

## THE PARISH OF BERRICK SALOME

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th May 2010 at the Berrick Salome Village Hall at 8.00 p.m.

1. Apologies for absence

Nicol Glyn, Ian Glyn, Alison Blakely, Denis Hall, Dot Cussens, Chris Kilduff and Pam Marsh.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th May 2009 were read by John Radice. The minutes were signed by Derek Shaw.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters raised – see agenda items following

4. The Annual Report of Parish Council

This was presented by the chairman, Derek Shaw:

2009/2010 has again been a busy year during which the Parish Council held 6 meetings in the Village Hall.

### Planning Activities

As usual, much of our activity centred around planning applications, of which there were 20 this year, most being non-controversial. Of these applications, 14 were approved by the Parish Council and SODC, 1 was refused and 5 are ongoing.

### Sewer Problems!

In the winter the local sewer system again became overloaded by the ingress of ground water. This resulted in the leakage of foul water and, in some cases, raw sewage into our environment. Thames Water resorted to a short term “solution” by tankering out sewage from the holding tank in Berrick with large tankers. This resulted in road congestion, noise and ground water pollution and general environmental damage. The Parish Council lobbied SODC, the Department of the Environment and also obtained strong support from John Howell, our local MP, in order to put pressure on Thames Water to address this problem seriously. Later in the meeting a representative from Thames Water will up-date us as to their progress.

### The New Waste Collection System

July saw the introduction by SODC of a new waste collection system for the parish. Houses were supplied with 2 wheelie bins, one for recyclable waste and one for other waste, these being collected on a bi-weekly basis, as well as a small food waste bin for weekly collection. Following negotiations between the Parish Council and SODC minor teething problems, e.g. the provision of sacks rather than wheelie bins to houses which could not be served directly by the SODC collection vehicles, the system appears to have settled in and now works well.

### The Parish Recreation Field

Over a period of time, people, especially dog-walkers, had been accustomed to using an unofficial route at the back of the Recreation Field. In October, Lower Farm erected a stockproof fence, on the Recreation Field bank of the stream dividing the Recreation Field from the paddock in Lower Farm. This fence restricted access to land owned by Mr Stephen Cooke. In addition, as a result of its use of barbed wire, the fence was considered a potential danger to people, particularly children, using the Recreation Field. Based on the information available to the Parish Council the land boundary of Lower Farm is on the Recreation Field bank of the stream and, therefore the fence has been erected on the correct side of the stream. Although for practical purposes, the fence has been constructed some feet further onto the Recreation Field than that delineated by ownership, the Parish Council proposed that Lower Farm made the fence safe for users of the Recreation Field (which has now been done) and also landscaped the area of the field adjacent to the fence, in lieu of a nominal rent for the strip of land now enclosed by the fence. The Council checked with Mr Cooke that he was prepared to allow pedestrian access along the edge of his field to link up with the footpath to the west of Lower Farm and he confirmed that, without prejudice, he was happy with this. The question of access from the Recreation Field to Mr Cooke’s field is unresolved.

## COBRRA

Despite quite a few periods of very heavy rain there has been no repetition of the flooding seen here in 2008 and our self help group COBRRA, headed by Chris Kilduff, continued their excellent work. In January they were nominated by SODC for, but unfortunately didn't win, the category of 'best example of community group action to reduce flood risk' at a 'Community Flood Heroes' event organized by the Environment Agency in recognition of the important work that individuals and communities are doing to reduce flood risk. SODC has allocated money to be used in the Parish to help prevent problems in the future. I wish to thank all those involved in these activities for their efforts and the group will now stand-down having achieved its objectives.

## Relations with RAF Benson.

The interaction between RAF Benson and the Parish Council has continued in a positive way during the year, especially after the attendance of Senior Air Traffic Controller Kyle Gregory. The current Commanding Officer, Group Captain Burr, has hosted several meetings at which he has explained the future plans for the base, e.g. the arrival in 2012 of the Chinook helicopters, and has asked for suggestions as to how these activities can be undertaken with the minimum impact on Parish life.

## Parishes Against Gravel Extraction (PAGE)

Unfortunately, the prospect of gravel extraction in our neighbourhood with its potential of dramatic degradation and pollution of our environment has recently reappeared. The PAGE group have reformed and will address the meeting later. The Parish Council will support its activities as deemed appropriate.

