

Signed (Berrick Salome Parish Council
Chairman)

THE PARISH OF BERRICK SALOME

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 6th June 2005 at the Berrick Salome Village Hall at 8.00 p.m.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Sarah Russell.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 19th July 2004 were read by John Radice, and approved and signed by Sarah Hicks.

3. Matters arising

Minutes: Nicol Glyn expressed thanks for the minutes circulated by email.

Meeting date: Sarah Hicks apologised for the late timing: it had been the first available date.

New licensing arrangements: Sue Cooper said that applications should be submitted covering anything you might plan to put on, naming both the building and responsible person. SODC Environmental Health can be contacted for guidance. Sarah Hicks confirmed that the application was being dealt with by the Hall Committee, and was already underway.

Community Safety: Sue Cooper said that there were plans to send a mobile police unit to places which suffer particular vandalism e.g. village halls. The new Police Community Support Officers had half their salary paid by the district councils: it was hoped that they may appear in the villages.

Waste Management & recycling: Sue Cooper said that paper sacks will be going on sale for green waste.

4. The Annual Report of Parish Council

This was presented by the chairman, Sarah Hicks.

The Parish Council has had a varied and busy year. Whereas last year we saw just 7 planning applications, this year the number has risen to 20, with 18 being approved and the other 2 being withdrawn prior to the SODC making a decision. On 2 occasions this year, Parish Councillors were split in their views on applications and we felt the best way of dealing with this was to send letters to the SODC to express our differences in opinion.

One of these applications was the proposed development at Roke Farm of removing the existing farm buildings and replacing it with a development of basically five dwellings including two so-called low-cost houses. This application was withdrawn prior to the SODC making a decision.

That application prompted a discussion about low-cost housing and whether it was required or desired in this group of villages and we have the opportunity to undertake a low-cost housing survey which will determine everybody's views on the matter. Delivering a questionnaire to every household in the Parish and returning the responses to find the results would do this, but obviously, to get a fair picture we would need as many people to respond as possible. So if you find such a questionnaire on your doorstep, please don't put it straight in your recycling bin!

Towards the end of the year, our local area responder who was trying to raise funds from this and other Parishes to support his work approached us. He is a volunteer who works with the ambulance

service to reach urgent call-outs within the stipulated time frame. We agreed that it should not be the responsibility of Parish Councils to fund this work but private individuals can obviously donate to his cause if they so wish. If anybody would like more information on that, please speak to Sue Clayton.

Following on from this we had a presentation by Richard Tracey, who is basically the area's Ambulance Service representative and the Community De-fibrillation Officer. It appears that businesses and communities are being encouraged to invest in a de-fibrillator and train people in how to use them in an emergency. We have decided to order a machine and place it in a secure box and position it in a central location. Various locations have been suggested including the village hall and just inside the allotments. The cost to the Council is £760 (plus the cost of a secure box) and training to use it is free to anyone who would be interested. Again, if anyone is interested in being trained let us know and we will co-ordinate with Mr Tracey.

The threat of gravel extraction in our area appears to have gone away for the time being. A press release was issued by PAGE in December, stating that the Examination in Public, that took place in September last year, recommended that this area should be removed from the County Council's Structure Plan. They went further to suggest a change in the Council's policy in suggesting brand new areas for extraction purposes. Basically, this means that it will be much harder to include this area in the future as the reasons are going to have to be that much stronger. I have a full copy of the press release, should anyone like to read it but I think we should congratulate PAGE and thank them for their hard work. Thanks also to everybody who wrote privately, against this plan.

We noted from last year's meeting that the posts near the village hall are to be maintained by the Highways authority and we have contacted them to come and re-erect those that have been knocked over. Unfortunately, they are not considering this to be a high priority but it is in the pipeline. Hopefully the work will be carried out at some stage but they will not commit to a date at this time. They suggested that we contact them in a few months time if nothing has happened.

Other areas under consideration are the resurfacing of Church Lane, (which is keeping Ian Glyn busy), also the possibility of some kind of footpath from the Green Lane area to the playground and finally, whether the parking area at the end of Weller Close can be improved at all. These last two are areas being discussed and whether anything can be done about either of them is yet to be decided. For more information, please come to future Parish Council meetings.

