

THE PARISH OF BERRICK SALOME

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14th May 2015 at the Berrick Salome Village Hall at 8.00 p.m.

1. Apologies for absence

Jane Franklin, Rob Marsh, Anne Kilduff, Doug Taylor, and Simon Williams.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 8th May 2014 were summarised by John Radice. The minutes were signed by Derek Shaw.

3. The Annual Report of Parish Council

This was presented by the chairman, Derek Shaw.

He summarised the Council's activities, dealing in particular with Planning Applications, sewers and flooding, and the struggle for better broadband.

Council members:

Derek Shaw: Chairman
Ian Glyn: Vice-chairman
Craig Tribe: Treasurer
Anne Kilduff
Douglas Taylor

4. To receive the observations of the County and District Councillors

Stephen Harrod reported on behalf of OCC:

Budget This had been slashed again. There would be a 1.99% rise in the Council Tax share.

Since 2010 almost £200m in savings had been made, and we are very close to the bone – yet a further £60m savings have to be found. Senior management has been reduced by 40%, and staff overall by 30%. Some extra money has been available from the Government's City Deal.

Efficiency savings were being looked at through a tri-Council alliance with Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire.

Highways There had not been enough to do all the work needed, and understanding was requested from parishes. The best that can be done is 'managed decline'. Skanska had developed a new machine called the 'Dragon Patcher'. The best way to raise problems was through the 'Fix My Street' website.

Transport A draft Plan had passed the 2nd round of consultations, and would be finalised soon.

Minerals & Waste There had been much negative press recently about the increase imposed upon the County for gravel extraction from 700K to 1m tonnes.

Broadband Now looking like mid-2016 for Berrick.

Recycling Rates are good by national standards.

Education Most children are getting their 1st preference for Secondary School.

David Turner reported on behalf of SODC:

General Comments. The year has been dominated in the last few months by the fire at the Crowmarsh building. It was particularly unfortunate that a lot of money had recently been spent on upgrading the building to improve its poor insulation which had made it a very inefficient building in terms of energy consumption. The year was also saddened by the death of the Council Leader

Ann Ducker MBE. Ann was a good leader of the Council and was very inclusive of all the members of whatever party they belonged to. She was very much respected by all members and was a sad loss to the Council. This also applied to the late Michael Welphy from Thame who was a very open minded District Councillor.

Committees. For the last year I have chaired the main Scrutiny Committee which over the life of the Council has been shared between the opposition groups. I was also a substitute on the Planning Committee. I am a member of the Opposition Forum which has regular meetings with the Chief Executive and other strategic Directors when we discuss strategic issues which will be decided at the Cabinet meetings. We have continued the system which the late Ann Ducker and I set up whereby most Cabinet reports go to Scrutiny first which has proved to be very successful. During the last twelve months we have provided the constructive opposition that any council needs. The relationships between all the political groups are very constructive. It remains to be seen how the construction of committees will be for the next Council year following the election, but it will be different.

Housing. The SODC Core Strategy has had to be re-done following the Government's decision to do a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) as the figures produced for new homes requirement in the former Strategic Land Housing Assessment (SLHA) have been called into question. This is out to consultation but it is not expected that the SODC preferred housing numbers by community will be available until September of this year.

Joint Working between SODC & VoWH District Councils. Both sets of officers until the fire were located into the Crowmarsh offices. Combining the offices and officers of the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils is currently saving both councils approximately £6M. The Councils have now signed a deal to temporarily re-locate to the Milton Park Estate whilst it is decided between the two councils and the insurance companies what to do at the Crowmarsh site and how to establish a new head quarters. The offices were well insured as was the costs of business recovery. We have been guests at Howbery Park who have been very good to us for our committee and council meetings. Some key officers are operating from spare space in Abbey House in Abingdon whilst the majority are operating from home. Thank goodness for modern communications technology, that has enabled this to happen. The staff have been wonderful during this period but cannot wait to be in one building again.

Budget. The budget for 2015/16 was set with a 3.0% reduction in Council Tax but this did involve like last year a another big dip into reserves to achieve. Whilst the Council has substantial reserves you cannot do this for ever so more savings will need to be made. The section 151 officer who is required to legally sign off a budget drew attention to longer term financial issues unless more savings are made and this is not going to be easy.

Leisure. The Council's leisure centres continue to be well used although it is still difficult for residents without their own transport to access them.

