

HORSPATH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 26th April 2022

Present: Mr D Burgess
Mrs P Cook
Mr J Dobson
Mr P Ewart
Mrs J Horne
Mrs B Oakley (Chairman)
Mrs C Riley
Mr M Timbs
Mrs L Yendole
Mrs H Kogel, Clerk
Mr T Bearder (County Councillor)
Mrs E Gillespie (District Councillor)

Apologies: Mr P Dobson

Absent:

Public: 17

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** – Apologies were given on behalf of Mr Peter Dobson.
- 2. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL.**
The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on Tuesday 27th April 2021, were approved and signed by the Chairman as correct.
- 3. STATEMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS 2021/22 – Un-audited.**
A statement of un-audited accounts for 2021/22 was circulated. No questions were asked. The statement of accounts had not at this point been audited.
- 4. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT – Mrs Beverley Oakley.**
Good evening and welcome everyone, it is so good to resume to face to face meetings. The Zoom meetings have been tolerable but hopefully the Parish Council is back to normal now.
It has been an eventful twelve months. In September Mr Peter Dobson resigned as Chairman but thankfully due to his knowledge has remained as a Councillor. Mr Burgess took over as Chairman and myself as Vice Chairman. Unfortunately due to private commitments Mr Burgess resigned in January and I took the role as Chairman, and Mr Burgess remains as Vice Chairman. In November Mrs Paula Cook and Mrs Catherine Riley were co-opted on to the Council and they are very welcome additions.
Over the past twelve months there has been one contentious issue, this is the bridge restoration and the installation of the fence. Some residents were concerned that wildlife would be unable to travel safely through the village. HPC requested that Historic Railways England open up several places in the fence to enable wildlife access to the bridge. The disused railway line is privately owned and because access would be possible to the owner’s parent’s property, the fence remains intact. HPC is still waiting for HRE data regarding the movement of wildlife.
Horspath Stone Pit Charity goes from strength to strength. Grants have been awarded to many individuals and local organisations. The criteria for grants is available on the HSPC website. Recently a new grant for organisations was established where organisations can apply for up to £75,000 for large scale infrastructure improvements. All organisations should apply for the first stage of this grant by 1st May 2022.
Thanks to Mr Simon Hamlet who spent two weeks clearing soil, trees, concrete sleepers and rubbish from the over-flow car park. The work has now almost doubled the size of the car park and was mostly funded by Horspath Stone Pit Charity.
The bus service is now incredibly popular and Horspath Stone Pit Charity will continue to support this

service.

I am sure that everyone is aware of the huge amount of building works undertaken in the village. HPC is required by SODC to comment on most planning applications apart from permitted development applications. The proposed development at Northfields will be discussed as an Agenda item later.

Horspath Hub is proving to be a vital resource for the village. The Friday Post Office and Cafe are once again thriving fully after the pandemic. There are numerous craft, exercise and hobby classes. HPC will continue to support the Hub and wish the Trustees continued success.

HPC has recently signed a lease on additional ground at the allotment site. We wish all allotment holders a fruitful and productive year.

In December following a meeting with Mr Burgess, Mr Hamlet, myself and a representative from Oxfordshire County Council, traffic surveys were carried out on Oxford Road and Cuddesdon Road. The main reason is to use this data for the removal of the Oxford Road chicane. In its place there will be large “pillows”, these are not the same as the sleeping policemen at present in the village, but they will hopefully provide traffic calming and speed restriction, without the near misses as at present.

HPC is now looking for able bodied volunteers to help reinstate the wildlife area on Butts Road. My apologies to all walkers on the temporary closure but it was considered too difficult to negotiate certain parts of this area. If anyone is able to give their time and expertise to carry out works to the footbridge and steps, please contact me at the end of the meeting.

The new HPC website is now up and running, thanks to Mr Burgess and his considerable efforts working with the website company.