The owners and staff of the Home Sweet Home have kindly allowed us to put a bottle bank in their car park. This is proving to be a success and we thank them for letting us do this. Please refer to the notice boards for times when they have asked us not to use it.

Finally, conscientious dog-owners will already be aware of the dog waste bin that we put in the field behind the village hall last year. We are ordering a second bin, which will be installed in or around the allotments and footpath area in the near future. We are hoping this will encourage other dog-owners to take up this opportunity to make it a more pleasant place to walk.

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

The inspector's report on the Local Plan inquiry arrived in mid May and officers are going through it. Following that and any possible alterations, the plan should be adopted later this year.

Development control rates of processing are getting quicker. Most applications are determined under delegated powers now. As many residents are well aware, staffing in the planning enforcement section is very low. Over 700 enforcement cases are outstanding. A Best Value review of enforcement has been carried out and its recommendations categorising cases and speeding up procedures adopted but it remains to be seen how the backlog will be addressed.

Housing

As ever the District as a whole suffers 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 homes at the moment to 40% (over 3000 population) and 50% (under 3000) Fewer affordable homes have been completed this year.

NB Since the annual parish meeting, the inspector's report recommended, and SODC accepted, that the figure should be 40% on sites of 5 or more in these smaller settlements.

Website

SODC continues to improve its website www.southoxon.gov.uk There are plans to make it possible to book and pay for things like bulky waste collection and sports facilities over the coming year.

Environmental Health

New licensing arrangements are now being introduced. The new licensing committee members have been undergoing training. There are 3 types of licence – premises, person and TEN's – temporary events notices. The new system ought to simplify things in time but I can envisage teething troubles.

Didcot Town centre

Building work on the shops is almost complete. The stores which have been let will be fitted out soon. You can already see the New Look shop and other well known names such as Woolworths, Argos, Next, Spec Savers, Superdrug and others should soon appear. Last year I said that we expected the new Sainsburys to open before Christmas and indeed it did. A contract to build a 5-screen cinema, fronting onto the new town square is being sorted out now. Likewise, for the Arts Centre on the other side of the square (on the site of the former Somerfield 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. A new Community Safety Strategy has recently been agreed, with 2 overarching aims – to reduce crime (by a demanding 15%) and to maintain low levels of fear of crime. The focus will be on the following crimes: theft of & from or tampering with vehicles, domestic burglary, theft of bicycles, theft from a person, personal robbery, criminal damage, assault & wounding.

The partnership (which is responsible for the strategy) also agreed to give priority to action to address the following issues:

- anti-social behaviour including criminal damage & environmental issues such as noise, litter, vandalism, and graffiti
- property crime (vehicles and dwellings)
- alcohol and drug related crime and behaviours
- violent crime, including domestic violence
- road safety (speeding, dangerous driving and illegal parking)

CCTV is operational in Wallingford & Henley and schemes for Didcot and Thame are proceeding but there is little sign of the mobile unit yet although work on specifying the equipment so that we can go out to tender to buy it should take place in the next few weeks. The main problem is determining who and how the equipment will be used. It is hoped that the new Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) can be utilised.

Waste Management & recycling

Currently recycling rate is under our target. As always, if anyone needs a recycling box, or knows of someone else who might use one, contact public amenities at SODC or the parish clerk or me.

County and districts all promote waste minimisation and Oxfordshire is amongst the best in the country for this. Officers have been asked to investigate with Grundons methods for collecting garden waste separately probably using biodegradable paper sacks in future. The community waste collections at 9 key sites include separate garden compostable waste collections over the summer months. But our composting targets were not achieved last year from these collections. This doesn't affect us much because of our proximity to Oakley Wood where all types of domestic waste can be taken. We continue to investigate community composting or perhaps shredding sessions but I'm having difficulty in getting a response from OCC on whether we could use their site in St Helens Avenue.

Car Parking

There is still much concern about the introduction of charges in the Watlington car park. Watlington Parish Council are negotiating with SODC to take over the car park there to keep it free but then they will have to find the money for the rates payable on it (& repairs when necessary).