## The Parish Web Site

The Parish Web Site has now been functioning for two years. We hope that villagers have found it useful and informative. Any suggestions for improvements will be appreciated. I will be happy to answer any questions.

5. To receive a report by Thames Water on the village sewer

Jenny Elliott, Customer Coordinator at Thames Water, addressed the Meeting.

TW apologised for the nuisance of tankering. CCTV work had been done in Berrick Salome and Rokemarsh, and a 10m section at the top end of Back Street had been found to have gaps between the pipes, which had been temporarily sealed. A permanent repair was being quoted for this summer. At the top end of the village, there were some minor leaks which are less serious.

At the Berrick pumping station, 2 pumps were being replaced over the next fortnight.

In Roke, some leaking sections in Chapel Lane will be lined, following liaison with residents.

Once ground water ingress is substantially halted, the system as designed should work without tankering. Next winter, engineers will visit to balance flows carefully.

In the longer term, Roke needs a bigger pumping station and a much bigger rising main from Rokemarsh to Benson, to get the flows away. TW is pushing for miney for that.

David Pelling asked about damage to the verge near the millenium stone: JE confirmed that TW would repair what had been damaged by tankers.

6. To receive a presentation from the Community Support Officer

Rebekah Kent, PCSO, addressed the Meeting.

RK is assigned to Benson / Berinsfield, with colleagues Sarah Talbot and Paul Webber.

'Have Your Say' meetings were planned every 3 months, and would be advertised. Any member of the public should feel free to approach her on any issue of concern. Her duty hours are organised around 2 shifts: 8 – 5, and 3 – 12, and her phone number is 0845 8 505 505.

The village is a low crime area, with only 5 reported crimes last year, involving theft from outbuildings and cars.

Neighbourhood Watch: RK will get Carol Rudd, Coordinator (based in Abingdon) to contact Ian Ross. There was a 'Ringmaster' email system.

Speeding through the village: a temporary detector can be set up displaying the vehicle's speed, and then a warning letter sent to offenders. She warned that most of these turn out to be villagers!

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

*Sue Cooper reported on behalf of SODC:*

#### Council Tax & finance

The District Council portion of Council Tax at SODC stayed the same this year. SODC and The Vale of White Horse District Council are trying to make more savings by more joint working, now down to the 4<sup>th</sup> tier of management! The amount available for grants is less this year as interest rates were low and grant money comes from interest on the Community Investment Fund.

#### Planning

The Core Strategy, which should be the foundation of the future planning strategy for our area, has still not been agreed. There are problems with deciding on the location of new development in Wallingford and Henley. We still don't know when the site-specific allocations of housing land will be examined again. Since the ball started rolling on this several years ago it has been extremely difficult to get land for affordable housing as so many areas now have "hope value" (including a possible Phase 2 of The Meer in Benson.) And of course Benson has a number of sites where landowners are hopeful of getting planning permission but none have yet been designated for housing.

#### Housing

SODC has been using the "HOMECHOICE" system for letting affordable (Housing Association) housing. Most of the vacant housing, including some in other Oxfordshire districts, is advertised so that those wanting a house will be able to see what is available and can put in a request for anywhere they fancy. The homes are allocated to the household in greatest need, chosen from those who expressed an interest. But as ever, the District as a whole suffers from a lack of affordable housing, supplies of which are not increasing in line with demand. Currently, there is a working group looking at housing for older people, numbers of whom are forecast to increase considerably over the next few years.

#### Website

The District Council website [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk) is a good place to look for SODC info. And more improvements are promised for next year. It is certainly easier than going through the tortuous telephone switchboard arrangement. Even if you, or the person needing the information, doesn't have internet access, someone you know will do.

#### Didcot Town Centre

The new shopping centre seems to be doing well and an extension eastwards is being planned.

#### Waste Management & Recycling

After a chaotic introduction of the new system, it is generally working well with high rates of recycling – well done everyone and please keep up the good work.

#### Leisure

SODC's Leisure centres are now run by Nexus (who also run the Wycombe centres) although SODC's contract is with their parent company Greenwich Leisure.

*Tony Crabbe reported on behalf of OCC:*

My term of Office as Chairman of the County Council came to an end at the Annual meeting of the Council on April 6<sup>th</sup>. The normal period of office is one year but I have been fortunate in holding the position for two years. During this time I have welcomed many members of the Royal Family to Oxfordshire, represented the Council at functions all over Oxford and entertained a variety of Oxfordshire residents, and visitors, at County Hall. I have also represented the County on the Oxfordshire Buildings Trust and the Blue Plaques Board. As a member of the latter I proposed that we erect a Blue Plaque at Winterbrook House in Reading Road, Wallingford, for Agatha Christie. I was delighted to attend the unveiling ceremony on 8<sup>th</sup> May. If you know of any former local residents who could be similarly honoured please let me know.

