

**HORSPATH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Parish Council Open Meeting held at Horspath Village Hall**  
**on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 8.00pm.**

**Present:** Mrs B Oakley (Chair), Mr D Burgess, Mrs P Cook, Mr J Dobson, Mr P Dobson, Mrs C Riley, Mrs H Kogel (Clerk), **Apologies** Mr P Ewart, Mrs J Horne, Mr M Timbs, Mrs L Yendole.

**Absent:**  
**Public:** 21

**136/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** – Apologies were given on behalf of Mr Ewart, Mrs Horne, Mr Timbs and Mrs Yendole.

Mrs Oakley informed residents that the balloons and gifts are for the Clerk who has recently reached 22 years as Parish Clerk.

**137/22 IMPROVEMENTS TO HORSPATH BURIAL GROUND.**

Mrs Oakley informed residents that Mr Underdown has recently highlighted that improvements to Horspath Burial Ground are required. Mrs Oakley invited Mr Underdown to present his ideas.

Mr Underdown passed thanks to the Parish Council who have been very supportive with his proposal to make improvements to the burial ground. In March, Mr Underdown met an elderly couple who were unable to get into the burial ground as the gate was stuck and there was nowhere to sit. Mr Underdown then arranged a site visit with members of HPC. Following this meeting tree cutting took place to make the burial ground more accessible. Mr Underdown produced a report and passed it to HPC. The burial ground is totally neglected, it is not a field it is a consecrated piece of land and some of the graves are misaligned. Mr Underdown stated that he has been approached by relatives who are horrified by the way the burial ground has been left to deteriorate. Mr Underdown suggested that a sign should be attached to the gate displaying a contact telephone number. The gate itself is very difficult to open, and having obtained 3 different quotes to lay a new path in the burial ground, the companies have said they would start the path before the gate, which would then allow the gate to open freely. The new path would be very similar to the path in the Churchyard and this would allow access to the graves from the entrance. All 3 quotations come with guarantees, so if anything was to go wrong they would fix it. As it is at the moment, it is very difficult for disabled people to navigate their way to the graves which is in contravention of DDA. The cremation plots are totally neglected, which is why Mr Underdown has suggested a memorial garden next to it, and also suggested that a bench is installed. Mr Underdown arranged for an expert in wild flowers to visit the burial ground who offered lots of advice and saw no reason why we couldn't have a wild flower memorial garden. Mr Underdown suggested that it would be nice to have a group of volunteers who could maintain the burial ground maybe once a month. Mr Underdown stated that he would like to see the burial ground as a peaceful and beautiful place for loved ones to spend time remembering. It is time in this village to do something to be very proud of and honour people that have passed away. There are approximately 34 people buried there and the burial ground is expected to last around 70 years.

Q Mrs McSweeney stated that her mother was buried there around 15 years ago and in that time nothing has changed. There used to be a path but as it was unstable it was removed. Mrs McSweeney passed thanks to Mrs Oakley as in recent months she was unable to get to her mother's gravestone due to the brambles being overgrown, and Mrs Oakley arranged for this to be done. Mrs McSweeney has put rose bushes on her mother's graves but the monkjacks and deer's eat them, so she is not sure how we can have flowers there. Mrs McSweeney's sister is disabled so she has not been able to see her mother's grave as the area is so

unstable, so it would be nice to see some improvements and a bench installed. Mrs McSweeney stated that the other problem is that some of the graves have not gone down because the ground is clay.

A Mr Underdown stated that the best and preferred quotation for the new path was from the company who laid the path in the Churchyard which is nice and flat and in keeping with the area.

Q Mrs Julian stated that everyone here would like to see some improvements carried out especially for disabled access and seating. Who is responsible for maintaining it and how can we move it forward, as it is a place for people to visit love ones.

A Mrs Oakley stated that HPC is responsible for the maintenance of the burial ground, but in most burial grounds it is difficult to access graves in wheelchairs. If you compare Horspath burial ground to other local burial grounds, our burial ground is far more accessible. Mr Underdown stated that some of the gravestones in the Churchyard are very old dating back to 1683, but the other side of the Churchyard does have access. Mr Underdown asked about the burial ground manager. Mrs Oakley stated that Mr Horsley is the manager of the burial ground and he deals with the funeral directors.

