

THE PARISH OF BERRICK SALOME

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11th May 2017 at the Berrick Salome Village Hall at 8.00 p.m.

1. Apologies for absence

Nicole Glyn, Craig Tribe, Anne Kilduff, Susan Radice, Sally Derbyshire, Pam Marsh, Julie Bird.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 12th May 2016 were summarised by John Radice. The minutes were signed by Ian Glyn.

3. The Annual Report of Parish Council

This was presented by the chairman, Ian Glyn.

This is my second Report as Chairman of your Parish Council and I think it's fair to say that we've had a busy year.

The driver for much of our activity this year has been the effect on our Parish of proposed large scale developments in Chalgrove and in Benson. In this statement I propose to deal with all the other matters that concern us first and then to cover Chalgrove and Benson at the end.

SODC have asked us to comment on 16 Planning Applications.

- 1 is due for consideration by the Parish council later this evening
- 2 are still outstanding at SODC but have been recommended for approval by the Parish Council
- 10 were recommended for approval by the Parish Council and subsequently approved by SODC
- 2 were recommended for approval by the Parish Council but refused by SODC. 1 of these was subsequently appealed to the Secretary of State and refused again at that level. And
- 1 was recommended for refusal by the PC but approved by SODC.

From the record above you will note that we, your Parish Councillors, don't always agree with the Planning Department at SODC but that, by and large, we seem to be on the same page. You might also deduce that our approach is to respect house and property owners rights to improve and alter their properties so long as those improvements and alterations are not to the detriment of their neighbours or the rural nature of our community and so long as they do not overstretch the infrastructure on which we depend.

And that thought brings me neatly on to Thames Water. We left the story last year with Thames Water admitting that we were one of 31 parishes where it was agreed that their system was unacceptable when under strain. They promised to canvass us all in the Spring of 2016 to gauge where on that list of 31 we featured in terms of them prioritising their remedial work. Despite David chasing them on numerous occasions that canvassing did not happen till the late autumn and we await their response to it. They had previously indicated that work could start in November 17 if appropriate. Meanwhile the year has been exceptionally dry and we don't seem to have had any problems. Meanwhile, also, the whole hornets nest of the Benson Residential developments has been stirred up and what happens there will influence what happens to our sewage system both in the context of the overall capacity in Benson and also in the context of the route and size of our existing outflow pipe. This remains work in progress-- and progress is frustratingly slow.

We have maintained contact with RAF Benson and I feel, that the overflying problem has improved. For this we are grateful to those in authority at Benson. The fact that it has improved seems to me to confirm that sensitivity on the base to the overflying issue can deliver a favourable outcome for us.

The Playground equipment continues to be well used -- in one instance slightly too well used - but we are going to have to spend some more money this year to renovate the pits.

Caroline Tribe and her team have continued with their excellent work of preserving the accessibility of the footpaths and bridleways. They do a wonderful job nagging the landowners and have persuaded the Parish Council to set aside a modest amount out of the precept to undertake professional clearance work in some locations.

We have been encouraged by OCC to embrace their Oxfordshire Together initiative whereby Parish Councils get together to buy and undertake services that , historically OCC were responsible for and receive a cash incentive to do so. For us the interest was mainly in the area of grass and verge cutting where OCC cuts demanded a halving of their commitment down to a cut once a year only. We investigated this initiative but have not proceeded as its benefit was overtaken by other more urgent priorities. We will need to keep an eye on this , particularly in the context of overgrown grass at dangerous road junctions. Last year a working party with trimmers sprung up from the Parish to deal with a couple of junctions and I suspect the same will have to happen again later this year.

We have started the process of producing our Neighbourhood Plan having been persuaded that it was risky for the Parish not to have a Plan in the context of current Policies re Planning and Development. Brian Tracey heads this initiative which is being done under the auspices of the Parish Council. All parishioners will shortly be asked to feed back their views and thoughts and I would urge everyone to do so and to take this process seriously. It will certainly contribute to the future shape and style of our Parish.

