

THE PARISH OF BERRICK SALOME

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19th May 2011 at the Berrick Salome Village Hall at 8.00 p.m.

1. Apologies for absence

Pam Marsh, Dorothy Cussens and Salli Pelling.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th May 2010 were summarised 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:

Elections

On May 5th there were parish and district election. The following were elected to the Parish Council unopposed: Ian Glyn, Anne Kilduff, Ian Ross, Derek Shaw, Douglas Taylor

We wish to thank Sam Clayton for his contribution to the Parish Council over the last 4 years

Felix Bloomfeld and Rachel Wallis were elected to SODC.

Sue Cooper lost her seat. We would like to offer our thanks to Sue for all the conscientious effort she has put in supporting Berrick and Roke at the district level.

Planning Applications

As usual planning applications took up a significant part of our time. This year there were a total of 17 application involving 7 properties. 2 applications were withdrawn and the other 15 were approved by both the Parish Council and SODC.

Village Hall and playing field

It has been a busy year concerning the Village Hall with a new committee taking over the running of the Hall re negotiating agreements etc. with the Wallingford Bridge Club who are the main users of the Hall. This will be reported on in item x. We would like to thank Pam Marsh and the retiring committee for all their work. The village field and the playground have been maintained during the year and recently the goal posts moved and re-fixed. There have been some minor incidents involving drug equipment but these have been resolved in cooperation with the local police.

Sewers and flooding

Fortunately there have been no major problems with flooding this year as a result local actions to keep ditches and streams etc. clear. Much of the credit should go to the COBRA team who now considered their job done and have disbanded. Our thanks go to Chris Kilduff and the team for their efforts. We wish to remind everyone that it is in everybody's interest/responsibility to keep all the drainage channels clear and especially not to build dams as has been done to downstream of the village hall. There was a failure of one of the pumps in the Rokemarsh holding tanks earlier in the year which caused Thames Water to tanker out waste from the Berrick holding tank for about 48hrs. This resulted in damage (again!) to the verges in front of the Millennium Stone. Thames Water have acknowledged this damage and will be making good and issuing specific new instructions to their new contractors to avoiding it happening again should tinkering be necessary again.

Road Maintenance

We have lobbied SODC, with limited success, to repair the pot holes caused by the severe weather this winter and deal with some recent outbreaks of fly tipping. To help ease the icy road conditions in future winters the Parish Council has bought 3 “salt bins” which will be maintained by the highways dept.

Parishes Against Gravel Extraction (PAGE)

The Parish Council contributed to PAGE again this year. Their positive report on the current status concerning gravel extraction in the area will be dealt with in item y.

Relations with RAF Benson

The interaction between RAF Benson and the Parish Council have continued in a positive way with the New Commanding Officer seeming to be as keen as his predecessor in keeping good relations with the local communities. In view of the recent defence review the flight activates there for the next few years are in a state of flux.

The Village Website (www.berrickandroke.org.uk)

This has undergone a major makeover in the last few weeks to enable it to be updated etc. in a much easier manner. The site should now be kept more topical and have the facilities to feature, and if appropriate promote village activities.. Please look at the site and contact the webmaster@berrickandroke.org.uk if you have any suggestions for improvement or wish to put any material on the site.

Broadband

We had a good response to the Village Broadband survey, about 50% of the village responded. Of those who responded 70% said their speed was “slow” (<1 Mbps), 30% were “medium” (1~2 Mbps) and none “excellent” (>2 Mbps). Only 65% thought their connection was stable. These results were passed on to our MP John Howell and SODC. Further details are on the website.

Finally I would like to remind everyone that Benson Library is threatened with closure. If you would like help save the library please contact them through the village website, or forms in all shops in Benson.

5. To receive a report by PAGE on gravel extraction

John Taylor presented a report on behalf of PAGE.

PAGE had embarked on a strategy with 2 prongs: a) to challenge the quotas by looking at Oxfordshire’s share; b) to defend the area by looking at archaeology, transport, landscape, ecology and hydrology.

Quotas

The Atkins Report in February recommended 1.26m tonnes p.a. which was agreed by the OCC Cabinet. PAGE qualified their support for this figure by noting that a) there was still no data available for the actual 2010 production; b) there should be more encouragement to recycle; and c) the number was still too high.