Tony Crabbe, Conservative County councillor, reported as follows:

Representation on the Council stood as follows: Conservative 17, Labour 9 and Green 5. The Executive were now all Conservative members, and Keith Mitchell remains leader.

Executive organisation: after problems with the Finance department last year, one of the executive has been given specific responsibility for it. The government also requires that Children's Services are overseen by a member of the executive: this has now been included in the Education Department – already the biggest directorate, and now a very large department. Tony Crabbe himself has stepped down from the executive to give more time to local issues.

Council Tax: the key issue facing the Council was to get the budget under control and avoid a large Council Tax rise. Last year it rose by only 4½%: the aim was to reduce that increase annually.

Gravel extraction: inspectors reported and recommended that this issue be removed from the Structure Plan; this was agreed by the full Council. The matter will now be dealt with in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework. TC has a copy of the Framework programme, which is due to complete by September 2008. With the strong evidence brought forward on archaeology and landscape, it now seemed likely that several small areas would be chosen, rather than the large area being opposed by PAGE.

Church Lane TC has been trying to get something done for 8 years – and will continue to support the parish's representations.

Road repairs generally: in reply to a question from Ray Perfect, TC said that he didn't know why the south of the county gets a poorer service than the north. It must be a management problem.

6. Statement of the Parish Council's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2005 and observations

Derek Shaw tabled the accounts as follows:

SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31/03/2005

2003/2004 RECEIPTS	2004/2005
£3,000.00 Precept	£3,000.00
£6.33 Interest	£12.27
£3,006.30 TOTAL Receipts	£3,012.27

PAYMENTS

£58.75 General administration	£166.00
£421.78 Insurance	£462.10
£567.00 Clerks fees	£655.20
OALC membership	0
£730.00 Running costs - grass cutting etc.	£1008.75
£69.33 Play ground	£58.75
£290.38 Dog bin installation & emptying	£345.24
£405.89 Election expenses	0
£1,175.00 Donation to PAGE	0
£80.00 Rental of rooms for Parish meeting	£170.00
£3,798.13 TOTAL PAYMENTS	£2866.04

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS SUMMARY

Balance bought forward 01/04/03	£3,204.07
Total receipts	£3,012.27
Total payments	-£2,866.04
	£3,350.30

REPRESENTED BY

Current account	£1,890.65
Business Premium account	£1,359.35
Community account	£97.30
Cash	£3.00
	£3,350.30

The precept remained at £3,000.

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

David Pelling reported as follows:

There had been no further requests for grants; £2,000 had been disbursed to the church for repairs to the church as agreed last year.

There was £4,860 in a deposit account, and £345 in a current account. £75 in interest had been received.

Wilkinson's lease runs out in December 2005, and the Committee has been considering options and rental levels. Mr Wilkinson has confirmed he wishes to stay. The planning consent is to him and his son individually, restricted to a woodyard and sawmill, and SODC have said that no alternative use is likely to be allowed. With no services, and difficult access at a bend in the B4009, it is not a valuable site. The rent has been £2,000 per annum for 10 years. The Committee are of the view that it should remain around that level, perhaps marginally increased.

Karin Bateman suggested fencing the playground and renewing the Village Hall floor, as suitable projects for the Charity to support.

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

The current management committee comprising Chris Kilduff, David Pelling, Tim Clayton, Tom Curran, Marion Shaw and Neville Gill was re-elected en bloc on a proposal by Chris Wittle, seconded by Nicol Glyn.

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

The current trustees are Chris Cussens (Administrative Officer), Ian Cohen, Chris Whittle, Sally Pelling and Sue Clayton. Chris Whittle announced his retirement; Jane Franklin was elected in his place, proposed by Marion Shaw and seconded by Sam Clayton.

Chris Cussens explained the purpose of the Charity, i.e. to make grants of money to persons in poverty / need in Berrick Salome. He encouraged people to contact him to apply, or nominate someone they knew to be in need. Any such approach would be confidential. Examples of criteria included college university expenses; holidays for those on benefit; disability expenses, etc. The Charity would be very keen to help, with grants say up to £1,000. Typically sums paid have been £50 – 150.