Q Mr Mutton stated that the burial ground is in the wrong position, it should never of been built there as the area floods, it should have been built on Cuddesdon Road which would have been more suitable. The gate is supposed to keep travellers out of the site, but the padlock is not secure and can easily be removed. When Mr Mutton organised the new extended car park, a barrier was installed with a padlock enclosed in a box so it couldn't be broken. The gate at the burial ground is not needed and should be removed as the barrier is in place. These problems could have been avoided if it was thought through more sensibly. Mr Mutton stated that he would support any improvements to make it look nicer than what it is. Mr Mutton stated that his neighbour who recently visited a loved one was very upset after visiting, as the whole area was flooded.

Q Mr Brooks stated that the first thing that should have been done was to put drainage all the way around the burial ground, which is why flooding has always been a problem. When the burial ground was first established, a maintenance plan should also have been in place.

Q Mrs Gray stated that her and her husband managed the burial ground for a long while and kept the area clean and tidy, but when they retired it was up to the Parish Council to maintain.

Mr Brook stated that before any work is carried out, the drainage must be sorted, and the water from a burial ground is classed as contaminated.

Q Mrs Southall stated that the burial ground needs a lot of attention, and fencing to keep the munkjacks out. HPC needs a proper budget to maintain the area so that this doesn't happen again. HSPC funds would seem to be a very good use for funding.

Q Mrs Walker asked if planting trees would help with the drainage to soak up the water.

A Mr Underdown stated that this is an excellent idea, and he will look into it. Mr Burgess stated that in the summer trees would help but not in the winter, it needs proper piped drains installed.

Q Mrs Mcsweeney suggested a sign on the gate for the burial ground, as it looks like a field walled off with graves in.

Q Mr Coolman asked what the budget is for this project, and can we include a survey for the drainage.

A Mr Underdown stated that the main cost would be for the new path, the rest of the work would be carried out by volunteers. Mr Underdown stated that he has 3 quotations, £21K, £13k, and £12k, which is the preferred quote as this company laid the path at the Churchyard. They will extend the path outside of the gate which will allow the gate to open freely and then go round to the graves, where a bench could be installed. Mrs Oakley stated that a survey can be included in the project costs.

Q Mrs Julian stated that Mr Harris has said in the past, as long as there is flooding in the burial ground, this will undermine the path.

A Mr James Dobson stated that in 2006 HPC decided to lay a new path and then for flooding reasons it was decided not to. A drainage drawing was done in the 70's and HPC should have the information about this but it has probably been superseded.

Q A resident stated that she like the burial ground as it is, and if flowers are planted they will get eaten.

- Q Mrs O'Day stated that if there is a contract for a burial to take place, the families will expect the area to be maintained.
- A Mrs Oakley stated that HPC has agreed to cut the grass and the brambles in the burial ground. The burial ground is not like the crematorium that comes with a maintenance contract.  
Mrs McSweeney thought that the maintenance of the graves was the responsibility of the family. When the grass is cut, the mower can only go around the graves.  
Mr Underdown stated that some of the graves need their profiles raised.  
Mrs Oakley supported the idea of a volunteer group to maintain the area.
- Q A resident reported that the tap is very hard to turn on/off and yesterday it was left on.
- Q Mrs Kidd stated that HPC is responsible for maintaining the burial ground.  
Mrs McSweeney stated that if a volunteer group are happy to maintain the area, why spend money to do it.  
Mrs Gray stated that St Giles Church manage the churchyard with a group of volunteers.
- A Mrs Oakley stated that hopefully HPC will organise a drainage survey as improvements to the burial ground is more important than other things planned for this village using HSPC funds.

