**SOUTH LEIGH AND HIGH COGGES PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes for 28th February 2022 at 19:30 in the Village Hall**

This was the meeting that was adjourned from 21st February 2022 because of the storms and power cuts in the village.

It was the first meeting of the newly designated South Leigh and High Cogges Parish Council.

Present

**Councillors Present**

Nicky Brooks (Chair) (N B)

Lysette Nicholls (Deputy)(LN)

Rita Sawrey-Woodwards (RS-W)

David Auger (DA)

Dick Pears (DP)

Additionally present – Carl Rylett – District Councillor and Dan Levy – District and County Councillor

Parishioners present – Oli Shestapol, Gary Nicholls, Liz and John Ashwell, Caroline Auger, Martin Spurrier – all of who spoke on different items

AGENDA

1. There were no apologies.

2. There were no declarations of interest.

3. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved – there were amendments to the December Minutes which are these **(please insert the amendments)** and those December Minutes were approved. Further in relation to the item 18 on those minutes “Speed Watch / ‘20 is Plenty’ scheme”. the PC had been unanimously in favour of both continuing with Speed Watch and seeking to be considered for the “20 is plenty” scheme but in relation to the latter had not taken a formal vote. In order for procedure to be appropriate for an application to be made there had to be a formal vote. So LN proposed that the village should make an application to be considered for “20 is plenty” scheme. It was seconded by R S-W and carried unanimously. LN to contact the relevant authorities and follow through.

4. Opportunity for any parishioner to raise a matter of concern. – John Ashwell raised the issue of the road demarcation sign “South Leigh Road’ which had been damaged – LN volunteered to report it to “Fix My Street.” He also raised the issue of mowing the village hall grass which probably needs a cut now – there was some discussion about whether the village green also needed a cut. NB indicated that she had negotiated the contractor from last year to mow both the village hall and the village green this year at the same price. There needed to be further consideration about the mowing of the playing field.

Further David Brown had been having trouble with sewage in his garden possibly as a result of the work currently being carried out by Thames Water. It is likely that the lack of gradient of the house pipes to the main sewage pipe which runs under the road in front of these properties is a contributory factor to David Brown’s surface sewage problem.

His neighbour, Paul, has had to pump surplus water from his property onto the Barnard Gate Road for some time now to avoid his home being flooded. He has followed this up and identified that the main drainage pipe running from the drain opposite Old Crossing down to the first bend on the Barnard Gate Road, which should drain his and neighbouring properties, was blocked. On Monday 28 February, 2022, this pipe was power-cleaned to remove the blockage. RS-W agreed to liaise with Paul re the success of this clearing of the blockage in the pipe in terms of its success in reducing his problem of flooding. There had apparently been clearing and investigative work done on the manhole opposite the Old Crossing and LN had observed work being done on the manhole near the Mason’s Arms and update from Thames Water is needed. It was noted appreciatively that David Burry had cleaned out ditches and the brook was running much more freely along its course from Station Crossing junction.

5. Opportunity for any County Councillor and / or District Councillor to update the Parish Council on any matter of relevance or concern – Cllr Carl Rylett updated the PC about an application for a solar farm and a proposed housing development at Ducklington – the solar farm had been passed by WODC but the development turned down. Cllr Dan Levy said the Area Action plan for the Cotswold Garden Village was waiting for WODC input post the inspector’s report whilst the West Eynsham Development Planning document was in the process of being developed. He also clarified the position about payment for parking in Witney – OCC is taking back on-street parking enforcement but will have to serve 12 months notice on WODC which is pending and OCC are also responsible for on road resident parking schemes but WODC is responsible for parking within car parks and that responsibility will remain with WODC and there are no current plans to introduce charges.

He indicated that he had put in an objection to the A40. He said the planning decision was imminent but he was not able to indicate when it would go to committee. He said we should object loud and strong if there were areas where there was no adequate protection for the village.

6. Report on the liaison between the Parish and the Parishes of Stanton Harcourt, Sutton and Standlake – Aston continues to have ongoing sewage issues alongside South Leigh. Water pressure keeps dropping in Stanton Harcourt.

