

## STANDLAKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Standlake Parish Council, held by telephone/online conference call on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.30pm

Present:

Mr. B. Parnham Chairman  
Mrs. A. Knipe  
Mrs. L. Burton  
Mrs. S. Garrett  
Mr. J Rippin  
Mrs. J Macdonald  
Mr. D. Bevan Clerk

Cllr. C. Mathew (OCC), Cllr. S. Good (WODC), Mr. D. Jeffcoat, 8 members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES - None
2. ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE - Mr. David Jeffcoat signed his Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the clerk, and was welcomed to the council.
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - there were no declarations of interest.
4. PUBLIC ITEMS - The following members of the public wished to speak:

Mr. B. Cade said he wished to refer to the planning application 21/00367/S73. He explained that the WODC planning officer required changes to the garages associated with the development; the application was to make minor changes to the orientation and location of the plots. Mr Cade referred to complaints to WODC and a letter to the MP (Robert Courts) that he alleged had been made and sent concerning him, but he had not actually seen the documents in question. Mr. Parnham said the council had no knowledge of either complaints or a letter and therefore could not comment.

In reply to a question by Mrs Macdonald (she referred to a detail on the drawings in the WODC planning application where it states that "none of the existing woodland should be removed"), asking if trees had been removed from the site, Mr. Cade said that some of the willows were in a dangerous condition and had to be removed. He stated that he was compliant with all environmental conditions in the approval and pointed to his record in planting trees and shrubbery on his completed developments on the Abingdon Road.

Mr. N. Evans said he and Mr. M. Webb (joint owners of The Bell) would shortly be making a planning application for the pub and its land. This would involve the pub itself being retained in its original form but converted into a private house, with a garden replacing the present car park. To make this financially viable, two houses, with access past the existing building, were planned behind that garden with the rest of the paddock to gardens/paddock; there would be no means of access to build behind those houses and therefore removing concerns of large-scale development that have been raised in the past. Mr. Evans said he had passed a copy of the architect's sketch plan to the clerk and would furnish an electronic copy that can be shared with councillors. Mr. Parnham thanked him for the information and said that the council looked forward to receiving the planning application after which the council could discuss the plan.

### 5. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Mr. Mathew reported that OCC had passed the proposed improvements to the A40 but leaving some 30 matters left open. What is known is that the plan involves removal of 57% of trees and 35% of hedges along the route. A funding request for an investigation into the feasibility of resurrecting the old railway between Witney and Oxford has been sent to the government. Mr. Parnham said that, in his opinion, the so called A40 improvements would not improve the system at all. Mr. Parnham also commented on the poor quality of the repairs to the potholes on the A415 between the Downs Road and Hardwick crossroads and asked if there was any guarantee by the contractors of the quality of the repairs? Mr. Jeffcoat said, as a cyclist, he fully agreed with Mr. Parnham's comment. Mr. Mathew said all he could do was pass the comments on to OCC. Mr. Mathew added that the Swinford Bridge crossing would be closed at night from 15<sup>th</sup> March for repairs which will take approximately one week.

Mr. Good had little to report from WODC but was pleased to announce the council's first all-electric vehicle had come into service and was to be followed by others as part of the council's green initiative. Mr. Good also said he was pleased to hear that there were now firm plans for The Bell.

### 6. PLANNING -

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21/00367/S73: Application for variation of conditions 2 and 3 of planning permission 20/01120/FUL to allow amendments to siting of new dwellings and changes to the schedule of Materials Original APPLICATION NO: 20/01120/FUL PROPOSAL: Erection of two detached dwellings and associated operations: Land East Of 90 High Street Standlake. No objection.

7. MINUTES - Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021, copies of which had been previously circulated to all members, were agreed as a true record and will be signed by the chairman at a later date.

### 8. MATTERS ARISING

*Sewage/Flooding* - Mr. Parnham reported that the situation remained as follows: TW have confirmed that more surveying will be carried out commencing in April; OCC have acknowledged the problems in Woodlands and High Street but, apart from saying they will be addressed in the coming financial year, have given no indication of when surveying/work will commence. Mr. Parnham will continue to press both agencies.

*Roads/Traffic/Speeding/Traffic Calming* - Mrs. Knipe reported that she and Mr. Bond-Smith had made some speed checks now that the school has re-opened. The results clearly showed an increase in the overall average speed on The Downs and Rack End compared with previous readings taken prior to the re-opening; one driver was recorded at 60 mph on The Downs. Mr. Mathew said he had been notified that the police are about to restart the Speedwatch organization; he will forward the letter to the council.

Mr. Parnham said that a councillor was required to chair the Speedwatch sub-committee; there were no volunteers from the councillors and Mr. Parnham said he would pursue this outside of the meeting.

*Playground/Recreation Ground & Maintenance* - Mr. Parnham said the COVID sign at Windrush Way had been torn down yet again and, once more, this will be replaced. Absolute Solutions have provided an estimate of £820 for treating the wooden equipment, re-barking the safety areas where necessary and carrying out minor repairs at the Rack End playground; Mr. Parnham proposed that this be accepted: agreed unanimously.