Spatial strategy

PAGE has commissioned high quality reports and carried out surveys and field walks. Area SG13 is now excluded from the plan as a result, on grounds of its grade 1 agricultural land and archaeology. OCC is now seeking another area, because Sutton Courtenay will run out in 2020, and was looking at SG09 and SG59 – the Berinsfield / Drayton St Leonard / Stadhampton area. But a Cholsey site has now become the ‘preferred strategy area’. PAGE is cautiously optimistic, but not yet relaxing. West Oxfordshire is pressing for more extraction from the south of the county.

Archaeology

There has been a major find near Overy Lane: old streets and a settlement. This has been recognised as significant in archaeology circles – it is a very rich area archaeologically.

Next steps

The PAGE Report went to OCC in February 2011, and now an OCC document for public consultation is awaited – expected in June 2011. PAGE will then work on its response with its planning consultant. This process will result in an OCC ‘Core Strategy’ in 2012, which will go to an ‘Enquiry in Public’.

Fundraising

There have been lots of events. £53,000 has been raised, 65% from private donations, 18% from parish councils, and 14% from other organisations. About 60% of this has been spent on expert reports. PAGE is talking to the larger councils about further contributions.

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

Sue Cooper reported on behalf of SODC:

There isn't a great deal new to report this year as most things at District level are run by officers of the Council or Cabinet members who work on a minimalist principle. Other councillors have very little say in what happens. They can scrutinise the workings of the Council but this seldom results in much change.

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, progressing down the tiers of management. The amount available for grants is much less this year as interest rates were low and grant money comes from interest on the Community Investment Fund but this money is also being used to prop up the revenue expenditure as government grants are reduced.

Planning

The Core Strategy, which should be the foundation of the future planning strategy for our area, has at last been submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. Much of it is similar to our present planning policy. But I am afraid I do not agree with the proposed strategy for providing the large number of houses suggested for South Oxfordshire in the now abandoned South East Regional Plan in a few large housing estates stuck on the edges of towns. I believe that new housing could be accommodated much more sustainably by integrating smaller groups of houses closer to shops, services and jobs but we shall have to see what the Secretary of State says. We still don't know when the site-specific allocations of housing land outside the main towns will be decided. 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

Still no progress on providing more affordable housing in this area.

Leisure

SODC's Leisure Centres are run by Nexus.

Website

The District Council website www.southoxon.gov.uk is a good place to look for SODC info. It has been re-vamped this year. If you, or the person needing the information, doesn't have internet access, someone you know will do or you can try the library while we still have one.

Waste Management & Recycling

We have a good system here which generally works well with high rates of recycling – well done everyone and please keep up the good work. Now we need to do more work on waste reduction.

Tony Crabbe reported on behalf of OCC:

The Council's Budget for 2011/12, which was set at the Council meeting in February was the most difficult budget that I have experienced during my membership of the Council. In view of the

significant reduction in the grant from Central Government it was inevitable that there would be cuts to funding across all services with the exception of the Education service which was fully funded by Government. The Council has tried to be innovative in the use of funding to protect as many as possible of the services it provides. On a brighter note the level of the County's element of Council Tax has remained at last year's level with no increase. The plan is also to keep the increase in Council Tax down to 2.5% for 2012/13. The Band 'D' tax level is £1161.71. I detail below the level of funding each service will receive for comparison purposes:

Children, Education and Families - £92.23m

Social and Community Services - £171.74m

Community Safety - £27.65m

Environment and Economy - £75.17m

Chief Executives Office and Customer Services - £8.04m

Waste Disposal

It has become necessary to seek alternative means for the disposal of waste as there will be large penalties for continuing to send excessive waste to landfill. The Oxfordshire Waste Partnership which is made up of representatives of all the five District Councils together with the County Council decided, after a lengthy process, to adopt a policy of Energy from waste, which means incineration. Non-recyclable combustible waste will be burned to produce electricity. A suitable contractor has been identified and it is proposed to construct an incinerator at Ardley in the Cherwell District. Planning permission has been granted but there is a legal challenge to the planning decision.

Oxfordshire Schools Achievements

In the 2010 examinations the local secondary schools achieved the following success rates for the new measure of % or more GCSEs including English and Maths (the former measure of 5 or more GCSEs for any subjects are shown in brackets):

Wallingford School - 58% (67%)

Icknield Community College (Watlington) - 50% (58%)

St Birinus School, Didcot (Boys) - 59% (65%)

Langtree School (Woodcote) - 61% (71%)

Oxfordshire - 57.3% (72.8%)

Local Oxfordshire Libraries

The Council has approved a significant cut in funding for the County Library Service. In order to provide an equitable service across the County the Council's Cabinet has proposed the withdrawal of funding for 20 of the 43 Libraries in Oxfordshire.