We have created an archive of interesting historic Parish related documents in a filing cabinet in this hall. David Langston kindly indexed the archive and it is available to anyone who wants to look through it. It is held under lock and key so -- please ask me or the clerk or the treasurer if you want access. It would also be good to add to it if anyone has any interesting local documents in their possession.

We were asked to consider providing a tennis court for communal use on the parish field but our quest for a champion for such a project fell on stony ground and there was a murmuring of dissent from some living nearby driven by concern about noise. So the idea stalled.

The Parish Council , in conjunction with the VHMC and the Bridge Club , have continued the process of renovating the Village Hall. Stage 1 was the new roof. Stage 2 has been the provision of new windows , insulation and external cladding. And Stage 3 is currently being contemplated. The hall is now structurally sound and insulated efficiently. It should stand for many more years to come and, I hope you'll agree, looks great. We are very grateful to the Quarry Charity and to SODC for the grants that have made this work possible.

And , of course, we await with almost uncontrolled excitement, the final stages of the installation of super fast Broadband throughout the Parish. Hannah has been driving this project for us with the sort of enthusiasm and commitment that only a young person with the absolute need to communicate in a contemporary fashion can bring to the table. It remains to be seen whether Gigaclear are as good as they claim to be but , I have to say, their installation programme to date has been remarkable in terms of the way they've " just got on with it". I hope and trust that the verges will recover and that those who were contemplating moving from the Parish because they couldn't work from home will now stay for ever!!

And so – let's move on to the Elephant in the room: Chalgrove and Benson. The Parish Council's position on the proposed Developments in Chalgrove and Benson was extensively debated at the Parish Council Meeting on 12/1/17 and set out clearly in the minutes to that meeting. I do not propose to go over that ground again here. But I do ask Parishioners to bear our stated position in mind in the event that anyone feels driven to make personal representations on either Proposals. Without repeating them parrot fashion it is very useful if their general thrust can be repeated often and loud. Suffice to say that we are totally opposed to large scale developments at both locations principally because we see them as damaging the rural nature of our Parish and because of significant concern about their effect on the local infrastructure and services and the inevitability of increased traffic through the Parish. In the case of Chalgrove we also express the intellectual argument that it is simply in the wrong place to deliver what is expected of it. We will represent our position forcefully when the various Plans are canvassed and when the Applications are made. But , on the basis of covering the " what ifs" we propose and are working on the following specific action so as to mitigate the effect of the Proposed Developments on the Parish should they be granted consent.

Re Chalgrove: We are engaging with the HCA (the developers) and OCC (Highways)to persuade them to upgrade Hollantide Lane and divert Chalgrove traffic heading for Reading , Didcot, Wallingford and all points South and West along it to avoid the traffic coming through the Parish.

Re Benson: We are engaging with OCC (Highways) to persuade them to countenance significant traffic calming and traffic discouragement facilities along the length of the lanes through the Parish to avoid Benson traffic travelling to the M40 north and the Oxford Ring Road (going east) using them as a rat run. If successful this initiative might involve some major alteration to the appearance and ergonomics of our lanes. We are employing a consultant to advise and the objective will be to persuade SODC to demand a specific contribution to the cost of the works from the Developers.

Sandwiched between the two developments we are clearly under threat and I anticipate that a considerable amount of the time and efforts of your Parish Council will be devoted to defending our position in the coming year.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their continuing commitment , wisdom and efforts but most especially to thank our Clerk Chris Cussens who has taken the art of clerkship to a completely new level this year in his quest to keep us in order. I said last year that Sarah White would be a very hard act to follow – well Chris has done that – in spades.

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

Steve Harrod reported on behalf of OCC:

Proposals for Unitary Council

Following a year of negotiation, proposals, counter proposals and deadlock, the County eventually persuaded South and Vale Districts to join in the proposal for a single unitary council for Oxfordshire. This has now been submitted to the DCLG for consideration by the Secretary of State and has very recently received the support of local MP, John Howell. There had been hope of an early indication of support or otherwise from DCLG but the snap General Election has probably put the kibosh on that.

