

# STONESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES 2022/05

Minutes of the **Annual Parish Meeting** held on **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022** at St James Centre at 7pm

**Members present:** Cllrs David Brown (Vice Chair), Cllr Phil McArdell (Chairman), Cllr Geraldine Lawrence, Cllr Wendy Gould, Cllr Simon Powell, Cllr Mick Heduan, Cllr Matthew Parkinson (DC) and Cllr Natalie Chapple (DC)

**Others present:** Karen East (Clerk) and members of the public: Harry Holland, Nikki, Frank Huddleston, Ben Whitworth (Scouts), Peter Oleson, Susan Rudlin, Paul Bates Richard Morris & Dale, Morris Diane Bates + 2 other members of public

**Apologies:** Cllr Jim O'Brien, Cllr Eleanor Bailey, Cllr Andy Graham

Meeting commenced at 7pm

22/01. The meeting **was not recorded**.

### 22/02. **Introduction of the Councillors and the Chair and Chairman's Report**

Cllr Phil McArdell (Chairman) introduced the clerk and councillors and gave a Chairman's report.

During the year we gradually returned to face-to-face meetings even though the threat of Covid was still prominent in the press, and I would like to thank the clerk, councillors and members of the public for attending despite the risk.

The biggest achievement this year was the implementation of the 20mph speed limit within Stonesfield. Whilst the true benefit of this scheme can never be quantified, I believe that Stonesfield is a safer place because of it, and I would like to thank Cllr Mick Heduan, Paul Bates and the SAFER team for all their efforts in achieving this.

The other significant achievement this year was the launch of the Neighbourhood plan steering group (a sub-committee of the Parish Council), whose purpose will be to develop the Neighbourhood plan for the Parish of Stonesfield. This milestone would not have been achieved without the Sustainable Stonesfield team and also our sub-committee representatives Wendy Gould and Simon Powell. There is a massive amount of work ahead of us, but a great start has already been made.

The White Horse saga continues. Thankfully the Parish Council re-registered the pub as an Asset of Community Value, which has again been triggered giving the pub group 6 months to put together another bid. Let's hope that whatever the outcome we get our pub back open.

We are also pleased to be able to financially support, through grants, a wide variety of Stonesfield organisations like the Playing Fields Committee, Scouts, Primary School, Carers Café and the Repair Café.

Cllr McArdell thanked all councillors for their work this last year and looks forward to another successful year.

# STONESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES 2022/05

### 22/03. **Declarations of Pecuniary Interest.**

There were none.

22/04. The **Minutes** of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were approved and signed.  
Proposed Cllr S Powell, Seconded Cllr D Brown

### 22/05. **Matters of report arising from previous minutes.**

None

### 22/06. **Financial Report to year end 31 March 2022**

There is £12,048 surplus for the year, excluding unplanned income surplus £680 for the year. Underspend in the parish in general was due to Covid. We did however overspend within the grants section of budget. This leaves the Parish Council with £72k in the bank with £70k ring fenced for specific reasons including £15k council reserves. The new 22/23 budget has been set and is being worked against.

### 22/07. **Reports from District and County Councillors**

**Cllr Matthew Parkinson & Cllr Natalie Chapple** – Cllr A Graham has been made leader of West Oxfordshire DC today and this is why he has been unable to attend the meeting today.

West Oxfordshire, a lot has happened over the year including aid project for Ukrainian citizens and introduction of hedgehog highways, introduction of electric charge points in the district. Covid shelved quite a lot of projects unfortunately but they did support many businesses to help keep them going. WODC are questioning Thames Water actions over the years to improve biodiversity in rivers and prevent contamination. Cllr M Parkinson indicated the additional housing in Woodstock is almost a done deal on WODC land but not on Cherwell land at the moment. The Woodstock doctor's surgery is still on the agenda to be dealt with. Cllr D Brown expressed that WODC do need to start saying no to Blenheim.

### 22/08. **Report from Representatives in the Village Playing Field Representative (*Frank Huddleston*)**

The PFA has become a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) so it now has a legal identity. This also provides a limited liability to the individual trustees. The financial structure of the PFA has changed. The PFA finances are independent of the sports and social club. A large amount of money is required to keep the playing fields running. 200+ children, multiple football teams and cricket teams who wish to use the pitches.

The North Field farm site has been leased to the Playing Fields. This will be used for junior pitches. It needs £40k to convert to good grade pitches and a safe playing area.

New fence has been erected around the outside of the children's play area – this is where the outdoor gym is going to be installed (hopefully June 2022).

# STONESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES 2022/05

The PFA always needs new volunteers.

### **Scouts (*Ben Whitworth*)**

Very much trying to get back to normal. Running all scout, beaver and cub sections as they were before Covid. Pretty much at limit on numbers but need more leaders to get more children off the waiting list (approx. 50 people on the wait list). Managed to hold the duck race which was a great event. Next duck race is in July 2022. Managed to get back to most normal activities (except bingo!). Generally everything is going well. Scouts have planning for the hut. Received 37k grant from the DC. Blenheim, Parish Council, Brick sales are also bringing money in. Did not get lottery grants. Trying to get money through other options. Looking forward there is a scout camp (all going to Youlbury) and other events planned, trying to get back to normality. Thanks to the Parish Council, slate and leaders & parents for all their support.

