**SOUTH LEIGH AND HIGH COGGES PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**Minutes**

11th July 2022 at 19.30 in the Village Hall

Present NB, LN, DA, R S-W, and DP

Cllr Dan Levy and Cllr Andy Goodwin attended

Parishioners were in attendance

AGENDA

1. No Apologies.

2. Declarations of interest – R.S-W declared an interest in any discussion about the distribution of money from Thames Water to residents of Lymbrook Close as she is a resident of Lymbrook Close and potential beneficiary. She would not vote.

3. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as being a true record of the proceedings.

4. Constitutional matters – appointment of new councillor. Peter Grant was proposed by LN as new member of the Parish council, DP seconded and the proposal was carried unanimously. The new councillor however cannot take up his position until formalities with WODC have been carried out. The PC will welcome him formally when he next attends.

NB noted that the annual parish meeting had not happened and could not happen until the accounts had been approved. As the income of the Parish had increased there was an added layer of financial scrutiny requirements which were now in hand.

NB also drew the attention of the PC to a new code of conduct that was about to be finalised and distributed by WODC which parish councillors would have to sign up to.

5. Opportunity for any parishioner to raise a matter of concern. A parishioner attended and recorded her concerns about a number of issues with verges and footpath. Some verges were cut short and some were left very long. The village in her view looked a mess. Another parishioner thought that sight lines for motor vehicles were obstructed causing potential danger. Some of the footpaths were overgrown so that only small strips were passable. It was accepted that there were at least two strongly held but incompatible views in the village between those who wanted shorn grass and tidy verges and those who wanted the verges to be uncut so that grasses and wild flowers could flourish. Each view was voiced clearly at the meeting. It is an issue that has been raised before and it had been intended that a Public Meeting should be held to try and get a consensus.

It was agreed that landowners were not paying as much attention to the footpaths over their land as they should and as sub issues –the path at Homan’s Farm was discussed- the missing part of stile needs to be reported to OCC rather than self-help resorted to because of insurance issues and the barbed wire down Moors Lane – will be removed by NB. The PC will, when it has more time after dealing with the A40/Shores Green, try and organise a meeting. Cllr Levy said that OCC were now instructed not to cut (where traffic sight lines were not an issue) until later in the season to allow seeds to set and DA suggested that OCC might be asked to cut short at the front – so that foot passengers might walk easily and leave it long at the back so that wild flowers might be encouraged.

Another parishioner asked 3 questions (1) who was now cutting the playing field **–** Ubico(2) could the croquet area be included in the process of cutting the playing field and it was agreed that it could be and there was the view expressed that there needed to be greater communication between the PC and the mowing contractors (3) what were the plans of the PC re Monday meetings given the hiring of the hall for yoga – Thursdays and Friday evenings were generally available but the PC expressed the view that they were not enthusiastic about meetings on Friday or starting at 8.30. It was noted that the next PC meeting was on Thursday 11th August 2022 at 7.30.

A third parishioners raised several matters most of which weren’t within the scope of our terms of reference. He also made comments regarding Shores Green which were noted.

6 Opportunity for any County Councillor and / or District Councillor to update the Parish Council on any matter of relevance or concern.

Cllr Levy had prepared a report which he had sent in advance of the meeting as there had been discussion between the PC and the District and County Councillors suggesting a report might be better than oral communication at the meeting and might on occasion obviate the need for councillors to attend. In fact for whatever reason the report had not be received by the time of the meeting. This is the report.

**Covid advice**

I had hoped not to have to mention Covid again, but numbers are rising rapidly. Can I pass on the advice from Ansaf Azhar, Oxfordshire County Council’s Director for Public Health:

“It’s been great for everyone to relax after the difficult last couple of years we’ve had with rules of varying kinds meaning restrictions on our lives.

“Currently there are no restrictions but there is still good, solid guidance that people are advised to observe to protect themselves and their families, particularly vulnerable and elderly people.

“The main bit of advice is to stay at home if you feel unwell – but it’s also worth reminding people of all those things that we learned during the height of the pandemic to reduce the risk of COVID spreading.

“This includes ventilating indoor spaces and washing your hands. During periods of good weather being outdoors rather than indoors also helps reduce risks.

“We expect to see fluctuations in cases and it remains the case we need to learn to live with COVID, but we need to strike a sensible balance and I would ask people to take precautions while cases are on the rise. Let’s enjoy the summer and our regained freedoms but keep in mind that COVID-19 hasn’t gone away and we all need to play our part to live safely.”

**Cost of Living Crisis**

We are in a period of rapidly rising prices. This affects everyone, but has a higher impact on people in many rural locations, if they have a reliance on motor vehicles or are not connected to the gas network. Although gas and electricity prices are rising quickly, there is at least a cap, unlike with bottled gas or tanked oil. The County Council is lobbying government to enable us to offer some support and we are bringing a motion to the Council meeting on 12 July to add force to this effort, I hope with cross-party support.

**Vision Zero**

Following the tragic deaths of cyclists in Oxfordshire, the county has adopted ‘Vision Zero’, a vision to eliminate road deaths and serious injuries in the county. The decision adds weight to efforts to improve cycle and walking infrastructure and reduce speeds. I was pleased to speak on behalf of this motion as County Active Travel Champion. Of course, it is easier to have a vision than to put it into practice - we must promote safe walking and cycling infrastructure especially at road junctions, and we have to apply our vision in the countryside as well as the city.

