

## THE PARISH OF BERRICK SALOME

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16th May 2013 at the Berrick Salome Village Hall at 8.00 p.m.

1. Apologies for absence

Nicol Glyn, Susan Radice and Guy Slocombe.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 3rd May 2012 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:

Quite a busy year during which the Parish Council held 8 meetings.

Council members:

Derek Shaw: Chairman

Ian Glyn: Vice-chairman

Anne Kilduff

Douglas Taylor

Ian Ross, resigned; to be replaced by Craig Tribe: Treasurer

OCC elections: As a result of the recent boundary changes the Parish is now no longer in Benson but is now in Chalgrove. This change was opposed when the Parish was “consulted” but.... The same change will be made when the next district elections take place in 2015.

Planning Applications: As usual planning applications took up a significant part of our time although there were fewer than usual applications. This year there were a total of 10 application involving 7 properties. 9 were approved by both the Parish Council and SODC. One, for Ivy Cottage, was not recommended by the Council on the grounds it removal all parking from the property but was approved by SODC. The situation re applications for the Roke Farm site is complex and will be returned to during the Parish Council meeting

Village Hall and playing field: The village field and the playground have been maintained during the year, the grass at the rear has been renovated The oak trees planted last year to define the edge of the overflow car park are establishing themselves well. The village hall car park was resurfaced at a cost of about £10,000 jointly funded by the Bridge Club, the Quarry Charity, the Parish Council and the Village Hall Management Committee.

Sewers and flooding: Fortunately, despite last summer’s heavy rains there have been no major problems with surface water flooding this year as a result local actions to keep ditches and streams etc. clear. We wish to remind everyone that it is in everybody’s interest/responsibility to keep all the drainage channels clear.

Unfortunately there were however major issues with flooding from the sewer system. The flooding started just after Christmas and its consequences are still being felt. The problem was first noticed as raw sewage gusher up from the manholes at the corner of Roke and the Berrick/Benson road and flowing into the gardens of some houses in Harrow Lane. Thames Water was alerted, there initial action was to start tankering the excess. This tanking has been going on to this day. It peaked with 4 tankers working 24 hrs. a day and caused much inconvenience too many people and considerable damage to local roads. The Council had many meetings with representatives from Thames Water and after much pressure (mainly lead by Douglas Taylor and Bill West) managed to break through the complex Thames Water bureaucracy. The outcome is that Thames

has identified the major cause of the problem, ingress of ground water into the sewer system which over loaded it resulting in the overflowing of sewage. The sources of the ingress have been identified. One being a collapsed of the sewer just north of the Village Hall allowing a spring direct access to the Berrick holding tank, the other being in near the Rokemarsh pumping station. The collapsed sewer is scheduled to be repaired on July 15<sup>th</sup>, it cannot be earlier due the time necessary for the procedures required to close the road. I don't yet have a date for the repair of the problem in Rokemarsh. I have confirmation that contracts have been placed to repair the road damage and they, Highways permitting to do it next week.

Road Gritting: SODC/OCC are encouraging villages to undertake proactive work to keep the roads ice free. As an experiment the Parish Council bought and filled 2 bins at each ends of Roke and under the leadership of Anne Kilduff a team of volunteers was set up to "man" them. We gritted the village road three times in early January when we had a spell of fairly heavy snow and ice. We gritted before the snowfall, known by Oxfordshire County Council as a precautionary salting and it seemed to work very well. Our roads were not only free of snow but more importantly ice. They synchronise their gritting with the OCC gritting programme, obtaining information from their website and following them on Twitter. Anne also followed the Benson five day weather forecasts very closely. The volunteer teams worked very well, always coming out when asked. It does need to be coordinated by someone willing to do all of the above; we will bear that in mind if we decide to install salt bins elsewhere in the Parish.