Children's centres

Of the 44 Children's Centres from which we had to withdraw funding, 33 have successfully converted to self-funding models in various shapes and sizes and we continue to advise the remaining centres on how to move forward in the best interests of children and families in the county.

Day centres

Elderly residents who make use of Day Centres in the county will continue to receive support from the Council while they also transition to new and sustainable funding models. The Council will go out of its way to ensure that vulnerable residents in the county receive the services they deserve.

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

HWRCs in the county will continue to operate as usual despite the threat of cuts to funding and the Council will continue to lobby central government for permission to charge (modestly!) for these services in order to ensure their sustainability.

Plans to transform Adoption Services across Thames Valley

OCC is joining forces with neighbouring councils to create a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) for the Thames Valley. The agency will improve outcomes for both children and adopters – including the ability to match children with families more quickly and improve support services for adopters. Oxfordshire will be the host authority within a partnership known as 'Adopt Thames Valley', alongside six other councils (Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham, Swindon and Reading) and two Voluntary Adoption Agencies (PACT and Barnardo's).

Schools

Solid forward planning has once again ensured the overwhelming majority of Oxfordshire children have been offered a place at their first-choice primary school. The proportion of children receiving a first-preference offer rose to 93.68 per cent this year, from 91.51 per cent in 2016 and 88.04 per cent in 2015. A further 4.55 per cent of children were offered their second-choice school. 2. Annual Parish Report – 09 May 2017

Although there were fewer applications this year (7,312 compared with 7,600 in 2016), it means just 78 children have been offered a place at a school not listed on their application, compared with 148 in 2016 and 320 in 2015.

The council is on course to have created nearly 3,000 additional primary school places between 2015 and 2018. Recent national figures also show the proportion of pupils in Good or Outstanding primary schools in Oxfordshire rose from 59% in 2012 to 85% in 2015 – in real terms, an increase of 14,600 children.

Extra Funding secured in addition to 2017/18 Budget Proposals

The County Council set its budget for 2017/18 on Tuesday 14th February. Ahead of the meeting, it was announced the Council had £1,957,000 extra, as a result of better than expected business rate collections, council tax collection fund surpluses and a higher than expected grant. The County is proposing to hold £926,000 of this until the 2018/19 financial year, and to spend the rest of the money (£1.03m) in this financial year in the following ways:

- £170,000 to be spent on additional grass-cutting work on highway verges. This is an area of spend that has been reduced in recent years.
- £250,000 one-off funding initially for a pilot Communities Fund for parishes and towns to bid for matched funding schemes following changes/reductions for funding for services.
- £600,000 additional funding for children's social care – a part of the council that has been exempted from cuts since 2010 but has continued to experience significant rising demand on services in common with children's social care departments across England.
- £11,000 increase on the Council's Flood Defence Levy.

Election 2017

No overall majority has been achieved. The Conservative group, with 31 of 63 seats, will be seeking an alliance with independent members to achieve a voting majority.

David Turner reported on behalf of SODC:

New alerts app from Thames Valley Police

Thames Valley Police has recently launched the 'Thames Valley Alert' app which sends residents phone notifications about the latest policing alerts in their area. The app can send targeted messages based on geographical location as well as messaging preferences, about specific information, warnings and advice relevant to that location. It also offers a number of other features, including quick location of the closest police station, and also provides the latest Thames Valley-wide news. The app is free to download on iPhone and Android by visiting the Apple store or Google Play and searching 'Thames Valley Alert'.

Extra garden waste week

Our garden waste customers can leave an extra bin of garden waste out for collection on their normal collection day in the week beginning 22 May. The extra waste should be left out in an open box or bag.

