

Signed (Berrick Salome Parish Council
Chairman)

THE PARISH OF BERRICK SALOME

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19 July 2004 at the Berrick Salome Village Hall at 8.00 p.m.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Ian Glyn, and Chris and Mary Whittle.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 27th May 2003 were read by John Radice, and approved and signed by Sarah Hicks.

3. Matters arising

Church Lane: Repairs are now in OCC's budget for next year.

Parish Council Clerk: Sue Clayton has been appointed.

Compensation to the Chequers: Sarah Hicks said that Thames Water had agreed to a small amount.

Gravel extraction: Nicol Glyn said that those who had written to OCC have been told the date for the hearing.

Verge posts: David Pelling observed that their condition was unchanged, and asked for parish councillors to chase OCC.

Minutes: Nicol Glyn suggested that these be circulated earlier by email to councillors and those present.

4. The Annual Report of Parish Council

This was presented by the chairman, Sarah Hicks.

The Parish Council's year began with the official opening of the playground, which had been installed by the retiring council. Jules Thomson, the Vice-Chairman of South Oxfordshire District Council performed the opening, and various villagers and their children attended the ceremony.

The proposed gravel pits in the surrounding area has been a cause of great concern this year. We called an extra council meeting to discuss the proposals and the meeting had one of the highest attendance rates on record. The overwhelming feeling was that we should join the fight to stop the development and as a result we donated £1,000 – which forms one third of our annual precept – to PAGE funds. Unfortunately, the problem has not gone away. It seems the required amount from this area has fallen but the plan is still in the County Council's strategic plan, which is still open for discussion and debate. We can do no more on this until September, when we shall hope for an update from PAGE.

The Parish Council has seen 7 planning applications this year. Of these, 1 was withdrawn, 5 granted and 1 refused. I believe 2 of these are worth mentioning here. Firstly, the rejected proposal was for four new houses on the open orchard land next to Parsonage Farm – the Parish Council had mixed views on this but after discussions, we sent a letter expressing our varied opinions to the SODC who later rejected the application.

The other one I would like to briefly mention is the internal alterations and addition of external porch to The Chequers. The Parish Council offered some comments to the SODC regarding the internal layout but the plans as proposed have been granted with the normal conditions regarding commencement within 5 years and samples of materials being suitable.

The Parish Council took issue along with Boris Johnson over the large number of low-flying and noisy training aircraft that have been coming out of Benson. The result of this was various letters going to Ivor Caplin MP, the minister concerned and some reduction in the number of aircraft going over our village, at least at weekends.

Finally, I feel it is appropriate to say "Thank you" officially to everybody who has been involved with the repainting and general improvements to this village hall. I think everyone can agree that the hall and its surroundings were in need of repair and the work has been carried out to a high standard. So well done and thank you to all involved.

5. To receive the observations of the County Councillor and the District Councillors

Sue Cooper, Liberal Democrat councillor for the Benson Ward, reported as follows:

Planning

Work on the new Local Plan continues. A Public Enquiry is being held. (Several of the sessions were in Benson Parish Hall and the others at Crowmarsh.)

Housing

The District as a whole suffers as ever from a lack of affordable housing. New Local plan will require a higher level of social housing, increasing from 25% on sites for 10 or more at the moment to 40% (over 3000 population) and 50% (under 3000) The draft County Structure plan is asking for 50% everywhere although how this will be achieved if districts don't require 50% as well remains to be seen! About 100 affordable homes were completed last year. 'Social housing' covered shared ownership schemes as well as controlled rent. In villages, equity ownership was limited to 80%, with conditions attached to selling on to ensure buyers met similar criteria. The meeting discussed the effect of this policy upon development generally.

Leisure

Much delivered through SOLL who run most of our sports centres. Little has changed in these in the past year. The new SODC administration decided last May not to replace the Sports development officer to carry on the work in the villages but now they have decided that a sports officer is needed and we hope the new officer will be in place soon. Grant aid is given to many other providers of leisure facilities, eg parishes

New Website

SODC has recently installed a new website which is supposed to be more user friendly – quicker to load and better able to be kept up to date. Same address – www.southoxon.gov.uk Have a look at it and see what you think. Try it in the library if you don't have access to the internet at home.