### **138/22 20mph SPEED LIMITS IN HORSPATH VILLAGE.**

- Mrs Oakley informed residents that HPC has been informed about 20mph speed limits in villages by Mr Tim Bearder, OCC, who is encouraging all villages to introduce the 20mph speed limits to enhance road safety. There are lots of villages in the County that have signed up for this scheme and it can take up to 3 years to be introduced. There are certain areas in Horspath where 20mph should not be introduced, such as, around the Green, Cuddesdon Road, Sandy Lane and Gidley Way which are considered to be rural roads and 20mph will not make a difference. Mrs Oakley suggested that 20mph speed limits should be introduced on all other roads in Horspath.
- Q A resident living at the top of Gidley Way which is currently 30mph, and as a pedestrian with no paths along that area it's quite scary and cars/vans exceed 30mph. The speed humps that are installed do not slow the traffic.
- A Mrs Oakley stated that HPC can try for 20mph along Cuddesdon Road and the top of Gidley, but it is unlikely to be introduced.
- Q A resident living at Cuddesdon Road stated that there are a lot of people who walk along this road to get to the village school, and with no pavements it is very dangerous.
- Q Mr Mutton asked who will monitor the 20mph speed limits. He has been trying to get the chicane outside the village hall changed for years and that is also very dangerous and he has seen 3 accidents at this location.
- A Mrs Oakley stated that she has recently attended a meeting with OCC, Mr Burgess and Mr Hamlet to look at moving forward and removing the chicane and replace with double speed pillows.  
Mr Mutton stated that he attended a meeting with OCC 7 years ago and every year it is supposed to happen, but it is still not done, and there will be a fatal accident there before the chicane is removed.  
Mrs Oakley stated that HPC has to pay for the design of the proposed traffic calming as well as the installation, and she would expect for this to happen in the next 18 months.
- Q Mrs Julian living at Gidley Way suggested that the smiley face traffic signs are installed.
- A Mr Burgess stated that these signs can only be installed by OCC, and he is currently waiting for a quotation.
- Q Mrs O'Day living at Gidley Way, stated that it tends to be vans that are speeding at Gidley Way and with no pavements it's dangerous. Mrs O'Day suggested that smiley face speed signs are installed at the top of Gidley Way and additional 30mph signage installed on the left of Sandy Lane. Some villages have average speed cameras in place which would be good at the bottom of Gidley Way to track through to Littleworth.
- A Mrs Oakley stated that TVP will be enforcing 20mph speed limits, and they are now advocating for HPC to produce a community speed watch programme with a group of volunteers to operate. With this programme, TVP cannot prosecute motorists who speed, but they will issue a warning letter.

Mr Peter Dobson stated that all of the information is linked to a TVP computer and all information is stored. This programme works well with volunteers and is currently being operated in Harwell and it is making a difference. HPC tried a few years ago to try this programme but we couldn't even get access to a camera.

Q Mrs McSweeney stated that ambulances feel every hump when travelling along Gidley Way, and the humps do slow the traffic. What is the point of introducing 20mph on the little roads in Horspath when the majority of vehicles that are speeding are at Cuddesdon Road and the top of Gidley Way?

A Mrs Oakley stated that Manor Farm Road is also a problem and outside of Horspath School and if there was a deterrent with 20mph being introduced, it will hopefully slow the traffic.

Q Mr Mutton stated that Church Road needs speed humps installed as there is a problem with motorists speeding past the School. There is a large amount of lorries that use Church Road to avoid the bridge.

Q Mrs O'Day asked if TVP carry out speed checks at the top of Gidley Way. Hand held speed guns are fine for a visual deterrent but TVP cannot prosecute with these as they are not accurate.

A Mr Peter Dobson stated that if a motorist is caught speeding three times, TVP can prosecute.

Mr Underdown stated that near Waterperry they have made a guy holding a speed gun.

Q Mr Mutton suggested that smiley face speed signs are installed at the entrances to the village.

A Mrs Oakley stated that HPC is waiting for a quotation from OCC.

Q Mr Coolman stated that introducing 20mph speed limits in the village will not do any harm so he would support it.

A Mrs Oakley stated that HPC is asking residents to complete the voting forms for both 20mph speed limits and for improvements to the burial ground. The end date for the consultation is 14<sup>th</sup> August 2022 and the results will be discussed at the September HPC meeting. Voting forms will be available on the village noticeboard and a voting box will be placed in the village shop.

Q Mr Hamlet asked if the village support both projects going ahead, how we will get the money from HSPC as the way it is, it is a loaded vote.

A Mr Peter Dobson asked on what grounds is voting loaded as we are all here to make independent decisions.

Mr Hamlet stated that HPC is asking for residents views and if the cap fits.

Mr Peter Dobson stated that is a derogative comment and it amounts to bullying.

Q Mrs Julian passed thanks to Mrs Oakley for giving residents the opportunity to discuss the two projects and it is very positive to have a village meeting.

A Mrs Oakley stated that she is in favour of HPC making improvements to the burial ground and install the correct drainage.

Q Mrs Riley asked if anyone visited the burial ground in the winter months to see if was flooded.

A Mrs McSweeney stated that she did visit the area, and it was flooded.

Mrs Oakley thanked residents for attending the meeting.

Signed.....

Date.....