Provision of broadband in the villages: - The Parish Council has set up a task force, led by Anne Kilduff and Kathy Maxwell and they have implemented the following:

- Launched the Better Broadband Campaign for Berrick and Roke villages
- Become Oxfordshire County Council's Broadband Champions acting as link between OCC, the Parish Council and the community
- Launched a single webpage that gives background information and instructions on how to support the campaign, plus latest news and links to relevant sites and case studies from residents illustrating their broadband experience.
- Set up a twitter account that is linked to Oxfordshire County Council. Residents can tweet and follow.
- Written an article for the April edition of Link as well as a leaflet drop to all houses in the village publicising the campaign
- Interview and photograph with Oxford Mail
- Contact with Huw Jones and Nick Carter both prominent Oxfordshire County Councillors involved in the broadband roll out.
- Enlisted support from John Howell who has been very helpful providing contacts and information
- Meeting with BT (contact given by John Howell) to discuss our options and get more information on how to make sure we benefit from OCC's 13.86 million investment.

They plan to make sure that Oxfordshire County Council notice how committed we are in our aim to be included in the broadband roll out plans.

The Village Christmas tree: - Following the suggestion of Pam Marsh the Parish Council funded the provision of a Christmas Tree on the Millennium Stone corner in Berrick. We received many positive comments and plan to make this an annual event. We wish to thank Pam Marsh for the idea and coordination the project, Ray Perfect for the electrical work and Jim Vincent for donating "the electricity".

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 10.

Relations with RAF Benson: - The interactions between RAF Benson and the Parish Council have continued in a positive way. A new Commanding Officer took over in November who I will meet for the first time on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Benson Library: - The future of Benson Library is still in a state of flux. As we understand it OCC will provide all necessary materials, plus 50% of the staffing, leaving the other 50% to be made up by volunteers.

The Village Website: - ([www.berrickandroke.org.uk](http://www.berrickandroke.org.uk)) Please look at the site and contact the [webmaster@berrickandroke.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@berrickandroke.org.uk) if you have any suggestions for improvement or wish to put any material on the site.

5. To receive a report by PAGE on gravel extraction

The following report was presented:

It is the 3rd year since the campaign began. OCC had to submit a Waste and Minerals Core Strategy to the Secretary of State. PAGE put forward a strong case in July 2012, which was received well by OCC. It focussed on addressing the overall amount of extraction required, which it argued should be 1.2 million tonnes, not 2.1 million.

The Secretary of State appointed a Planning Inspector to examine the Core Strategy and to listen to interested parties e.g. PAGE and the extraction companies. There were a lot of letters between the Inspector and OCC, some quite acrimonious. The Inspector's remit is limited to examining the process, and PAGE are employing a barrister to show that was flawed.

It will not be good news if everything goes back to stage 1: PAGE is watching matters closely, leaving OCC to take the lead. Further funds are needed to follow things through. The public enquiry is supposed to happen in September, but is expected to be delayed.

6. To receive the observations of the County Councillor

6.1 *Caroline Newton reported on behalf of OCC:*

Mrs Newton introduced herself. She has been elected Watlington Conservative councillor a year ago, on a bye-election. New boundaries have put Nettlebed, Milton and Lewknor together, the largest division in OCC.

The Conservatives have 31 out of 63 seats, so are allied with some Independents to lead the Council and form the cabinet. Labour have 15, Lib-Dems 11, Independent 4 and Greens 2.

Broadband: the company (probably BT) who will lay the service will allocate between villages. Those which have demonstrated a strong demand, or have a school, will be higher priority. A detailed plan will be published soon, with first cables to be laid Dec / Jan 2014.

Roads: A new machine is being trialled to carry out repairs faster. She will convey back concerns expressed about how holes are done selectively, i.e. ignoring some nearby. There is a 'Fix My Street' website link. There is pressure on the Highways budget, always easy to cut – everyone in the county is complaining.

Grants: Chill-out Fund – for access to leisure by the young

Council Community Fund – to seed fund small community projects, up to c. £10K

6.2 *Tony Crabbe (retiring councillor) reported on behalf of OCC*

County Council Elections

The election of Councillors for the next four years took place on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Following the Boundary Commission review of Divisional boundaries Ewelme, Berrick Salome and Brightwell Baldwin are no longer part of the Benson Division. The remaining Parishes will be added to Cholsey and Moulsoford to form the new Benson and Cholsey Division. Owing to the major change in the Benson Divisional Boundaries I did not personally seek re-election to the Council and the newly elected member for that Division is Mark Gray an Independent from Cholsey. The re-elected Councillor for your new Watlington Division is Caroline Newton (Conservative) who lives at Britwell Salome and who I am sure you will find very helpful.