*Hornsway Trees* - Mrs. Burton reported that because of the uncertainty of the ownership of the strip of land along the path (and a change of personnel at OCC) this project cannot go ahead but see item 14 below.

*Skate Park* - Nothing further has been received from the residents proposing this scheme. This item will be deleted and raised again if necessary.

### 9. ACCOUNTS - The following accounts were approved for payment:

PWLB - loan repayment	£2142.96
D C Bevan - clerk salary	£1519.50
HMRC - clerk PAYE	£361.80.

The clerk announced that this month was the last of the Financial Year. In brief, the council's accounts show that, overall, expenditure was within the planned budget and the required reserves of £5000 were always exceeded: indeed, in some areas, there will be a surplus. The council's accounts are in a healthy position entering the new FY.

10. RISK ASSESSMENT FY 2021/22 - the clerk reminded the council that, as the council owned no land or buildings, the risk levels were primarily concerned with the recreation and playgrounds. These were adequately covered by insurance and inspection procedures; Mr. Parnham inspects once per month and RoSPA inspects annually. Financial risk is managed by an ongoing monitoring of the accounts by the council monthly and by an internal auditor on an annual basis.

11. MORATORIUM ON FURTHER PLANNING APPROVALS - Mrs. Garrett proposed that the council object to all new build applications until the sewage flooding situation is addressed. The clerk said that the council could object to anything it liked but it should be on valid planning grounds. Unless TW (a statutory consultee) also objected, then the planning officers at WODC could not refuse an application on that basis alone. Mr. Good (who sits on the WODC Lowlands planning committee) concurred and said that he had the greatest sympathy with those suffering from the sewage flooding, but the planning officers' hands were tied.

Mr. Jeffcoat suggested contact with the parishes along the Windrush who were suffering the same problems. Mr. Mathew said this problem affected not only villages in West Oxfordshire but throughout the whole county. He suggested that a letter be written to TW, the leaders of OCC and WODC, the MP and the local press stating the problem and the intention to refuse applications regardless of whether they would be approved by the planning authorities: Mrs. Garrett agreed to draft such a letter. Mr. Jeffcoat offered to help her. While no vote

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was taken the general opinion was that Standlake should refuse any further applications for new build properties.

12. THE BELL, EXTERNAL CONDITION - Mrs. Garrett raised concerns about the condition of The Bell and its surrounds and asked if anything could be done to enhance the visual aspect of the site. M. Evans and Mr. Webb gave assurances that remedial action would be taken. However, chain link fence would have to remain as this was a health and safety measure required by WODC.

13. NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK MEETING, REPORT - Mrs. Burton gave a full and detailed report of the meeting. Briefly, there is a range of options for parish councils, such as the establishment of wildflower meadows, tree planting, and the leaving of the mowing of grass verges to facilitate the establishing of wildflower habitats, further seed and plant sowing and biodiversity enrichment. This is to be encouraged not only by the Parish Council but also by the community. Planting at Downs Road and High Street verges with wildflowers could be encouraged by interested groups if necessary, i.e. the Garden Club, W.I., etc. Standlake PC does not own any land but there is scope for such measures as wildflower planting at the recreation ground, adjusting verge mowing schedules and, in the light of the failure to plant trees on Hornsway, examining with OCC the planting of more trees on the High St. The report was received enthusiastically by the councillors and it was agreed that Mrs. Burton form a committee, to include interested residents, to examine the options. The clerk said that funds could be found from the community fund budget to support the initiative. Mrs. Macdonald proposed a vote of thanks to the residents who carried out the recent litter pick around the village; this was passed unanimously.

14. HORNSWAY BENCH - Mr. Rippin has been approached by a resident asking if a suitable location could be found to place a memorial bench commemorating a recently deceased relative. Mr. Rippin suggested that this would be an ideal option to replace the old concrete framed bench on Hornsway which was in serious need of refurbishment, if not outright replacement. The origin of the old bench is not known but there is no indication that it was placed there as a memorial itself. There were no objections in principle from councillors; it was agreed that Mr. Rippin would liaise with the resident and report back to the council with a detailed plan of action.

15. MAY MEETINGS (AGM AND ANNUAL PARISH MEETING) DATES - The clerk said that lack of certainty from government regarding the legality of online meetings continuing beyond 7<sup>th</sup> May had implications for the council's May schedule of meetings - due to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> May. Covid restrictions on gatherings indoors will still be in force on that date and it is likely that social distancing measures will not be relaxed until June at the earliest. The clerk said that it would be impossible to hold a meeting with full social distancing in place and ensure the regulations were observed. Therefore, to comply with the law, he proposed that the May meetings provisionally be brought forward to 4<sup>th</sup> May and be held remotely; if the legislation were to be changed to allow remote meetings to continue then the date would revert to the original 11<sup>th</sup> May. This was agreed and the decision will be reviewed at the April meeting.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS - The next meeting will be by Zoom conference call on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 7.30pm. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.20pm.

..... Chairman ..... Date