LN wanted us to acknowledge the help from Stanton Harcourt in lending us litter picking equipment for the litter blitz in our village on 27th February. DP raised something that he and Janet Soame had discussed and that was the massive amount of rubbish by the road from the turning from South Leigh towards Sutton. Janet Soame thought she and others could organise enough volunteers to grapple with the problem but it was a road with traffic and large lorries and in order for it to be attempted a lane would have to be cordoned off temporarily to give the litter pickers adequate protection. DP suggested that it would be something about which Cllr Dan Levy and Janet Soame could liaise and DP said he would write to Janet Soame and copy in Dan Levy.

7. Payments to approve. Not quite within this item but it was noted that a donation of £100 had been received. NB indicated that membership of Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC) was coming up for renewal and at £150 pa NB wondered whether it was worth it – LN thought that most other parishes were members but there could be discussion with other parishes whether shared membership was possible and it was agreed that pending further discussion it would be renewed for a year. NB asked for agreement to spend £50 on further litter picking equipment – a sum which Janet Soame had requested. LN proposed and R S-W seconded and it was passed unanimously.

South Leigh & High Cogges Community Emergency Plan – a draft revised document is in preparation to make contingency plans for the village to provide for the circumstances such as the village faced last week of having no electricity and no internet connection – it will be brought back to the Parish Council at a subsequent meeting for discussion and potential adoption. One of the discussions was funding for the electrical work in the village hall which would allow for the provision of electricity through a generator – this would need an electrical link provided to the village hall (thought to be about £2,000) and a discussion of whether a generator should be borrowed, hired or bought. Mark Walker has said that he has a spare generator he would be happy to hire in the future – after discussion it was agreed that we would go along this route to start but investigate buying a generator.

8. Website had launched by Gary Nicholls and LN – it was still being refined as this was a soft launch and there were decisions to be made about how much material should be loaded on to it. Liz Ashwell observed that if one typed into a search engine the name of South Leigh – the website did not come up but Gary indicated that would start to occur as more and more people started to use it. He was able to analyse a whole amount of data such as there had been 775 hits on it. We can also pay to get an SEO expert that would rectify it. John Ashwell was concerned that potential renters of the Village Hall would not find the availability of the Hall as easily as they had and there was discussion about how that might be resolved with Gary deputed to talk to Tim Lawson about the best way of resolving the issue. John was of the view that the best solution would be “no change” but with the ownership of the domain name that might not be possible.

9. Conservation area – The Conservation area group had prepared a document setting what had happened since the last time the matter was before the Parish Council – which was 13th July 2021 where the Parish Council had agreed unanimously that after the circulation of the Heritage Consultant’s report a pre-application meeting with WODC would be arranged before the matter was brought back to the PC. In the event although a meeting was requested and despite reminders over a number of months Phil Shaw of WODC had responded by email only relatively recently and in effect said that an application for the whole of the Parish would not succeed (the terms of his email was set out in the document presented) and had said

* The proposed area is far too widely drawn and encompasses diverse housing clusters and then areas of field merely because they sit between the areas of housing - but which do not in themselves contribute to the architectural or historic character of the settlement
* There are too many areas of undistinguished housing set amongst the more characterful houses for a discernible character to be identified.
* Extending the area to be incorporated merely so that it doesn’t upset anyone is not a tenable approach.
* The diverse spread of listed buildings ensures that the key buildings and their settings are already protected
* The planning status of South Leigh as a small village in the Local Plan where development is highly limited by policy OS2 provides further protection
* Those buildings which are not listed but which have a discernible character (e.g., the cottages in Station Lane close to the Mason Arms on the playing field side of the road) could be incorporated into a revision of the neighbourhood plan as non-designated heritage assets without the need to confer Conservation Area status on the remainder of the settlement(s) This is the option being taken by Milton under Wychwood Parish Council who had also previously considered Conservation Area status.