He tabled the accounts as follows:

Financial Statement for the year ended 31st August 2004

Receipts and Payments Account

Receipts	y.e. 31.08.04	y.e. 31.08.03
Interest on 195 M&G Charibond shares	14.84	14.82
Rents from Chalgrove charity y.e. 31 December	309.01	309.01
Interest on COIF charities Deposit A/c	562.97	537.73
	<u>£886.82</u>	<u>£861.56</u>
Payments	y.e. 31.08.04	y.e. 31.08.03
Admin expenses – N Willifer – Postage/Tel/Stationery Covering 15 years to 31.8.02		25.00
Grant for educational expenses	50.00	
Two grants for special needs recreational opportunities	300.00	
	<u>350.00</u>	<u>25.00</u>
Excess of Receipts over Payments	536.82	836.56
Bank Current & Deposit Accounts at 31 Aug 2003	15,512.66	14,676.10
Bank Current & Deposit Accounts at 31 Aug 2004	<u>£16,049.48</u>	<u>£15,512.66</u>

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 August 2004

Monetary Assets

Nat West Bank Current Account	15.87
COIF Charities Deposit Fund	16,033.61
	<u>16,049.48</u>

Investment Assets

Two undivided fifth parts of a piece of land approx. 18 acres in Oxfordshire
195 M&G Charibond Narrower Range Common Investment Fund Shares

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

Ruth Coffey reported to the Meeting:

The Wallingford Bridge Club was now settled in, bringing an income of £6,000 per annum. They were on a 3 month notice. Room for carparking was an issue: in summer, the adjacent field can also be used.

£7,000 had been spent on refurbishment, and the Hall was now more attractive for other bookings. Still to do: new sanitaryware, new kitchen cupboards, and a new vinyl floor finish (for which a grant was requested from the Quarry Charity). Thanks was expressed to Pauline for the gift of a cooker.

Overheads had risen about 50%, not a drastic increase in money terms. The account balance stood at about £3,300.

More volunteers were needed! and interest in the Hall raised generally. Nicol Glyn suggested direct approaches to individuals for help, rather than general appeals.

Ian Glyn enquired whether the small rooms could be hired: Ray Perfect said that the building is hired out as a whole.

11. Appointments of Representatives to other organisations

With the retirement of Chris Whittle, Dot Cussens was elected as parish representative to the Millstream Day Centre, Benson; proposed by David Pelling and seconded by Mike Darnborough. She will attend 2 meetings there a year.

Chris said that the Centre was exceptionally well run, with no input from Social Services and entirely funded by voluntary donations. The Centre provides food / entertainment for 2 – 3 days / week for our parishioners. He asked that the Parish consider giving some funds, which would be very well received. Sarah Hicks said that the Council would look into this idea.

Jane Franklin said that volunteer drivers were needed as well.

12. Any Other Business

Planning policy

Nicol Glyn asked for clarification on the policy of infilling within the village.

Sue Cooper said that this shouldn't be allowed in Berrick: it was only allowed in villages with a reasonable range of services, e.g. shop, bus, school etc.

Nicol next asked what the policy was regarding 'sheds with facilities', of which there had appeared a number of examples in recent years. Could the village in effect be doubled in size in this way? Sue Cooper said certainly not. Chris Whittle advised that planning permissions be checked, and a written complaint made to SODC. Various things had been done in the village without planning permission – and once 4 years had elapsed, these are deemed accepted. But there is no time limitation on the need for Listed Building consent.

Sarah Hicks that the Parish Council would keep an eye on things, but pointed out that SODC consents frequently went against the Parish's views. Sue Clayton said it was not the job of the Parish Council to police.

Derek Shaw said that subsequent deviations were then usually accepted afterwards. Sue Cooper said that district councillors themselves were irritated that there was rarely any follow-up when Enforcement Notices were issued; and thought was being given to putting such Notices on the Land Charges Register.

Derek Shaw told her that the Parish would appreciate more acknowledgement of its views from the District, and Sarah Hicks suggested that the Parish at least be informed by Officers if they were intending to go against the Parish's views.. Sue clarified procedures: any district councillor can request that an application be brought before the Committee, rather than being dealt with under delegated authority by officers.

There being no other business, the Meeting concluded at 9.30 pm.