Council Budget 2013/14

The County Council set their Budget for the coming year at their meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> February. It has been a difficult year in terms of agreeing the overall budget and level of Council Tax for a number of reasons. The Council's 3 year Medium term plan had anticipated a rise in Council Tax level of 3.75% this year but Government had indicated that any rise of 2% or above would require the Council to seek approval of the electorate by way of a referendum and also excessive rises would not be permitted. The Government had also agreed an incentive to Councils by way of a grant to

cover an increase of only 1% thus ensuring no increase to residents if the level was kept to 1%. Oxfordshire County Council has been making substantial savings and cuts to reduce Council Tax for a number of years and, bearing in mind that inflation is approx. 2.7% together with the increased pressures on Council Services, it was not considered possible to keep the increase in Council Tax down to 1% without significant cuts to existing services. The Council undertook a survey which indicated that residents would prefer a below inflation increase rather than suffer cuts in services. The cost of a referendum would be about £0.5m; the Council therefore approved a rise in Council Tax of 1.99% which would not trigger the need for a referendum. In order to reduce the need for cuts it was agreed that the Council will undertake a consultation on possible charging for parking at the Council's two Park and Ride sites. This will generate income in line with the City Council charges at their three sites.

The level of the County element of Council Tax will be £1184.83 for a Band D property.

There will be no change in the measures set up last year for the provision of Library services.

#### Minerals and Waste Development Framework - Core Strategy

After several years in preparation the Council submitted its Core Strategy to the Government Inspector for Examination in Public. The submission was made at the end of October 2012. Since that time the Inspector has raised a number of issues and showed concern over the Council's duty to cooperate. Unfortunately the government guidance on this topic changed just after the Council had prepared its strategy but the Council believes it has complied. The inspector requested significant additional information which is currently being assembled but it does mean that the Examination in Public could not take place as hoped in Feb. 2013. The inspector appears to be querying the annual volume of Sand and Gravel that the Council are proposing to provide as part of the Plan.

Because of the involvement of Councillors in the County Council Elections early in May it was decided to adjourn further work on the examination by the Inspector until the end of May 2013. It is hoped that all the information required by the inspector will then be available and the EIP could be held possibly in September 2013.

This issue has significant importance to the residents of South Oxfordshire as any new areas for Sand and Gravel working will finally be decided as part of the process.

My own concern on this matter is that if the Core Strategy is not in place within a reasonable timescale we may be left with inadequate provision for sand and gravel supply in Oxfordshire if the economy takes off and the construction industry suddenly has a large increase in demand.

#### Oxfordshire Secondary School's performance

Last year the GCSE results for Oxfordshire Local Secondary Schools was as follows:

*Oxfordshire overall- 5 GCSE's (A\*-C) Incl. English and Maths 57.9%*

Wallingford School- 5 GCSE's (A\*-C) Incl.English and Maths 76%

Watlington Community College- 5 GCSE's (A\*-C) Inc.English and Maths 54.0%

Langtree School (Woodcote)- 5 GCSE's (A\*-C) Inc.English and Maths 51%

St Birinus School (Didcot)- 5GCSE's Inc. English and Maths 59%

*England, State funded schools- 5 GCSE's (A\*-C) Inc. English and Maths 58.8%*

#### Big Society Fund

In 2012 each County Councillor was allocated £10K to distribute to projects supporting the Big Society concept. This is intended to support local projects mainly by voluntary groups (but not running costs). I chose to support both the elderly and our youngsters. The main grants that I supported were for refurbishment of the Benson Day Centre, where I worked closely with Ian Leppard, and the grant includes for provision of new carpeting, curtains and crockery; and also for the provision of an Environmental and Ecology learning area by Crowmarsh School PTA in the grounds of the School. Staff at The Centre for Ecology, at Howbery Park, are giving voluntary help and advice on this Project. A similar fund for Councillors has been approved for 2013/14.