Unfortunately Benson has been earmarked as one of those which it is proposed that funding will be withdrawn. A full consultation exercise is being undertaken, and is about to commence, before a final decision is made. Watlington Library will be funded and does not therefore face possible closure under the current proposals. Berinsfield Library is also likely to have funding withdrawn. Following a number of meetings across the County, and the late receipt of additional funding for the Council, it has been agreed that, should local communities wish to take over the running of those due for withdrawal of funding, the Council will assist in every way possible to make this possible. It is proposed that council owned library premises will be made available to those communities, that access will be available to the County book stock and professional guidance will be given to potential volunteer staff. Individual discussions will take place with each of the libraries and some set-up funding will be available. My own view is that Benson should attempt to set up a community run library and explore the possibility of combining this with Post office facilities.

Sand and Gravel extraction in the Benson Area

The next stage in producing the Council's Minerals and Waste Development Framework took a significant step forward when the Cabinet, at a meeting in February, agreed its proposals for preferred sites for sand and gravel extraction across the County. The possible sites to the North of Benson and to the West of the Thames from Benson are NOT now included. The majority of working up until 2030

is proposed as extensions to existing workings. The area to the North of Benson was rejected on the grounds that it was not deliverable. The cabinet's proposals will now be published for full consultation during this summer before the final decision is made.

Review of County Council Divisional Boundaries.

The Boundaries Commission has requested a review of these boundaries because of the differences in representation due to uneven development. The County Council have recommended that, as part of the review, the number of Councillors in the County should be reduced from 74 to 64. This proposal was accepted by the Commission and detailed proposals for new boundaries are being drawn up for consideration by the commission who will make the final decision. The reduction in the number of Councillors will bring Oxfordshire into line with other Counties in respect of the average number of electors represented by each Councillor. It is anticipated that the new Divisional boundaries will be used for the County Council elections in 2013. The County Council have submitted their own detailed proposals but it is entirely up to the Boundary commission to make final proposals for consultation.

Speed limits on A4074

At one point it appeared that the proposed, and agreed, alterations to the speed limits on the A4074 near Benson would be a casualty of funding cuts, however, the funding had been approved last year and the new speed limits have been introduced. The limit through the village will be reduced from 50mph to 40mph, and the speed limit to the South of the village will be reduced to 50mph.

Bus passes for the elderly

Under new legislation the County Council have taken over the operation of the free Bus pass scheme. The scheme will operate unchanged for the present but the five different District Councils formerly operated different start times in the morning so there will be some uniformity introduced later to ensure all Oxfordshire residents enjoy the same level of service.

7. Statement of the Parish Council's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2011 and observations

Ian Ross tabled the accounts as follows:

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

2009/2010 RECEIPTS	2010/2011
£6,500.00 Precept	£4,000.00
£0.21 Interest	£0.20
£82.50 Grants from Quarry Charity	£0.00
<u>£6,582.71</u> TOTAL Receipts	<u>£4,000.20</u>
PAYMENTS	
£1,000.00 Donation to PAGE	£1,000.00
£269.16 Football nets and posts	£0.00
£172.95 Website	£64.73
£107.50 General administration	£191.00
£538.83 Insurance	£555.80
£0.00 Clerks fees	£0,000.00
£149.26 OALC membership	£263.37
£1,040.00 Running costs - grass cutting etc.	£1,166.11
£72.45 Play ground	£74.03
£200.12 Dog bin installation & emptying	£137.00
£00.00 Rental of rooms for Parish meeting	£0.00
<u>£3,550.27</u> TOTAL PAYMENTS	<u>£3,452.04</u>

Parish Council accounts (cont)
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS SUMMARY

Balance brought forward 01/04/010	£5,164.71
Total receipts	£4,000.20
Total payments	<u>£4,452.04</u>
	<u>£4,712.87</u>
 REPRESENTED BY	
Community account (creditor)	£64.73
Community account (current)	£4,363.54
Business Premium account	<u>£414.06</u>
	<u>£4,712.87</u>

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

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

David Pelling reported as follows:

There have been no direct requests for funding from the Charity since the last Parish Meeting. However, after discussion amongst the trustees, as it is a matter that affects the community at large, we matched a contribution of the Parish Council by donating £1000.00 to the PAGE fighting fund.