Annual compost giveaway

Every year, we give away a lot of compost created from our garden waste service. This year the giveaway takes place on the weekend of 13-14 May:

- Saturday 13 May, 9am-11am - The old South Oxfordshire District Council car park in Crowmarsh
- Sunday 14 May, 9am-11am - Rye Farm car park, Abingdon

The giveaway is on a first come, first served basis for residents who come along with their box, bag or container – and a shovel.

Individual Councillor Grant Scheme

The Individual Councillor Grant Scheme was approved on Thursday 6 April. The scheme will launch early summer with every South Oxfordshire District Councillor having £5,000 allocated to them to award in grants for community projects. Grants can be made from £500 to the maximum of £5,000

and must benefit the community in the councillor's ward area. Funds will be allocated to councillors once they have completed training. For more information contact the Grants Team on 01235 422405

New CCTV operator report

The latest report covering Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford provides information on how the council's CCTV cameras help deter, and reduce the fear of, crime, increase crime detection and assist with the successful prosecution of offenders. The report shows that CCTV operators, between January and March this year, produced 25 evidence packs for possible court proceedings and supported 25 arrests. The report is available on the council's website.

Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme - Update

In June 2016 the councils pledged to resettle eight Syrian refugee families under a Home Office funded scheme. The scheme is making good progress - Two families have been resettled in South Oxfordshire, two families have resettled in the Vale and a further two families are due to arrive in May. To help us resettle more families two more three-bedroom private rental properties are required in the Vale. We offer a good package of support for landlords; two months' deposit, two months' advance rent; a tenancy securement fee; direct payment of rent to the landlord and ongoing tenancy support. If you are aware of any private landlords who might be interested in participating in the Scheme, please ask them to contact Thom Gaunt on 01235 422442.

New Sheriff of Oxfordshire

Miss Jane Elizabeth Cranston was formally sworn in as High Sheriff of Oxfordshire on 11 April. Jane takes over from Sarah Taylor and will serve for one year. Jane moved to Oxfordshire in 1990 and has played an active part in local life since then, particularly in education as she was, simultaneously for many years, a governor of St Helen and St Katharine, The Manor Preparatory School and both Abingdon and Abingdon Prep Schools. She is a Trustee of Vale House Care Home for Dementia, Chairman of her local village shop and Chairman of the newly formed charity Youth Challenge Oxfordshire.

SODC Local Plan

Don't forget that the deadline for your comments on the new local plan second consultation is 17th May. Please send in your comments and repeat old comments you have made if you do not think that they have been properly addressed to your satisfaction.

5. Statement of the Parish Council's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2017 and observations

Craig Tribe reported as follows:

On behalf of the Parish Council I present the receipts and payments accounts of the Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2017.

Receipts for the year totaled £20,117 which is a lot higher than usual. Last year's amount was £7,843. As well as the usual council precept of £6,380 we received two grants from SODC. The first of these was £162 for the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations. This was passed on to the Chequers pub. The second grant was for £5,009 and this is for the refurbishment of the village hall. This is half of a total grant of £10,018 awarded to us for this work. The expenditure will occur in the 2017-18 accounting year. We also received two donations from the Quarry Charity. The first of these was for £3,370 and this covered the spending on the playground in the 2015-16 accounting year. The second donation was for £5,000 towards the village hall refurbishment. This will be expended in 2017-18.

Total payments for the year were £3,787 compared with £11,056 previously. Last year there was some exceptional expenditure including the defibrillator for £1,382, playground maintenance of £3,370, overflow car park resurfacing £500 and the related input VAT paid and subsequently reclaimed of £1,303. There was no major expenditure in the current year.

The net surplus of income over expenditure for the year was £16,330. Total reserves carried forward to 2017-18 are £24,343. A reserves summary is shown at the foot of the accounts. This shows a false position as over £10,000 of this is to be spent on the village hall in the 2017-18 year. We also expect to spend money on the playground and we have a 'fighting' fund to help towards opposing over development in the area.

For 2017-18 the Parish Council did not increase the Band D precept. There was a slight increase in the tax base of the parish. As a result the total precept is £6,514. The council believe it is important to maintain healthy reserves and this year we can do this without increasing the precept charge on parishioners.