The Conservation Subcommittee remain committed, should the village decide that a Conservation Area is appropriate, to push for as much of the area of the parish to be within that status. If need be by applying in respect of three or more distinct areas so that the remaining parts might gain protection by association.

As a consequence the Conservation area group sought from the PC permission to 1. Advise residents of the current situation.2. Revert to the heritage consultant in order to re-configure our pre-application for re-submission, and to re-submit it in the light of WODC’s comments and the expert’s advice 3. If this is allowed, make recommendations for adding a number of noteworthy properties in Station Road to the Undesignated Heritage Assets in the 2017 South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan. There would then be further consideration by the PC as how to proceed.

DP had consulted with Ken Brooks about 3 and he had confirmed that he had tried to get certain additional areas designated as heritage assets but the inspector had specifically refused to allow the Station Road Cottages to be included and as a result any revision to the Neighbourhood plan would require further submission to an inspector and a further referendum.

Permission to 1 and 2 were agreed.

10. A40 dual carriageway planning application – NB gave an update of the current state of play and relayed the details of a recent zoom meeting that the PC had had with OCC – what was apparent was that the whole new dual carriageway would be to the south of the current line of the A40 which together with cycle lane and balancing ponds would mean there was a significant move towards the village - the current road being converted to a service road for the premises on the north side. In the plans currently there was very little to prevent noise or light, whether direct or indirect, having a serious adverse on the village. There would be continuing meetings between OCC and the PC and the PC would by negotiation or other means try and ensure as great protection for the village as possible.

11. Thames Water – there was discussion about the way forward – Dan Levy had emailed Thames Water at DP’s suggestion and the letter was before the PC but he had not received any satisfactory response. There had been another “Dear Neighbour” letter from Thames Water dated 3rd February saying that there were still delays in the work, tankers would be on site 07.00 to 23.00 and there still was no view from the company about how long work would continue. One parishioner had counted 38 tankers in one day. DP had received an email on 25th Feb 2022 from Thames Water which was both factually incorrect and unsatisfactory. R S-W explained what she thought had caused Thames Water to start carrying out the work. DP said that he would further consider how to progress this.

12. Update on solar farm at Tar Farm - NB said Bluefield were still to submit the revised plans in the light of the concessions agreed between the PC and Bluefield and therefore when the application would be considered by the planning committee was still not clear. LN said that a solar farm of circa 114 acres had just been approved in Ducklington. NB and Oli discussed the meeting there had been at the village hall with other residents and with Cllr Levy and Oli was going to follow that up and reach out to those who had objected but also to try and contact the landscape officer of OCC and then try and see if he could negotiate further reductions in the site by removing fields particularly the one abutting Just Cartridges and also putting in better shielding

13. Responses to any planning matters – Lindsey farm – DP said that the PC had on 1st February 2022 asked WODC to investigate possible planning breaches. As yet no response but as Cllr Rylett pointed out WODC were very understaffed and it was agreed that the PC would wait until middle of March before chasing and ask Carl Rylett to help. The applications relating to Oak Cottage and to Gill Mill had been discussed by PC between meetings and were not felt to need observation. NB noted they had been granted by WODC. In relation to Charlie Harris’s field storage tank on the Barnard Gate Road, NB had noted on WODC planning portal that although this had originally been posted for comment WODC had now notified that this application did not need planning approval.

14. Date of next meetings 21st March **( Agenda by 7th March)** and 25th April

15. AOB – R S-W raised the issue of posting notices in the village for those without internet as had been discussed before – Liz would ask the church whether either in the church or on the churchyard notice board would be a possibility, NB had found the key to the noticeboard near the village hall, the bus shelter could also be utilised but there was no resolution of where notices might be posted in High Cogges. Martin confirmed that he was investigating potential notice boards to purchase and it was confirmed that he would buy two.

Martin indicated that draft suggestions re the Jubilee had been circulated and the PC noted its approval and he and Caroline would send round the village a document for input from the village

He also said that the National Lottery had turned down funding for trees but one from TOE was still pending.