Our bank balance this time last year was £6562.81.

During the year we have received £2000.00 in rent from Wilkinson's our tenant in the wood yard on the B4409.

We have made £3.45 in interest on our bank balance!

Having paid out £1000.00 to PAGE our current balance (at the end of April 2011) stands as £7,566.26.

Whilst we will be happy to consider requests for financial help towards projects (that would benefit the four hamlets making up our parish) we do not feel that in these times of severe economical restraint it is a bad thing to gently build our reserves come a rainy day in the future.

After a flurry of phone calls from the legal department at SODC early last year, expressing the wish to divest themselves of any interest in the Quarry Charity,* I asked as chairman that they advise us on the exact legal procedure as to how this would happen and pointed out that we would be unwilling to saddle anything but the most modest of costs to effect such a change. I have heard nothing since! Your Trustees feel that as it is of no particular advantage to us that we would let sleeping dogs lie.

The trustees of the Quarry Charity are presently: David Pelling, Tim Clayton, Marian Shaw, Neville Gill and Abbie Clayton (who is the treasurer) and the Chairman of the Parish Council all of whom have indicated their willingness to continue in office and therefore seek confirmation from parishioners for them to continue managing the affairs of the Charity for a further year.

He noted that the Charity Commission had stipulated that the Chief Executive of SODC be included as a Trustee. This arrangement is continuing, since the Charity would have to meet the cost of any change.

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

The current management committee was re-elected en bloc, proposed by Ray Perfect and seconded by Chris Kilduff.

10. 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. He suggested two possible kinds of beneficiary as examples: university students and people with special needs.

Income is received from rent from a parcel of agricultural land and a fixed interest investment plus interest on accumulated income. Three grants to the total value of £346.65 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. 31.08.10	y.e. 31.08.09
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	89.26	524.97
	413.11	848.82
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Payments	y.e. 31.08.10	y.e. 31.08.09
Grant for educational expenses	346.65	75.00
Grants for special needs, recreational & educational opportunities		450.00
Grants towards flooding relief		400.00
	£346.65	£925.00
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Grants towards flooding relief paid 07/08, presented 08/09		-750.00
Excess of Receipts over Payments	66.46	-76.18
Bank Current & Deposit Accounts at 31 Aug	14,826.94	15,653.12
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Bank Current & Deposit Accounts at 31 Aug	£14,893.40	£14,826.94
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11. Report of the Berrick and Roke Village Hall Management Committee

Robert James reported to the Meeting:

The Hall is in a good financial situation, with its regular booking by the Wallingford Bridge Club, with whom a new agreement has nearly been concluded.

RJ was keen to encourage more use by villagers.

A new management committee had been formed, comprising Camilla Jackson (Secretary), Ian Ross (Treasurer), Debra Thomas and Reggie Hickman. RJ thanked retiring members Pam Marsh, Ian Glyn and Alison Blakey for their efforts.

The accounts were tabled as follows:

Financial Statement for the year ended 31st March 2009

Receipts and Payments Account

	Receipts	y.e. 31.03.11	y.e. 31.03.10
Hire of Village Hall		650.00	785.00
Quarry Charity donation			7,000.00
Grant donations			10,144.00
Bridge Club rents		8,100.00	7,350.00
		<u>£8,750.00</u>	<u>£25,279.00</u>

Payments

Admin			26.64
Refurbishment			25,511.89
Cleaning	1,605.00		1,439.58
Maintenance	3,663.91		715.03
Oil / heating	676.73		117.60
Disposable items	270.36		197.87
Kitchen items			667.81
Insurance	769.80		637.86
Electric	538.13		1,245.85
	<u>£37,523.93</u>	<u>£30,560.13</u>	
Excess of Receipts over Payments		1,226.07	-5,281.13
Capital b/f: Lloyds Bank		2,440.38	7,721.51
Capital c/f: Lloyds Bank		<u>£3,666.45</u>	<u>£2,440.38</u>

12. Appointments of Representatives to other organisations

Ann Ross was re-elected parish representative to the Millstream Day Centre, Benson; proposed by Anne Kilduff and seconded by David Pelling.

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