

**MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL held on
Wednesday 23 April 2014 at 7.30pm at The Pavilion, Station Road, Cholsey, Oxfordshire.**

Present: Parish Chair, County Councillor and District Councillor, Mr M Gray.

Parish Councillors, Mrs Dyer-Lynch, Helen Jiggins, Mr P Ramsay, Mr M Madeley, Mr J Butler, Mrs L Hamlyn, Mr P Ramsey.

Police Community Support Officers, Lauren Edkins and Chris Wyatt

Members of the public, 11 members of the public attended.

1. **Apologies received:** Mrs Angela Rowlands, Marion Kaposy
The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm
2. **Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on 24 April 2013**
No-one present had any comments to make on the minutes, therefore Mr Gray confirmed acceptance.
3. **To receive reports from:**
 - (a) **Parish Council Chair, Mr Mark Gray**

Mr Gray began his report by commenting on the new Pavilion which he feels is a testament to what can be achieved by dedicated volunteers. He then spoke on the following Parish Issues:

The Proposed Gravel Pit

Although the immediate threat of gravel extraction in Cholsey has now receded this is always going to be an issue that recurs every few years because of the reserves of gravel sited in the Parish.

The Fair Mile Development

This is now almost fully occupied and it is important that Fairmile residents become integrated within the community. The Play Area at Fairmile is soon to be delivered as is an allotment site both of which will likely be managed by the Parish Council.

Winterbrook

Last year saw the removal of the threat to build 550 new houses at Winterbrook. Council worked closely with SODC to make sure these were sited elsewhere. However, there is now a new threat to Winterbrook which has arisen out of the SODC's latest Community Governance Review, Wallingford want Winterbrook to become part of Wallingford, the argument for which is based on the relatively new artificial boundary formed by the bypass. Council intend to fight the proposal as they feel strongly that Winterbrook is part of Cholsey, a view which is reinforced by Winterbrook residents.

Parking issues

Council have worked closely with Highways to try and ensure that parking from station commuters doesn't overwhelm the streets around the station. The comment sheets completed by residents at the recent parking consultation have been passed to OCC Highways department who will then factor the comments into any possible revision of their plans. This will be followed by a formal consultation for residents.

Future Threats

New Homes. SODC have been targeted to build a significant number of new homes and wants to site 128 of these in Cholsey. Council recognise the need to be vigilant on the issue to try and ensure the village grows generically.

The Post Office - It is proposed to move the PO behind the general check out counter in Tesco. Council would like everyone to respond to the consultation sent to residents by the Post Office, the deadline for which is 9th May.

Future Plans

In the immediate future Council have plans to appoint a Youth Worker to run a homework club and summer play scheme and a Children's worker working through the school to provide help for families.

Mr Gray concluded his report by expressing his thanks to all the Parish Councillors for their hard work and giving up their time.

(b) County Councillor – Mr Mark Gray

Mr Gray began by speaking of the privileged of being a County Councillor and thanked all those who voted for him.

He reported on the County Councils work in 2013-14 and for the future:

Budget Cuts

The major challenge facing the County Council is the huge budget cut imposed by Central Government which for Oxfordshire CC amounted to 270 million in first round of cuts and a further 61 million in the latest

round. This means that Oxfordshire CC has been forced to slim down the services it provides and just deliver statutory services.

Cuts include the County Councillor £10,000 annual community budget which will be cut to £5,000 next year.

As Chair of the Area Locality Group which brings together all the councillors in the Didcot and Henley districts, Mr Gray spoke of the strong desire among members to do away with the two-tier system of District and County Councils and replacing them with a single body, which could potential result in huge savings and cut confusion among residents.

Gravel Pit

Mr Gray is part of the CAG (Cabinet Action Group) responsible for advising the County Council on suitable sites and policy for local gravel extraction. This group has had some success in reducing the figures for the amount of gravel required leading to less new sites being needed.

Projects

The money provided for the Fair Mile Development has been /will be used for:

Parking changes to lessen the impact of station commuters - the new work will provide additional yellow lines and restricted parking areas within the village.

Improvements to the Ilges lane Track which will connect with the newly opened Reading Road cycle path due to be delivered in late summer.

Repairs to the road surface on Pound Lane and "siding out" of Wallingford Road.

Providing road warning signs at the top of Caps Lane.

Current projects include the Wallingford to Cholsey cycle path. The existing proposals have been costed at around £400,000. Unfortunately there is only around £170,000 in the budget. Therefore alternative ways of delivering the cycle path are being investigated including the possibility of resurfacing and widening the existing footpath to make it suitable for both cyclists and pedestrians.

Mr Butler expressed his thanks for the work Mr Gray is doing and commented on the perceptible difference he has noticed since Mr Gray was elected. He urged Mr Gray to push County to review the way they deliver services and thus deliver them for less.

(c) District Councillor – Mr Mark Gray

Mr Gray spoke about Parish issues from the District perspective.

New Housing Plans

He feels strongly that the District Council should challenge the figures for extra housing in South Oxfordshire required by the SHMA plans, which have been imposed by central government.

In response to a question from the audience about how the figures were arrived at new houses Mr Gray responded that the figures had been calculated backwards by taking the amount of social housing needed and then based on a 40% social housing requirement calculating the overall number of houses needed.

Help for Residents

In the last year he has been able to help 2 families with housing issues and urged people to get in touch with him if they are in inadequate accommodation or if they know of those who are.

Future Plans

Future plans include improving the parking situation around the shops in the centre of the village, however this will require money.

In response to a query about a possible swimming pool for the village Mr Gray thought this very unlikely as these are very expensive to maintain.

(d) Cholsey Community Police Officers

PCSOs Chris Wyatt and Lauren Edkins based at Didcot station attended the meeting and reported on the State of local policing in the absence of officers from Wallingford being available.

Crime Statistics

PCSO Edkins provided the meeting with some statistics on crime in the local area which includes Cholsey.

Since April 2013 the area has seen 4 burglaries of dwellings, 15 burglaries of non- dwellings 4 attempted burglaries, 43 reports of anti-social behaviour, 34 reports of criminal damage. In August 2013 they received 7 reports of bike thefts from the Communal Bike Sheds at Cholsey Meadows.

Despite the figures Thames Valley are having success in their priority areas of reducing rural crime, improving crime detection rates, rehabilitation of offenders, and reducing household burglaries, as well as in other areas.

Parking Issues

PSCO Wyatt reported on the constant battle the police have against people parking illegally. Most reports come to the police from Station Rd. West End and Sandy Lane. Unfortunately due to the parking restrictions already in place, tickets can only be issued in West Lane and Sandy Lane if an officer sees a car entering the road.

Crime Prevention and Reporting

PCSO advised that people should report anything suspicious. In a non emergency Wallingford Station can be contacted either via the website or by calling 101. Mr Sheldon and Mr Gray both expressed the opinion that the 101 service was too long-winded and bureaucratic. The PCSO's undertook to report this back.

Residents can also make use of the Police's Crime Prevention Survey service where an officer will come out and look at their property and give advice on security free of charge.

Police Presence

Mr Gray said that it was important for the village to see the PCSO's around the village more especially if new parking restrictions are to be put in place, they need to be enforced.

In general the feeling of those attending the meeting that the PCSO's were not seen enough in the village and Mr Gray undertook to speak to the new sergeant at Wallingford Station, Sergeant Fraser.

Mr Butler and Mr Gray thanked the police for they work they are doing and for taking the time to attend and address the meeting.

4. Opportunity for residents to raise other points from the above, or any other items of local interest.

No questions were raised.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.55pm.