I am currently a member of the County Planning and Regulation Committee.

## County Council Budget for 2010/11

The Council Budget for 2010/11 was set at the Council's meeting in February and confirmed the lowest increase in Council for many years. The increase in the County element of the Council Tax was set at 2.75% for the coming year with projected increases of 2.5% in each of the two following years. With possible extra Govt. support the Council Tax could effectively be zero.

The Council Tax payable for a Band 'D' property is set at £1161.71 for the coming year.

The anticipated expenditure on the County's main service areas is as follows: Children Young People and Families £99.05m, Social and Community services £181.18m, Environment and Economy £70.41m, Community Safety and Shared services £28.12m, Corporate Core £9.58m. The delegated Schools Budget is £ 333.16m.

## Sand and Gravel extraction in Oxfordshire

Consultation on potential new areas for Sand and Gravel extraction has taken place with those Parishes that could be affected. A series of meetings was held across the County where five Options were discussed. These options were:

*1a, 1b, 1c. Concentration Strategy* – Concentrate working to two main areas or in both. The two areas are The lower Windrush Valley; and Mainly South Oxfordshire including Radley, Sutton Courtenay, Culham, Dorchester, Warborough, and Benson.

*2. Dispersal Strategy* relating to areas of demand. – Includes working at Windrush Valley, Eynsham, Cassington, Radley, Faringdon, Sutton Courtenay, Culham, Dorchester, Warborough, Wallingford, Cholsey and Caversham.

*3. Phased Strategy* – Short term- extension to Caversham, Radley, Sutton Courtenay, Faringdon, Windrush Valley, Eynsham, and Cassington. Long term working at Clanfield/Bampton, Warborough, Wallingford, Cholsey, and Culham.

I attended this first of these meetings in Oxford which was for County and District Council representatives. Once all the meetings have taken place the County officers will prepare plans for the future taking into account the views expressed at the various meetings; these will be published for further consultation.

## Non-recyclable Waste Disposal

The volume of waste going to landfill must be significantly reduced or the County will face severe financial penalties. After examination of the alternatives, and consultation with the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership, the Council has chosen a preferred method of incineration and a suitable contractor. However, the contractor's proposed site at Ardley has not received planning consent and an appeal has been lodged against planning refusal. A public inquiry will commence in early July. An alternative site at Sutton Courtenay was also rejected by the planning committee.

## Oxfordshire schools GCSE results 2009

The Government slightly changed the preferred method of assessing schools' attainment in 2009. Instead of the old measure of 5 good GCSE's the measure was changed to 5 good GCSE's including English and Maths. Local schools attainment levels for the new measure (with the old measure shown in brackets) were: Wallingford School 56.6% (71.4%), Icknield Community College (Watlington) 51.5% (56.6%), Langtree School (Woodcote) 60.9% (70%), and St Birinus School (Didcot) 47.1% (56.7%). The overall National figure was 50.4% (69.2%). The Overall Oxfordshire figures were 52.6% (66.5%)

## Local changes to Speed limits on A4074

At the Benson Annual Parish Meeting in 2008 a possible reduction of the speed limit along the A4074 from South of Benson Lane to Elmbridge roundabout was requested.

Following a review of speed limits on A and B Roads across the County the current speed limit at Benson has been reduced from 50mph to 40mph, and a limit of 50mph imposed on the remaining section to the point south of the Benson Lane junction. I had requested a 30mph limit on that section through Benson as I believe that, with the increased use of the Bus stops and the popularity of the riverside services, this lower limit would make for a much safer environment for everyone. I opposed the removal of the 30mph limit at the Crowmarsh roundabout and the change was not agreed. My request for a reduction to 40mph through Ipsden in accordance with the wishes of the local community was not accepted. The revised limits will be introduced shortly.

Possible safe crossing for pedestrians near Castle Square in Benson.

Despite representations to the Road Safety Dept we have so far been unable to agree a possible site for a safe crossing. I arranged for an Engineer from the Road safety Dept to meet with myself and the Parish Council representative to examine the problem at rush hour and thought that we had convinced him of the need. However, there is difficulty in establishing a safe location within reasonable costs and we have so far not achieved a satisfactory outcome. We continue to press for a solution.