### **Publishers of the slate (*Diane Bates*)**

Took over the slate with Paul Bates. Welcomed 2 new editors to the team of 4 and people who help with distributors (27). Team of 36 in total. 2020 was difficult not least for the advertisers (65 paid up advertisers). Advertisers had a 3-month payment holiday due to Covid to help them out. The magazine supports the scouts brick scheme. Always happy to receive content for the slate.

### **Village website (*Paul Bates*)**

The website has been running at new address since 2017. In 2021 managed to get the old address too. Format is continually developed for content. Stonesfield diary has also been added to avoid duplication of events and to help people out – encourage people to add events to this. Paul can add dates or organisers can have access.

Specific page for the neighbourhood plan has been added since 2022.

Historic photos being added regularly. Library of things that can be borrowed is also on the front page. All Parish information and slate information is also on the web.

170 people subscribe to the slate. Also link to next door.

### **Report from the school (*Harry Holland*)**

The school continues to progress. The accounts are looking better than expected. Had predicted a deficit budget but have clawed it back so relatively in balance. Hoping to be able to afford some work on the premises – outdoor classroom to complement forest school. The head teacher is leaving, the job has been advertised and applications close this week. They hope to have someone in post in September otherwise there will be an interim head. School numbers have been around 100. Looks like similar this year, maybe slightly down – small intake from pre-school.

Results in the school have improved.

### **Community Pub Group (*Peter Oleson*)**

The owner of White Horse has given intention of disposal of the pub so the community pub are putting in a bid. See pub group minutes for detail on finances. Most expenses were professional fees. Plans for forthcoming year depend on whether the group secures the pub. The campaign will ramp up again. Big thanks to the slate and reiterate thanks the Parish Council and WODC for

# STONESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES 2022/05

support and help too. Thanks to all shareholders. There are 850 members at present but expect this to increase again.  
There has been no indication of price of the pub at this stage. The owner cannot sell the pub while it is in moratorium.

### **Gardening Club (Cllr Wendy Gould)**

Gardening club is up and running again. Membership is increasing. Magnificent plant sale last year raised over £900. Articles in slate and trip to Bridewell gardens, open gardens planned. War memorial planted this afternoon in jubilee colours.

### **Common (Richard Morris)**

Fencing damaged last year has been repaired (stock proof), cattle were on the common end Dec 21 in to Spring 22.  
Tall grass and blackthorn are invasive species and are detrimental to the column. Volunteers have been working on this.  
The willows along the river need pollarding – this is going to be done in June and the PC are paying for this.  
Low evidence of horse riding and motorbikes on common so kissing gate is low priority.  
Drainage ditch needed so the rainwater moves from the gate. We need a drainage channel put in.  
Need a new log to sit on at the common. (Would not like a bench there).  
Agreement is coming to end in 2023 with Rural Payments / Natural England.  
Worth reapplying for that or looking at other ways of getting grants.

### **Neighbourhood Plan (Cllr Wendy Gould)**

Village residents are hopefully aware that the Neighbourhood Plan is underway. It eventually should have legal force at District level. The whole village is designated as a neighbourhood plan area.  
The steering group meets monthly and has met the District Officer who oversees plans, other parishes for ideas etc. Wide publicity locally including public meeting and questionnaire has taken place. Villagers will be kept informed throughout.  
Another village meeting is scheduled soon to work with volunteers, survey will hopefully be circulated later in the summer.

### **SAFER (Cllr Mick Heduan)**

In 2018 road safety report was published. Report indicated desire to make village safer by reducing speed of vehicles. Desire was to reduce speed to 20mph. Planning for this goal started 2019. Support and technical guidance from Highways helped to make this happen.  
20mph has been implemented across the village with numerous road safety improvements (including signage). Many thanks to Paul Bates for support and planning to make this happen. Cllr Andy Graham has also been a fantastic support.  
The data is already showing cars are slowed down. Average speed on Woodstock Road is 21mph (was 23mph). Laughton Hill average speed down to 25mph, previously it was 27mph.  
Re-launching community speed watch recording speeds of vehicles. 8 members in the speed watch team. The team has a new radar gun. Data reports go back to TVP.

# STONESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES 2022/05

Village travel network –combined villages are working together on a cycle network. Working with Blenheim to progress this.  
Speaking with other parishes about what the village is doing. Also speaking to Cllr Andy Graham to look at road improvements.  
(Cllr Heduan will write to delivery drivers to advise of our new speed limit)

22/09. **Report from the Police**

None

22/10. **Any other reports not covered above**

**None**

22/11. **Queens jubilee update**

The parish are in support of jubilee benches.

An image of the village is being printed and will be displayed in the village hall.

Thanks to Frank Huddleston for supplying the image.

22/12. **Any Other Matters**

None

*Meeting closed at 8.50pm*

Karen East, Clerk to Stonesfield Parish Council  
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