Some good news is that Oxfordshire has been granted extra powers to enforce traffic violations using ANPR cameras. This permission is for specific places, but we can apply for additional locations in the future. Up to now, only Cardiff and London councils have had these powers. Among other things, these powers will make delivering “school streets”, where motor vehicles are restricted in school entry and exit times, much easier.

**Bus Improvements**

The cabinet approved a plan to improve bus services and use the £12.7 million Oxfordshire secured from national government. The plan includes cheaper fares for under-19s, 2 new rural services (around Didcot and Bicester), and bus priority improvements and traffic filters (in Oxford). Improvements to bus stops, real time information, and the quality of buses are also planned. The plan will be consulted on with the bus companies and needs government sign off.

I appreciate that such improvements might feel a bit remote for people off the main bus routes – but we are constrained by government policy and the availability of grants from central government. I and others will keep banging the drum for rural services.

**HIF1 and HIF2**

The cabinet of OCC have agreed to proceed with Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 (‘HIF1’), consisting of 4 road / bridge projects around Didcot. While it is an inherited Conservative project, the Lib-Dem led administration worked to improve provision for active travel and public transport, as well as better mitigate cost risks to the council

HIF2 is the A40 project. The cabinet approved merging the project with the P&R project to give more flexibility in the finances and more control over timescales. There are still lots of areas that need improvement in the A40 plans, particularly to make crossing between Eynsham and Salt Cross safe and convenient. **The sound insulation needed for High Cogges still needs to be committed to by the project team.**

In addition, the Shores Green project, to deliver westbound access to and eastbound access from the A40 at Cogges looks like coming for approval in the next few months. It may change traffic patterns to the south of the A40, and I would expect some new A40 avoidance routes and “preferred” ways between the A40 and A420.

Additionally he mentioned that with less need for office space within the local authority there was reorganisation both at Wood Green and the offices in Welsh Way in attempts to be more efficient and save money.

7. Report on the liaison between the Parish and the Parishes of Stanton Harcourt, Sutton, Standlake and Eynsham PC. There was nothing specific to report.

8. Jubilee booklet – It was agreed that the Jubilee Booklet was a tour de force and there was praise for Martin Spurrier who wanted it recorded how much assistance he had in achieving the result, with particular thanks to Anne Peake and a friend of hers who had reorganised the presentation. As there was sufficient money it was agreed that 6 hard-back versions would be prepared so that one could be sent to Buckingham Palace and others to the archives in Oxford and elsewhere

9.Payments to approve. Refund to Ken Brooks for payment for clerk expenses of £30 agreed, and it was agreed that other cheques needed to be reissued. It was agreed that with continuing problems with the PC bank account DP and NB would visit Barclays in Witney to try finally to resolve the internet banking issue and open a further PC account for the receipt of money from the 12 Acre Solar Farm and elsewhere

10. Butterfly count – no further information

11. Generator – no further news

12. A40 dual carriageway planning application and

13. Shores Green planning application

The PC representations in respect of A40 had been submitted and two drafts of representation in respect Shores Green had been circulated between members of the PC taking into account the various concerns that parishioners had raised. One parishioner at the meeting said that the PC should oppose the junction but the view of the PC and of the County Councillor was that the junction would happen whatever the views expressed and the PC would be better be focused on getting the best result.

The PC had been reasonable confident that OCC and the planners were responsive to the views of the PC and that reasonable plans that protected High Cogges and the rest of the village would be implemented. However immediately prior to the meeting there had been emails from OCC which caused the PC to conclude that further work needed to be done and meetings organised with OCC and in advance with Cllr Levy.

There was in any event still issues about the amount of available land between the Shores Green junction and the village of High Cogges for sound proofing, planting etc and there were unresolved issues about footpaths and cycle paths.

14.Traffic calming. The attempts to have traffic calming measures were still progressing.

15. Thames Water/Storm Overflow (EA) - progress report. DP outlined the offer that had been made by Thames Water of a community payment of £25,000. The terms of the offer were the subject to a draft that the councillors had seen and varied. There was a discussion about how the money would be distributed and the following proposals and motions were proposed, seconded and passed (1) the PC would accept the offer of £25,000 (2) the PC would send to Thames Water its views on their draft terms (3) the beneficiaries of the bulk of the money would be the residents of Lymbrook Close starting at the entrance to the close and running round all the premises within the close (4) it would be in the sum of £1000 per household and (5) the balance, if any, would be utilised in the future for the benefit of the residents of Lymbrook Close

16. Responses to any planning matters – April Cottage – there were no objections to that planning application from the PC /Homans Farm was wrongly on the agenda as a planning matter. Lindsey Farm – nothing had been heard from the enforcement department of WODC and DP would ask Cllr Rylett to chase

17 Liaison with Eynsham Estate over various matters – LN was the liaison PC with Eynsham Estate and plans were proceeding about reconfiguring the playing field and a sketch of the PC’s proposals was being sent to Savills

18. Emergency Plan – that would be ready for the next PC meeting

19. Mobile signal – there was nothing to report and would be nothing to report before November when BT/EE would get back to DP

20. Date of next meeting - Thursday 11th August – 7.30

21. AOB – DP brought the PC attention to the terms of an emails that Oli Shestopal had sent to the PC about the Tar Farm Solar Farm