Waste Management & Recycling. SODC is now again the top recycling Local Authority in the UK, something we should all be proud of.

Grants. South Oxfordshire District Council offers capital grants to community projects in South Oxfordshire together with some revenue grants through its Community Investment Fund (CIF). The fund was established from the sale of housing stock in July 1997. Approximately £1,000,000 per year is distributed in grants. To date, the fund has distributed approximately £15M million. Full details of how and when to apply are on the SODC website.

SODC Ward Boundary Changes. As you know the District Council election was fought on new boundaries on May 7th following the downsizing of the council from 48 to 36 members. Chalgrove Ward which was previously Chalgrove only now contains Chalgrove, Brightwell Baldwin, Upperton, Berrick Salome, Roke and Rokemarsh and Newington

5. Statement of the Parish Council's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2014 and observations
Craig Tribe tabled the accounts as follows:

SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31/03/2015		
2013/2014	RECEIPTS	2014/2015
£6,000.00	Precept	£6,000.00
£25.53	Grants	£75.00
	Donations	
	Verge post receipts	£1,044.90
£1.90	Interest	£4.90
<u>£2,441.03</u>	VAT recovered	<u>£226.45</u>
<u>£8,468.46</u>	TOTAL Receipts	<u>£7,351.25</u>
	PAYMENTS	
	Staff costs	
	Loan interest / repayments	
£467.31	Capital purchases	
£33.33	Christmas tree + decorations	£50.00
£236.50	Dog bin collections	£117.54
£500.00	Donations – Village Hall	
£650.00	Donations s.137	£500.00
£70.00	External audit	
-£18.00	Fees	
£1,095.00	Grass cutting	£1,200.00
£534.54	Insurance	£549.20
£50.00	Internal examiner's fee	£50.00
£65.00	Playground expenses	£65.00
	Printing	£58.00
£175.46	Repairs + Maintenance	£147.05
	Subscriptions	£221,78
£220.00	Tree removal	
	Village improvements	£1,587.68
£165.73	Website costs	£178.32
<u>£231.55</u>	VAT paid	<u>£215.81</u>
<u>£4,476.42</u>	TOTAL PAYMENTS	<u>£4,940.38</u>

Craig Tribe reported in summary as follows:

The net surplus of income over expenditure for the year was £2,410.87. When this is added to the reserves brought forward for 2013/14 the Parish Council had reserves at the year-end of £11,226.26. The council has allocated some of these reserves towards particular expenditure, being legal fees in relation to the investigation of the title of village land, playground maintenance, general village improvements and land drainage works to alleviate the risk of flooding. A reserves summary is shown at the foot of the accounts.

For 2015/16 the Parish Council has increased the precept by 2% to £6,240 to help pay for the work required to make the playground safe and for the purchase of a defibrillator for the parish.

6. To receive a report by PAGE on gravel extraction

The following report was presented by John Taylor, PAGE Chairman:

PAGE pursues 2 main objectives:

- To reduce overall extraction
- To defend parishes by specialist evidence on archaeology etc

Since summer 2013 Atkins had been appointed to come up with numbers looking at new factors like population changes. PAGE was able to prove their logic was flawed, and the Atkins Report was rejected by the Inspector. Matters went back to averaging the previous 10 years which PAGE supported in terms of total volume, but criticised areas as too extensive. Things were looking good, with a total tonnage at 812K tonnes.

Despite no objections to this, new consultants were appointed who used a new methodology and came up with 1.15M tonnes. There was no consultation – the first PAGE knew of this was a week before a Cabinet Meeting in November 2014. Again, the logic was flawed and it failed regarding its Statement of Community Involvement; but it was passed by the Cabinet. Lynda Atkins brought a successful amendment for the Council to go back and consult further, and a full Council Meeting was set up for March 2015, allowing PAGE time for more work. . However this effort has failed, and we are faced with a new number of over 1M tonnes, and a larger area including our parishes. A new action group OXAGE was formed encompassing SE and SW areas.

OCC will present documentation in June 2015 and PAGE will be able to comment on whether the process was sound and legal – there are strong reasons to think it is neither, but things are unlikely to change. The final Plan goes to the government in September / October, which will appoint an Inspector. There will be an 'Examination in Public' in Spring 2016.

