

Stonesfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Stonesfield Primary School on Wednesday 14th August 2024 at 7pm

Meeting starts at 7pm

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Phil McArdell

Attendees: Cllr Simon Powell, Cllr Phil McArdell (Chair), Cllr Simon Warr, Cllr David Brown, Cllr Mick Heduan, Cllr Claire Renshaw, Cllr Ursula Rice, Cllr Jessica Huband (Co-opted), Cllr Tim Sumner (WODC), Cllr Genny Early (WODC)

Other present: the clerk and 12 members of public

24/739 To receive and accept apologies for absence: Cllr Andy Graham (OCC).

24/740 Declarations of interest: Cllr Phil McArdell declared he is trustee of the SCT. Note: There is no item on the agenda relating to this. Cllr Claire Renshaw is a Village Hall Committee Member. Note: There is no item on the agenda relating to this.

24/741 To Introduce new councillors and new RFO: Cllr Ursula Rice and Cllr Claire Renshaw were introduced, along with Cherie Carruthers as the new RFO and Locum Clerk.

24/742 Co-op one councillor to fill the last remaining current vacancy: Two candidates put themselves forward, Jessica Huband and Kate England. Both addressed the meeting giving short statements about themselves and saying why they would be a good choice.

Cllr David Brown asked how they would apply their skills to help the council.

Cllr Ursula Rice asked, "What is the biggest hot potato in the village at the moment" and "What is the biggest problem needing solving"

Both candidates gave their responses.

The Clerk asked the members to vote via a show of hands.

Candidate 1 – Kate England = 1 vote

Candidate 2 – Jess Huband = 6 votes

Cllr Jessica Huband was co-opted and accepted her seat.

24/743 Public Participation: None

24/744 To approve the minutes of the meeting 11th June 2024. It was *RESOLVED* to approve the minutes of the meeting on 11th June 2024.

Proposer: Cllr Simon Warr **Seconder:** Cllr Simon Powell – all in favour.

24/745 Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting on 11th June 2024. None.

24/746 To receive reports from District, Parish, County Councillors, and clerks report.

a) Cllr Tim Sumner (DC) – updated that he is portfolio holder at the DC for Leisure, Car Parking (Off street), Culture & Heritage and Conservation & Historic Environment. He advised that WODC were acting on the national point of devolving power to Town and Parish Councils, in particular housing and planning. They will be collating feedback from the towns

and parishes, along with the other Oxfordshire Districts and produce a plan of action on how to tackle this.

Cllr Genny Early (DC) updated that the Neighbourhood Plan meeting was well attended. She had attended a session with the Citizen Advice Bureau as part of her new Cllr training and noted that in 2023-24 8,620 people in Oxfordshire were helped by the organisation. 95 people in Tackley & Stonesfield in 116 separate cases. 52% of these people had disabilities or mental health issues. She had also attended Equality and Diversity training.

As a member of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, she was reviewing waste services, currently supplied by Ubico.

Botley West Solar Farm has started investigative works by digging archaeological trenching, it would be moving north through the county, aiming to complete by the end of 2024.

Biodiversity – the timings of hedge and verge cutting are on the agenda.

Cllr David Brown said he had received several complaints on scruffiness, he asked if there was a balance that could be reached, so areas could be left, but safety and appearance were considered.

Cllr Genny Early replied that the village needs to produce a plan that is cohesive. WODC have a Nature Recovery Policy on their website, which is helpful.

b) Questions arising from the clerk's report: None.

c) To receive reports from Parish Councillors:

Cllr David Brown advised that Ed Vickers of Rectory Homes had telephoned him, putting out feelers on the development of North Farm site. Ed Vickers is using the S106 "wish list" collated as a fall back if Parish Council lost the Carla Homes appeal in 2019, and asking if the PC would be interested in these options still. Cllr David Brown has asked for plans and agreed to take a further call later in the week.

The Clerk asked if the Council is happy that Cllr David Brown act as a sole Cllr in these interactions and that for transparency and mitigating any possible scrutiny at a later date an additional Cllr or representative should also partake.

Cllr Ursula Rice proposed, seconded by Cllr Claire Renshaw that Cllr David Brown liaises on behalf of the Parish council with a deputy working close by, any reports to the PC are from both representatives, any discussions are via Teams or in person with both representatives present and notes are taken. A vote was taken: all members were in favour.

d) Cllr Mick Heduan advised that Paul Bates had circulated the SAFER report to the new councillors, there were no questions from the members on the report. Cllr Simon Warr asked what SAFER's policy is and how the VTN fitted into its scope. Cllr Mick Heduan confirmed that the two are separate projects.

Cllr Simon Warr updated on the Neighbourhood Plan, he advised that the public meeting held on the 29th July 2024 was well attended, and the majority of feedback was supportive of the work the steering group have done. All questions are available on the website. The writing of the plan was being done by Viv Kendal, who was pulling together all the information. WODC's feedback was that the adjacent landowners to the plan need to be consulted, this information has now been sourced from the Land Registry.

Character Assessments were making progress, and it is hoped that the first draft will be ready in December 2024.

