was raised by rubbish that had been dumped in the Limbrook that had been there for several months – a parishioner had raised the issue with the landowner but with no action being taken. DP agreed to write to the estate about this as well as the issues raised about Moor Lane and Bonds Lane.

24. Emergency Plan – that was still in development but one of the issues that needed resolved was the issue of the generator and the quotes that had been discussed above

25. Date of next meeting - the dates of future meetings needed resolution because Monday was difficult if a meeting had to start at 8.15 because of a priority booking and the dates of both the AGM and Parish AGM had also to be coordinated.

26. AOB – One parishioner raised the issue of whether there had been the appropriate consultation about calling in an application to WODC. The PC noted his concern.

4<sup>th</sup> May 2022