

**Minutes of the Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council Meeting
held on Thursday 14th March 2024.**

1. Present.

Mrs Penny Budgen – Chair.
Mr Nicholas Keene.
Dr Dimitrios Hatzis.
Dr. Sarah Stanhope.
Mr Alan Woodward.
Dr Stephen Fraser – Clerk.

Eight members of the general public.

2. Apologies.

Apologies had been received from

Mrs Claire Cable-Alexander.
Mr. Mark Coleman – VofWH Councillor.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting.

These were signed as a true record by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising.

i. Replace Gate between A420 and Old Oxford Road.

This has now been installed.

ii. Registration of Village Greens.

The Clerk explained that in order to complete the paperwork as owner of the land, he had to supply proof of ownership. If requesting registration based upon free usage, the owner had also to be named. Since the land in question is not registered with the land registry, ownership lay in the historical deeds and wills held in the local County Archives. He stated that there is no such thing as unowned land with the Crown taking ownership of any land not passed on by will.

The Clerk felt that the work involved in uncovering the legal ownership of the land was prohibitive and proposed that the two Greens be given protection by including them within the Neighbourhood Priorities Statement. This proposal was accepted by council. **The draft Neighbourhood Priorities Statement to be amended to include the village greens.**

iii. Parish Council Website.

The Clerk stated that he had been reviewing the current web site and the requirements for easy access to parishioners with feedback. Whilst the web site had to hold static information required by the External Auditors it did not lend itself to rapid posting of news and queries from the community. Other parishes appeared to supplement their web site with a Facebook offering.

Following a brief discussion with Mr Philip Hatzis, the best approach would be to refresh the current web site using a Static Site Generator and creating a Facebook Group which the council would have administrative control over whilst parishioners were able access and comment. By making it a closed group, requests to join the group could be vetted against the electoral roll.

It was **resolved** to proceed on this basis and the Clerk would secure the current web site at a cost of approximately £30.00 per year.

iv. Allotments Mains Water Survey

Mrs Budgen said that there had been no progress on the survey but that the issues with the charities bank account were being addressed.

5. Planning.

The no applications had been received.

Mr Woodward reported that following the objection raised by the council, work on the Old School in Tubney had been stopped subject to the owner applying for planning permission for changes to a listed building.

6. Finance.

The Clerk reported the current financial position as follows:

• Precept balance brought forward.	£2,463.48
• Record payment of the following.	
• Cheque 000082 lost and time expired credit	(£201.13)
• Mrs Budgen – Replacement cheque 000082	£201.13
• Precept balance carried forward.	£9,813.39
• CIL balance brought forward.	£13,388.90
• Record payment of the following.	
• Clerk – Gate Installation Main Road Footpath	£327.94
• CIL balance carried forward.	£13,060.96

7. Church Community Area.

Mr MacElvogue gave a detailed update on the fund raising for the Community Space in the church. A considerable amount of grant money had been recently received bringing the total amount of received or committed to £120.9k. Despite having to re-cost the project in the light of inflation and the need to obtain a new quotation from the builder, there were sufficient funds available to commit to work starting on the 15th April 2024.

When asked, he stated that VAT could be claimed back on the construction costs only.

Having been advised that it was best to ask for everything at the same time, the project scope had been expanded to include an audio-visual technology package.

The current shortfall amounted to just under £40k. Fundraising would continue with a number of grant applications remaining live and out for consideration.

8. Memorial Garden.

Now that the weather had improved it was anticipated that work on the garden would recommence in April once the builders had been set loose in the church.

9. Fyfield Bus Stop Lighting.

Following concerns from residents about catching Oxford bound buses in the dark, Mrs Budgen organised a site visit by OCC. They are currently awaiting a quotation from SSE to power a light. If this is not practical, a solar powered light will be the solution. Final costs and any Parish Council contribution to be determined.

10. **Inter-Village Connectivity.**

Dr Hatzis envisaged better connectivity between the two main settlements utilising the underpass. This would need improvement to alleviate flooding and lighting to make walking safe at night. In addition, he was looking into making safe access to the A420 from the underpass with steps and ramps. If the Abingdon Road bus stops were moved to this position, there would be safe access to each stop whatever the amount of traffic on the A420 without the need for central reservations.

The project as a whole is complicated by the multiple land owners involved: St. Johns and Magdalen Colleges, Frilford Golf Course and OCC themselves.

Dr Hatzis had contacted Gemma Chandler of Savills, agents for St. Johns, for preliminary discussions. It was obvious that a study would be needed to seek practical solutions.

11. **Flooding Issues – Appleton Road and Digging Lane.**

The flooding on Appleton Lane was due to a collapsed/blocked culvert. OCC had inspected and cleared the culvert but it blocked almost immediately with mud despite the ditches being cleared by Ben Lay.

Mrs Budgen would get OCC to Jet the culvert and Ben would clear the ditches once again.

On Digging Lane, Ben Lay had cleared the ditches in his field leading to Pilling Brook and water was flowing freely here. OCC had attended but did not inspect the culvert due to bramble growth. Mr Lay had since cleared this providing access to the culvert manhole. Mr Varney stated that the water table was very high at the moment and that he was having to pump his house dry on a daily basis. As all the houses there were on septic tanks there was a distinct risk of pollution from drain overflow.

Mrs Budgen to encourage another visit from OCC.

12. **Neighbourhood Priorities Statement and Survey.**

This government initiative to provide a simpler form of planning statement from Parish Councils had been running for nearly two years. Although the primary legislation had been passed, District were still awaiting details of the exact format and content of the document.

Mrs Budgen stated that the council had lodged a first draft with District and that the next meeting of the group would be next week.

Following the parish survey, the one of the most desirable requests was the development of a circular walk in the parish for dog walkers etc. Consultation, via Gemma Chandler, with Mr Lay had failed to establish a mutually compatible route.

Whilst access to the countryside was currently covered in the document, it was suggested that it be expanded to cover the village green spaces and the underpass project.

13. **Tubney Action Group.**

Mrs Alexis Rushgrove gave an update to council on the recently formed Tubney Action Group formed to counter Hill's quarry proposals. The group, consisting of about 25 members, was meeting fortnightly at PhamaGenesis.

As Hills had an option of the land north of the A420, the issue should also be of concern to Fyfield residents.

To date, no indication had been given as to when an application would be lodged and how long we would have to respond.

In preparation, the group were speaking to a Planning Consultant and had identified Environment, Health, Transport, Hydrology and Wind as areas which might require specialist advice.

The group was building a list of interested parties to lobby for support and requested the Parish Council's help in communication with local residents which was forthcoming.

It was estimated that the planning consultants fees would be of the order of £2,500.00 + VAT. It was **resolved** that the Parish Council would meet this cost.

14. AOB.

Mrs Budgen asked for a volunteer to complete the OCC Customer Experience Questionnaire. **Dr Stanhope volunteered to complete the online feedback.**

There being no other items, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:45pm.

Next Meeting Thursday 9^h May 2024.