### Locality Funding

During the past year I approved the use of my allocation of the locality fund mainly for the resurfacing of many of the footways in the Thamesmead Estate in Crowmarsh, and for the provision of a Traffic Activated warning sign at the dangerous crossroads in Ipsden on the A4074 at the Whitehouse location. The speed of traffic down the hill and the lack of visibility for emerging traffic make this a very hazardous spot.

### County Council Governance review

At the last County Council meeting in May, before the election of new members, the Council agreed to revisions to the number of Scrutiny committees in order to improve outcomes and enhance member engagement. The current number will be reduced to three which will be: Education Scrutiny, Performance Scrutiny, and Health Overview Scrutiny. In addition to the Scrutiny committees a standing Transport advisory Panel will be set up to advise the Cabinet Member for Transport, and other advisory groups set up for topics selected by the Cabinet as and when considered appropriate. The changes result from a reduction in the overall number of Councillors and a desire to improve member involvement for those not forming the Cabinet.

#### 6.3 Report on behalf of SODC:

Miss Rachel Wallis did not turn up

#### 7. Statement of the Parish Council's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2011 and observations Ian Ross tabled the accounts as follows:

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

2011/2012	RECEIPTS	2012/2013
£6,000.00	Precept	£6,000.00
£0.20	Interest	£0.20
£0.00	Grants from Quarry Charity	£8,000.00
<u>£6,000.20</u>	<b>TOTAL Receipts</b>	<u>£14,000.20</u>
	<b>PAYMENTS</b>	£266.14
£0.00	OALC membership	
£64.73	Website Creditor 2011	
£93.52	Website	£58.74
£547.66	Insurance	£546.29
£60.00	Audit	£174.00
£100.00	Clerks fees	
£50.00	Examiner's fee	£50.00
£85.00	Election	
£141.54	Dog bin installation & emptying	£109.80
£1,505.50	Grass cutting	£1,125.00
£471.15	Trees and planting	
£307.42	Relocate goal posts	

£85.00	Planning application	-£40.00
£75.60	Playground inspection	£75.60
£537.88	Playground repairs	£1,894.00
£240.00	Car park maintenance	£9,730.00
<u>£4,365.00</u>	TOTAL PAYMENTS	<u>£15,589.65</u>

#### RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS SUMMARY

£6,000.20	Total receipts	£14,000.20
<u>-£4,365.00</u>	Total payments	<u>-£15,589.65</u>
£1,635.20	Surplus / Deficit for the year	-£1,589.45
<u>£4,777.60</u>	Balance brought forward 01/04/12	<u>£6,412.80</u>
<u>£6,412.80</u>	Balance carried forward 31/3/13	<u>£4,823.35</u>

#### FINANCED BY

£6,245.14	Barclays A/C 401667715	£14,130.70
<u>£414.26</u>	Barclays A/C 40166731	<u>£414.46</u>
£6,659.40		£14,545.16
<u>-£246.60</u>	Less unrepresented cheques	<u>-£9,721.81</u>
<u>£6,412.80</u>		<u>£4,823.35</u>

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

The Quarry Charity's bank balance at the end of April 2012 stood at £9,570.50.

Our income over the year has been £2000.00 derived from rent received from the Wilkinson's Wood Yard site on the B4009. A miniscule interest of £3.27 was also achieved.

During the year a request was received from the Parish Council for a contribution to the expenses incurred for refurbishing the car park at the Village Hall. The Quarry Charity contributed £2000.00 towards an overall cost of approximately £10,000.00.

This leaves a current balance, including the next instalment of rent (£500) at £10,073.77

A provisional application has also been verbally lodged with us seeking a grant towards improving car parking at St Helen's Church. We await detailed costings to be submitted but a figure of about £2000.00 is expected. The Trustees have indicated that they are likely to approve a formal request for this sort of money. This would reduce the balance to approximately £8,073.77

I return now to the question of rent for the wood yard site. As most of you will be aware the Charity's income is derived almost exclusively from rent received from the wood yard – the land being owned by the village of Berrick Salome.