Environmental Health

The new head has carried out staff restructuring.

New licensing arrangements due – new regulations still not clear.

There is wide concern about the future of our local hospitals.

Didcot Town centre

Building work is going on. Taylor Woodrow are responsible for the new Orchard Centre with 28 shops, bars and restaurants. It is hoped that the new Sainsburys will be open by Christmas. A planning application is being processed for the 5 screen cinema fronting onto the new town square. An Arts Centre is also being planned for the other side of the square (on the site of the former Sommerfield store.)

Community Safety

This one of the safest areas in the country in terms of crime. But many people still list crime reduction as one of their priorities. The Community Safety partnership (Police, local councils etc) receive funding from the Home Office for specific projects eg on domestic violence, drugs outreach, drug & alcohol misuse project worker etc. SODC has put £100,000 in its budget for this year for community wardens but this requires joint funding from Thames Valley Police in order to get Home Office grants and we are not yet sure how much the Police can commit to this.

Work on CCTV installation in Wallingford & Henley continues.

Car Parking

A consultation exercise on car parking fees was carried out. Fees are being introduced in Watlington car park starting in August.

Waste Management & recycling

Currently recycling rate is just under 25%. But this must increase – government targets are high for us. Please remember that cans and plastic can go into your recycling box as well as paper and card. If anyone needs a recycling box, or knows of someone else who might use one, contact public amenities at SODC 01491 823416. May I also remind you that the County Council are promoting junk mail reduction packs. The community waste collections have been rationalised on to 9 key sites and includes separate garden compostable waste collections over the summer months. This doesn't affect us much because of our proximity to Oakley Wood where all types of domestic waste can be taken.

The Council was marked as "Good" in the recent CPA inspection.

A Community Strategy, agreed by the South Oxfordshire Partnership, has been launched. It has 20 measurable targets covering a range of issues such as educational achievement, health and waste management. See the SODC website for more details.

Felix Bloomfield, Conservative councillor for the Benson Ward, welcomed the numbers attending the Berrick Salome AGM, and reported further as follows:

Following the elections held last May, the Conservative Party Group took control of the Council. The number of Councillors has been reduced from 50 to 48 and some wards have changed as agreed by the Boundary Commission. The Council has a Cabinet of 8 members, one Scrutiny Committee, one Overview Committee and one main Planning Committee and one Licensing Committee. A major change has been the one main Planning Committee which meets every other week. Targets set by the government for dealing with applications are being achieved.

When we were elected we stated our main aim was to keep Council Tax within inflation, and this we have done with a 2.6% increase. We have also set out our priorities following various consultations:

Fear of crime

We are introducing CCTV in Henley and Wallingford by this summer and Didcot by next year. There is £100,000 in a growth budget to have 8 Police Community Support Officers with a matching grant from the Police. Work with the Community Safety Committee involves Parish Councils, volunteers and the Police. We have given out some Anti-social Behaviour Contracts which have resulted in fewer problems in those areas.

Environment

Parish skips for green and household waste have been reintroduced. Abandoned cars are now being taken away within 5 working days. There is an extra crew to enable the quick removal of fly-tipping on A roads. It is now possible to have more than one green box for the weekly rubbish collection of recyclables. Help from all is requested by organising clean-up events and reporting anyone seen fly-tipping.

Affordable housing

There is much pressure on the Council to build more houses, with OCC draft Structure Plan requiring 1,000 new houses in the Green Belt outside Oxford, which we are fighting. 'Exception sites' have several completed schemes in the District and more in the pipeline. These are where a housing survey shows need and where planning permission would not normally be agreed. £1m from the Community Investment Fund (from sale of housing stock) is to go towards providing new homes.

Gravel extraction

This is not an SODC responsibility, but the Council supports PAGE's efforts. The Public Enquiry takes place in September 2004: John Howell will be speaking. Of concern at the moment is the apathy towards to the issue in Benson.

Flooding

Last winter we had not only river flooding but springs causing problems. The budget now includes schemes to improve those areas liable to flood.