Heavy Vehicles in Benson and Ewelme and adjoining villages.

Over recent years there has been a significant increase in heavy vehicles through the villages of Benson, Ewelme, Brightwell Baldwin and other adjoining villages. Much of the increased heavy traffic is a result of the Hazell and Jefferies recycling yard at Eyres Lane on the outskirts of Ewelme. This was only meant to receive local waste, but it is coming from further afield. Attempts to restrict the volume of traffic using this site have been unsuccessful but it is likely that a Liaison Committee will be set up to try to work with the operator to minimize the impact on local residents. An initial meeting has been held and chaired by our MP John Howell with representatives from Hazell and Jefferies, Brightwell Baldwin PC, Ewelme PC, Benson PC and OCC Planning Officers together with myself. A further meeting is to be held once some more information has been collected.

8. Statement of the Parish Council's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2010 and observations

Ian Ross tabled the accounts as follows:

SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING  
31/03/2010

2008/2009 RECEIPTS	2009/2010
Precept	£6,500.00
<u>£6.95</u> Interest	£0.21
<u>£2,814.35</u> Grants from Quarry Charity	<u>£82.50</u>
<u>£2,906.30</u> TOTAL Receipts	<u>£6,582.71</u>
PAYMENTS	
Donation to PAGE	£1,000.00
Football nets and posts	£269.16
Website	£172.95
£1,314.35 Notice Boards	£0.00
£229.00 General administration	£107.50
£593.30 Insurance	£538.83
£75.00 Clerks fees	£0.00
£125.85 OALC membership	£149.26
£1,085.00 Running costs - grass cutting etc.	£1,040.00
£70.50 Play ground	£72.45
£270.50 Dog bin installation & emptying	£200.12
£500.00 Rental of rooms for Parish meeting	<u>£00.00</u>
<u>£4,938.50</u> TOTAL PAYMENTS	<u>£3,550.27</u>

Parish Council accounts (cont)  
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS SUMMARY

Balance bought forward 01/04/08	£1,882.27
Total receipts	£6,582.71
Total payments	<u>£4,300.27</u>
	<u>£4,164.71</u>
REPRESENTED BY	
Community account (creditor)	-£1,000.00
Community account (current)	£4,750.85
Business Premium account	<u>£413.86</u>
	<u>£4,164.71</u>

The precept was increased to account for its omission the previous year. Next year it will be £4,000.

9. To receive the report of the Berrick Salome Quarry Charity

David Pelling reported as follows:

During the last twelve months the Charity received but a single request for financial assistance. A sum of £1000.00 (minus a few pence) was donated to Berrick & Roke Village Hall to provide new heaters as a part of their refurbishment programme.

Our income comes almost exclusively from the £500.00 quarter rent received from Wilkenson's Woodyard, though a further £100.00 was gained from the hire of our public address system.

Our funds/reserves stand currently at £6563.00 which includes a miniscule amount of £3.32 interest!

A request from St Helen's Church for a contribution to a carved stone name tablet has not materialised: we understand that this will now probably be funded by a recent legacy to the Church.

We are currently in discussion with the property officer at SODC concerning the transfer of the title to the Quarry/Woodyard site to the Quarry Charity (it currently resides with the SODC).

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

The current management committee comprising David Pelling, Tim Clayton, Abby Clayton, Marian Shaw and Neville Gill was re-elected en bloc, proposed by Brian Bull and seconded by Chris Kilduff.

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

Chris Cussens reported to the Meeting:

The Charity was set up to provide grants of money, provision of items or provision of facilities for persons in need living in the Parish of Berrick Salome. CC is keen to hear from anyone eligible to benefit.

Income is received from rent from a parcel of agricultural land and a fixed interest investment plus interest on accumulated income. Five grants to the total value of £925.00 have been made over the past year.

The Trustees of the Charity are

Rev. I. Cohen (ex-officio as The Vicar for the time being of St. Helen's Berrick Salome)

Nominative trustees appointed by the Parish Council of Berrick Salome

Mrs. J. Franklin (Chairman)

Mr. C. Cussens (Treasurer)

Co-optative trustees appointed by special resolution of the Trustees with special knowledge of the Parish

Mrs. S. Clayton

Mrs S. Pelling

Mr. C. Cussens (Mokes Corner, Berrick Salome Oxon OX10 6JR) acts as administrative officer.