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

Guy Slocombe, Trustee and Chairman, reported as follows:

Charity Overview

The Quarry Charity brings in a rental income of £2000 per annum from the business on the B4009 on an old disused quarry. The Charity exists to administer these funds for projects or equipment which benefit the community of Berrick Salome Parish (Berrick Prior, Berrick Salome, Roke and Rokemarsh). Anyone can apply for funding on behalf of an organisation or village project. The Trustees, a small group of villagers, elected annually at the Village Meeting, administer these funds on behalf of the village. Anyone interested can ask to be nominated for election - just contact Guy Slocombe (01865 400931, 07979603079 gslocombe@btinternet.com) or Abigail Clayton (07738319200 abigail.clayton@getfeedback.net).

Current Funds

The Quarry Charity's bank balance at the end of April 2014 stood at £11,579.07. Our income over the year has been £2000.00 derived from rent received from the Wilkinson's Wood Yard site on the B4009. Interest of £5.59 was also achieved.

During the year a formal approach for funding was received relating to the St Helen's, Berrick Salome - Bell Restoration Project. The Charity provided fund of £3,000 to support this project in September 2014.

This leaves the current balance at £10,584.66

Trustees

In January 2014 David Pelling stood down as Chair of the charity and Tim Clayton held the fort until Guy Slocombe was formally elected as the new Chair in December 2014.

The current Trustees of the Charity are: Guy Slocombe (Chair), Abigail Clayton (Treasurer), Tim Clayton, Marian Shaw, Neville Gill, Julie Bird and Derek Shaw (as current Chair of the Parish Council). The existing Trustees are prepared to stand for another year.

We are always keen to hear from any other interested parties who would like to be involved with the charity committee – if you have an interest in joining please feel free to approach any of the current committee members or contact me directly.

Guy Slocombe agreed better communication was needed. A page would be added to the village website, setting out eligibility criteria and publicising past projects.

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

The committee comprising Guy Slocombe, Tim Clayton, Marian Shaw, Neville Gill, Julie Bird, Abigail Clayton (treasurer) and the Chairman of the Parish Council was re-elected en bloc.

9. 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, for instance:

- Health needs / medical costs
- Disability
- Relief of poverty
- Housing

Income is received from rent from a parcel 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.

Four grants to the total value of £649 have been made over the past year.

The Trustees of the Charity are

The Rev Canon Ian Cohen (ex-officio as The Rector 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-optive trustees appointed by special resolution of the Trustees with special knowledge of the Parish

Mrs. S. Clayton

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

Financial Statement for the year ended 31st August 2014

Receipts and Payments Account

Receipts	y.e. 31.08.14	y.e. 31.08.13
Interest on 195 M&G Charibond shares	12.64	12.64
Rents from Chalgrove charity y.e. 31 December	309.01	309.01
Interest on COIF charities Deposit A/c	47.75	96.62
	<u>369.40</u>	<u>418.27</u>
Payments	y.e. 31.08.14	y.e. 31.08.13
Grant for educational expenses	199.00	272.95
Grants for special needs, recreational & educational opportunities	450.00	1,177.58
	<u>649.00</u>	<u>£1,450.53</u>
Excess of Receipts over Payments	-279.60	-1,032.26
Bank Current & Deposit Accounts at 31/8/12 (31/8/11)	12,208.43	13,240.69
Bank Current & Deposit Accounts at 31/8/13 (31/8/12)	<u>11,928.83</u>	<u>£12,208.43</u>

10. Appointments of Representatives to other organisations

Ann Ross reported on the Millstream Day Centre, Benson as follows:

It had been a turbulent year. After the Chairman's sudden resignation, former Trustee Christopher Clark was elected at an Extraordinary General Meeting, and Geraldine Galt Vice Chairman. In March the Treasurer also resigned, to be replaced by Ian Powell.

There has been some unhappiness about the Constitution, and a revised draft has gone to the Charities Commission. The Centre's remit now covers more villages, eg Brightwell Baldwin.

The Centre is self-financing, so a lot of fund-raising is necessary. In addition to the House and Fund-raising Committees, there is now a new Representatives Committee.

Berrick has been very supportive, especially of the 400 Club.

As always, more volunteers are needed, particularly drivers on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons.

11. Any other business

11.1 *Allotments*

Simon Williams raised the problem of dumping. .

11.2 *Bells*

The completion date is 22 June 2015.

11.3 *Defibrillator*

This has been purchased and installed outside the Hall – with thanks to Andy Pomeroy

A Training Event will take place on 30/5/15 at 11.00 am.

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