The lease, to conform with "planning permission" and "usage" controls at the time it was granted is tightly drawn and drastically limits what the land can be used for. The permission was granted specifically to Bernard Wilkinson (and has since been varied to include his son and daughter-in-law). Consequently our

existing tenant being engaged solely in the tree felling and sawing business has enjoyed very reasonable rents over a long period of years which are frankly by today's levels very generous indeed. However the Trustees have to consider on the one hand the maintenance of an income stream even if modest against the possible loss of a tenant who may be difficult to replace. Recent discussions with the SODC by the Chairman of the Trustees are far from definitive, there appears to be no clear cut view as to alternative uses for the site. Any change of use or tenant would require new planning permissions. We are also in the process of taking professional advice on current rental rates in the area but there are only limited enterprises and sites with which to compare.

It would of course be very nice to be able to increase the charity's income and the trustees are of a mind to try and negotiate new arrangements with our existing tenant to affect a rental level more appropriate to 2013. Such negotiations are likely to be difficult and delicate and may take some considerable time. We will keep the community informed of progress in this matter by updating the Parish Council as and when necessary.

David Pelling will be standing down from trusteeship at the next trustees meeting and Guy Slocombe has volunteered to come onto the board. His extensive experience in the commercial property world will surely be very useful and his good counsel appreciated.

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

The committee comprising Guy Slocombe, Tim Clayton, Marian Shaw, Neville Gill and Abbie Clayton (treasurer) and the Chairman of the Parish Council was re-elected en bloc, proposed by John Radice and seconded by Chris Kiduff.

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. Income is received from rent from 18 acres of agricultural land and a fixed interest investment plus interest on accumulated income: Chalgrove Charities, who manage the agricultural land for us, started a process of renegotiating the rent; from this, we hope to receive an improved income annually.

10 grants to the total value of £1,677.36 have been made over the year ending 31/8/12.

The Trustees of the Charity are

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

Nominative trustees appointed by the Parish Council of Berrick Salome

Mrs. J. Franklin (Chairman)

Mr. C. Cussens (Treasurer and Administrative Officer)

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

Mrs. S. Clayton

Mrs S. Pelling

Financial Statement for the year ended 31st August 2011

Receipts and Payments Account

Receipts	y.e. 31.08.12	y.e. 31.08.11
Interest on 195 M&G Charibond shares	142.64	14.84
Rents from Chalgrove charity y.e. 31 December	309.01	309.01
Interest on COIF charities Deposit A/c	109.58	89.26
	109.58	89.26

	<u>431.23</u>	<u>413.11</u>
Payments	y.e. 31.08.12	y.e. 31.08.11
Grant for educational expenses	377.36	366.94
Grants for special needs, recreational & educational opportunities	1,300.00	450.00
Grants towards flooding relief	<u>£1,677.36</u>	<u>£816.94</u>
Grants towards flooding relief paid 07/08, presented 08/09		
Excess of Receipts over Payments	-1,246.13	-406.58
Bank Current & Deposit Accounts at 31 Aug	14,486.82	14,893.40
Bank Current & Deposit Accounts at 31 Aug	<u>£13,240.69</u>	<u>£14,486.82</u>

#### 11. Appointments of Representatives to other organisations

Ann Ross explained the activities at the Millstream Day Centre, Benson: e.g. meals, the 200 Club, hire of the Hall.

All local villages fall under the remit of the Trust, which is independent and so unaffected by council cuts. It is financed by the Trust Fund, so fund-raising is required.

There is a part time administrator, and a part time chef. Volunteers are needed e.g. as drivers.

There are over 60 Members who can attend various activities providing companionship for the elderly: games, films, meals on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The Trust received a big grant from OCC, enabling a folding partition to be refurbished, the garden relandscaped with paving, and tables, chairs and umbrellas purchased.

There being no other business, the Meeting concluded at 9.10 pm.