Financial Statement for the year ended 31st August 2009

Receipts and Payments Account

Receipts	y.e. 31.08.09	y.e. 31.08.08
Interest on 195 M&G Charibond shares	14.84	14.84
Rents from Chalgrove charity y.e. 31 December	309.01	309.01
Interest on COIF charities Deposit A/c	524.97	869.11
	848.82	£1,192.96
	848.82	£1,192.96
Payments	y.e. 31.08.09	y.e. 31.08.08
Grant for educational expenses	75.00	£425.63
Grants for special needs, recreational & educational opportunities	450.00	£150.00
Grants towards flooding relief	400.00	£750
Grant for disability equipment		
Grant towards heating installation		
	£925.00	£1,325.63
Grants towards flooding relief paid 07/08, presented 08/09	-750.00	
Excess of Receipts over Payments	-76.18	617.33
Bank Current & Deposit Accounts at 31 Aug	15,653.12	£15,035.79
	£14,826.94	£15,653.12
	£14,826.94	£15,653.12

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

Denis Cooper reported to the Meeting:

The main expense was £25k on a major refurbishment.

The Wallingford Bridge Club provides an income of £650 pre month.

Tress will be planted along the extended car park.

He thanked Pam Marsh for organising donations.

The accounts were tabled as follows:

Financial Statement for the year ended 31st March 2009

Receipts and Payments Account

Receipts	y.e. 31.03.10	y.e. 31.03.09
Hire of Village Hall	785.00	680.75
Quarry Charity donation	7,000.00	0.00
Grant donations	10,144.00	1,500.00
Bridge Club rents	7,350.00	7,200.00
	<u>£25,279.00</u>	<u>£9,380.75</u>
Payments		
Admin	26.64	
Refurbishment	25,511.89	766.88
Cleaning	1,439.58	1,407.00
Maintenance	715.03	7,113.51
Oil / heating	117.60	909.30
Disposable items	197.87	76.63
Kitchen items	667.81	0.00
Insurance	637.86	623.54
Electric	1,245.85	1,458.28
	<u>£30,560.13</u>	<u>12,355.14</u>
Excess of Receipts over Payments	-5,281.13	-2,974.39
Capital b/f: Lloyds Bank	7,721.51	10,695.90
	<u>£2,440.38</u>	<u>7,721.51</u>
Capital c/f: Lloyds Bank		

13. Appointments of Representatives to other organisations

[Post-Meeting note] Ann Ross has succeeded Dot Cussens as parish representative to the Millstream Day Centre, Benson.

## 14. Any Other Business

### 14.1 PAGE– *Parishes Against Gravel Extraction*

Rob Marsh reported to the Meeting:

The threat of gravel extraction has resurfaced, and PAGE has been reactivated as in 2003 as a powerful group of villages to fight the threat.

OCC are targetting the large field between Warborough, the Millenium Footpath, and the A4074; plus an area towards Chiselhampton. The website [www.pagecampaign.org](http://www.pagecampaign.org) has details, plus a slide show of a working extraction site. The licence would be from 2011 to 2026: but this period would probably be extended.

Central government has imposed a 17% increase on Oxfordshire, which OCC did not fight hard enough: up to 2.1m tons per annum (as compared to county's own need of 0.8 – 1.0m tons).

PAGE will present a paper to the OCC Board Meeting, expected around September, with a case looking at preferable sites elsewhere as well as objections to this site; with sections on archaeology, ecology, economics, and transport. A Planning Consultant will pull this all together, and a planning QC will advise. Undoubtedly, the site has good sand and gravel: but there is also very important archaeology, which was tragically destroyed at Dorchester. PAGE's main arguments will be archaeology, the beauty of the rural landscape, and the local road capacities.

To fund this, PAGE needs to raise £25,000. This will cover the cost of attempting to block the proposals from going on to the next stage, a public hearing. Some of the professional costs are being provided voluntarily by local eminent archaeologists and ecologists. It is however likely that the site will stay under consideration in the next stage, when two are shortlisted.

Fundraising: RM distributed information on a flyer; and an e-petition will be started for September. Fund-raising events are being planned, many involving children

If extraction goes ahead, it will be wet extraction and afterwards the land will be left as lakes – there is no prospect of landfill.

There being no other business, the Meeting concluded at 9.50 pm.