6. Statement of the Parish Council's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2004 and observations

Derek Shaw tabled the accounts as follows:

BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL

SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31/03/2004

2002/2003	RECEIPTS	2002/2004
£3,000.00	Precept	£3,000.00
£5.69	Interest	£6.30
£16,538.03	Sundry (Funding for playground)	
<u>£19,543.72</u>	TOTAL Receipts	<u>£3,006.30</u>

PAYMENTS

£281.72	General administration	£58.75
£190.48	Insurance	£421.78
£538.20	Clerks fees	£567.00
£96.35	OALC membership	
£625.00	Running costs - grass cutting etc.	£730.00
£173.91	Toad Signs	
£17,541.03	Play ground	£69.33
	Dog bin installation & emptying	£290.38
£446.50	Car park gate	
	Election expenses	£405.89
£300.00	Jubilee celebration	
	Donation to PAGE	£1,175.00
£60.00	Village Hall rental	£80.00
<u>£20,253.19</u>	TOTAL PAYMENTS	<u>£3,798.13</u>

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS SUMMARY

Balance bought forward 01/04/03	£3,995.90
Total receipts	£3,006.30
Total payments	-£3,798.13
	<u>£3,204.07</u>

REPRESENTED BY

Current account	£1,756.69
Business Premium account	£1,347.08
Community account	£97.30
Cash	£3.00
	<u>£3,204.07</u>

The precept remained at £3,000.

The payment of £1,000 to PAGE attracted VAT, which he was trying to recover.

7. The accounts and report of the Berrick Salome Quarry Charity

Marion Shaw tabled a paper explaining the nature of the Quarry Charity, which receives income of £2,000 per annum from Wilkinson's woodyard, and whose disbursements are controlled by Charity Commission rules. The Charity was at liberty to accumulate funds. The policy of the Management Committee was to support projects of lasting value.

There was a balance in the account of £4,829.

Over the last year the Charity made no disbursements, although a couple of informal approaches have been made. It had recently been agreed to give £2,000 towards repairs to the north side of the church. Karin Bateman said that the Village Hall Committee may soon be asking for a grant.

John Radice enquired about rent reviews: David Pelling said that the Committee had been professionally advised to leave it at the present level, in order to keep the present tenant.

8. Election of Committee of Management of the Berrick Salome Quarry Charity

With the death of Norman Willifer, there was a vacancy in the committee. Neville Gill was elected on a proposal by David Pelling, seconded by Nicol Glyn.

The rest of the management committee comprising Chris Kilduff, David Pelling, Tim Clayton, Tom Curran, and Marion Shaw was re-elected en bloc.

9. The accounts and report of the Berrick Salome Relief in Need Charity

The Administrative Officer is now Chris Cussens, with Ian Cohen, Chris Whittle, Sally Pelling and Sue Clayton as fellow trustees. Chris Cussens explained the purpose of the Charity, i.e. to make grants of money to persons in need in Berrick Salome. He encouraged people to contact him to apply. Examples of criteria included college university expenses; holidays for those on benefit; disability expenses, etc.

The capital balance of the fund stood at £15,512. No payments were made in the financial year to 31/3/04; but since then a grant of £350 has been given.

10. Report of the Berrick and Roke Village Hall Management Committee

Derek Cooper reported to the Meeting.

£5,000 has been spent since Christmas 2003, mostly on interior decorations and works to the carpark. Some has been done by volunteers (exterior decorations).

Wallingford Bridge Club had expressed interest in a regular hire, and had a week's trial. If confirmed, this would bring an income of £500 per month.

Heating oil had been stolen from the tank, for which an insurance claim had been made

11. Appointments of Representatives to other organisations

Chris Whittle was re-elected as parish representative to the Millstream Day Centre, Benson. He attends 2 meetings there a year.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 Next Meeting

Nicol Glyn asked for this to be in May, as is customary.

12.2 Helicopters

John King observed that these now seem to be flying very low, right across the village. Marion Shaw said that the RAF were not regularly manning their complaints number: her husband had wasted an hour trying to get through.

There being no other business, the Meeting concluded at 9.15 pm.