Finally I would like to draw parishioners attention to the village website on which are published, amongst other things, financial information in accordance with the transparency code for smaller authorities.

6. 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 May 2016 stood at £12,590.52. 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 £4.62 was also received.

The following fund requests were made and approved in the last financial year:

August 2016	Village Playground Refurbishment	£3,370.00
August 2016	Lawncare strimmer purchase	£430
January 2017	Village Hall Refurbishment	£5,000

This leaves the current balance at £5,795.14

7. 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.

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

Jane Franklin 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 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.

Three grants to the total value of £200 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
Mrs S Derbyshire

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

Financial Statement for the year ended 31st August 2016

Receipts and Payments Account

Receipts	y.e. 31.08.16	y.e. 31.08.15
Interest on 195 M&G Charibond shares	9.88	12.64
Rents from Chalgrove charity y.e. 31 December	309.01	309.01
Interest on COIF charities Deposit A/c	54.11	53.83
	373.00	375.48

Payments	y.e. 31.08.16	y.e. 31.08.15
Grant for educational expenses	200.00	
Grants for special needs, recreational & educational opportunities	-	450.00
	200.00	450.00
Excess of Receipts over Payments	173.00	-74.52
Bank Current & Deposit Accounts at 31/8/12 (31/8/11)	11,854.31	11,928.83
Bank Current & Deposit Accounts at 31/8/13 (31/8/12)	12,027.31	11,854.31

9. Appointments of Representatives to other organisations

In the absence of Ann Ross, there was no report on the Millstream Day Centre, Benson.

It was noted that Ann is soon to leave the village and is stepping down from acting as the village representative.

10. To receive a report by PAGE on gravel extraction

The following report was presented by Rob Marsh:

The PAGE committee of local Parish Councils met on Tuesday 21st February to discuss our response to the recently issued modifications to the OCC Minerals Plan.

OCC seem determined to have a new site for extracting gravel in South Oxfordshire and continue to propose extraction levels of 1 million tonnes per annum far in excess of the 10 years average demand which has in the meantime fallen further to just over 600,000 tonnes per annum. Maps issued in the recent modifications by OCC continue to identify the areas in our Parishes as potential sites.

Our response to the modified plan was approved and has been submitted to OCC with our principle objections being (1) the Forecast Annual Production and (2) the balance of future supply between North and South Oxfordshire.

- We firmly believe that the annual rate of sand and gravel extraction in the OCC plan is too high and that the justification for deviating from Government Policy (that the 10 year average

should be used) is not based upon robust evidence. The outcome is likely to be an excess of land blighted by the threat of gravel extraction.

- The “rebalancing strategy” for shifting future provision for gravel extraction to South Oxfordshire is not significantly justified nor based upon solid evidence.

Extensive evidence is provided in our response to support these principle objections.

The fundamental point of our argument is that if the 10 year average figure was adopted by OCC then the County already has sufficient reserves from existing sites this means that NO new sites would be required.....NO rebalancing to the South would be required andNO Part 2 of the Minerals Plan would be needed.

As far as the timetable is concerned, we have the County Council elections early next month and if prior practice is anything to go by, they take a couple of months to get re-organised. This will put us into August so I don't expect OCC to have the Core Minerals and Waste Strategy up for approval until September at the earliest. This all assumes they continue not to heed our input! Once the plan is approved, then we have 6 weeks in which to instigate the Judicial Review.

The current estimate for the legal challenge is around £16k including VAT if we use a barrister. We should maybe consider engaging a QC which would clearly increase the cost. At this stage we don't have any advice from No5 Chambers, but there is the letter they provided as part of Geoff's submission which was intended to put OCC on notice of our potential next steps. Our first action would be to seek advice on the merits of our case.

We welcome the continued support of the Parish Councils.

11. Any other business

There being no other business, the Meeting concluded at 9.00 pm.