24/747 To consider and re-confirm the working groups for the council:

- a) To consider and re-confirm that SAFER remains as a Parish Council working group under direction of the Parish Council: Proposed: Cllr Rice, Seconded: Cllr Powell
- b) To consider and re-confirm that Neighbourhood Plan group remains as a Parish Council working group under direction of the Parish Council: Proposed: Cllr Warr, Seconded: Cllr Renshaw.
- c) To consider and re-confirm that the Common remains as a Parish Council working group under direction of the Parish Council: Proposed: Cllr Rice, Seconded: Cllr Powell

24/748 To confirm representatives for each of the following areas of the council:

- a) Playing Field representative – Cllr David Brown
- b) Village Hall representative – Cllr Claire Renshaw
- c) Solar Panel representative – Cllr Simon Powell
- d) Finance representative – Cllr Phil McArdell, Cllr Ursula Rice to be added as signatory.
- e) Neighbourhood Plan representatives – Cllr Simon Powell, Cllr Simon Warr, Cllr Jess Huband.
- f) Stonesfield Community Trust representative – Await response from Trust on a Cllr rep.
- g) SAFER representative – Cllr Mick Heduan
- h) VTN representative – Cllr Mick Heduan
- i) Biodiversity representative – Cllr Ursula Rice
- j) Big Events (Blenheim/Cornbury etc) representative – Cllr Jess Huband.

The above appointments were taken as one: Proposer Cllr Phil McArdell, Seconder Cllr Simon Warr – all in favour.

24/749 Financial Matters

- a) To approve financial payments.

The council *RESOLVED* to approve the finance report circulated by the clerk.

Clerk (outgoing clerk) – June and July office expenses - £78.20

RFO – July and August - £150 per month

Outgoing clerk part month payment £Confidential

HMRC £Confidential

Oxfordshire County Council Pensions £Confidential

Stonesfield Primary School – school meeting room hire (annual) £360

Windrush Press – NP printing – inv 115220 - £185

WODC – grass cutting £130.08 invoice 33578248

WODC – inv 3357512x – emptying litter / dog bins April to Sept £1,044.58

WODC – inv 33578972 – grounds maintenance / grass cut June - £1,155.53

WODC – inv 33574196 – April grass cut £372.08

Microshade hosting Citrix - £462.42 (file storage annual, portal and back up) – inv 19514

Vision ICT – 2 new councillor email addresses (invoice expected £48)

Vision ICT – RFO new email address – inv 18604 £24

Vision ICT – inv 18358 - £240 – annual email hosting (for existing email addresses)

Scouts Grant - £1,500

The hedge cutting quote of £1,026 was discussed and it was asked that the Clerk find out how much cutting the top and one side is, and then the top and the other side next year.

*£confidential relates to PAYE figures – the councillors have visibility of these.
The budget for PAYE has already been approved*

b) To consider grant requests received in advance of the meeting.
A grant request was received from the Scouts for £1,500. This was circulated in advance.
Council RESOLVED to approve this grant request for the full sum of £1,500 towards building costs.

24/750 Planning Applications To consider all recent planning applications received from West Oxfordshire District Council.

Councillors discussed the current planning applications

24/01878/HHD – extension - Karinya Churchfields Stonesfield – no comment

24/01523/HHD extension - 2 Busby Close Stonesfield Witney – no comment

24/751 Stonesfield Library: This is a matter for the Village Hall Committee.

24/752 Recruitment of new clerk: Cllr Phil McArdell, Cllr Claire Renshaw, Cllr Mick Heduan will have a call with the applicants. Cherie Carruthers has agreed to Locum for 3-6 months and will prepare interview questions, scoring matrix and check sheet.

24/753 To consider whether the Children’s play area should become an asset of SPC:
The Playing Field Association currently get an annual grant of £2,500 from the PC towards maintenance for the play equipment. If the equipment becomes an asset this figure would go directly into the sinking fund for it upkeep. Cllr Simon Warr requested that the Playing Field Association give the PC a financial breakdown and plan of their accounts. This will help determine whether the PC need to take over the asset or not.

24/754 Biodiversity

a) To consider whether SPC should adopt a Biodiversity Policy: It was AGREED that the PC will prepare a policy, Cllr Ursula Rice will draft the policy and bring back to council.

b) To understand the view of the Parish Council with regards to the management of the verges within Stonesfield ahead of Genny Early (DC) discussing with WODC: Cllr Genny Early discussed this earlier in the meeting with Cllr David Brown, a cohesive plan needs to be formulated and the management of the plan will come out of the Biodiversity Policy, when drafted and adopted.

24/755 To consider the Neighbourhood Plan HNA policy and whether council supports it: Agreed at June’s meeting.

24/756 Parish Matters

Village shop – The PC would like to invite the owner of the complex to a PC meeting, as the PC would like to know what powers it has, if any.

24/757 Items for information or next agenda only

- Second waste bin at the village shop
- Planning responses – how does the PC deal with major planning applications. Discuss a working group and an actions template.

24/758 Date of next council meeting

4th September 2024– 7pm (Stonesfield Primary School)

Meeting closes 9:20pm