My sincere thanks to all of the residents for their help and support. Mr Rob Gray for cutting the Village Green and the Burial Ground and other areas, Mr Max Eason, Mr Rob Judges and Richard Parker who ensure that the Recreation Ground and Bowley Field always looks exceptional, Mr David Horsley for managing the Burial Ground, Mr John and Rebecca Madden for emptying the bins, Mr Peter Aries for posting the Minutes and making sure that the library in the bus shelter is clean and tidy, Mr Bob Surman for his continued good work, and Mr Bob Hamlet and Mr Simon Hamlet for the work carried out. Thanks also to Mr Martin Harris, ex-Councillor who continues to advise HPC with planning legalities, Mr Tim Bearder and Mrs Elizabeth Gillespie our County and District Councillors and Mr Brian Lowe an Independent Advisor for HSPC. Special thanks to Mrs Kogel the Parish Clerk. This past year has been particularly traumatic and yet Hayley whose integrity and expertise has been questioned, always maintains a most knowledgeable and unbiased approach and has proved to be the most excellent and dedicated Clerk and member of this Council. I do not think that anyone could have done more to keep this Council running so smoothly. In July 2022, Hayley will have served 22 years as Horspath Parish Clerk.

5. VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE’S REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS. – Treasurer, Horspath Village Hall.

Cash flow has been steady over the year mainly due to the long-term booking with the NHS Oxford Community Support Group using our facilities. This has now ceased as of 31st March 2022 which will have an impact on this current financial year’s income.

The bank account is healthy, this has been mainly due to the NHS booking and the grant received towards the cost of the kitchen works. Expected costs coming up: - kitchen works, fencing, general maintenance, and the purchase of extra chairs.

Utilities, there will be a substantial increase in costs this coming year and we therefore need to keep a considerable amount of the current funds in the bank ready for this purpose.

Insurance has been renewed for the coming year and all relevant safety checks has either been carried out or arranged for the fire alarm systems, fire extinguishers, boiler services and PAT testing.

Charges have been reviewed and increased as agreed at the lastest Village Hall Committee meeting.

Bookings are steady, however, we need to be aware of the current economic factors that are affecting people’s disposable income and therefore we may have less bookings this coming financial year.

6. HORSPATH STONE PIT CHARITY STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

A copy of the un-audited 2021/22 accounts was circulated to all Parish Councillors and members of the public, no questions were asked.

7. HORSPATH RECREATION CHARITY STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

A copy of the 2021/22 accounts was circulated to all Parish Councillors and members of the public, no questions were asked.

8. FRIENDS OF HORSPATH – Report from Sheila Frankum.

This year has been very much a learning experience in order for us to get back to a sort of normal community life, but also remembering and establishing safety using masks, hand sanitisers, social distance, fresh air, track and trace, testing, and all the new vocabulary that the pandemic has introduced us too.

We have managed to keep the Post Office open throughout and usually a café as well although following the restrictions that were upon us at the time. Classes and Clubs have also managed to keep going with restricted numbers and doors and windows open regardless of the temperature.

We have kept the village active with Line Dancing, Yoga, Pilates, and table tennis. The community has been creative with Art, Making Time, Creative writing and continued photography for the calendars and cards. Learning has also been an important aspect with Spanish, Wine club and Senior Residents. We have made sure the villagers are able to celebrate and hold special events so the Hub has been there for hire.

We have a new class which encompasses all for those aspects for those who would normally be struggling with everyday activities. It is a Seated Wellness Class and we have managed to get an experienced tutor and taxis to and from the class for those who need it. This has proved to be very successful and a very welcome addition to the variety of classes we support. Another new addition is regular monthly massage and one to one yoga sessions using the small room and that too is proving very popular.

In September we had our AGM, this year in the Hub rather than on Zoom. We were able to report again how the Hub is used extensively by the village and the community even during these very difficult circumstances.

We held a very successful Christmas Market at the end of November with both the stall holders and participants very pleased to socialise and purchase items for this special time of year.

The Art Group held a very impressive exhibition of their work and the Hub was suitably decorated for the Remembrance Day tea party.

Although our monthly visit from Age UK did not go ahead during the months of the pandemic, we are pleased that during the last couple of months this facility providing advice and support for all those who need it has returned. Kat Hart now comes on a Friday morning and has proved very helpful to many proving answers to queries about care, support, health, or financial difficulties.

The management of the building and its facilities is an ongoing task and so far, this year we have had the outside windows repainted, replaced the carpet in the Post Office room, and due to volunteers refashioned the map board that has been part of our permissive path.

Our thanks must go to all of our volunteers who are on hand to help with all the varied tasks from cake making, to cleaning and mending. Without them the Hub would not be the success that it is.

9. SODC COUNCILOR'S REPORT – Mrs Elizabeth Gillespie.

As a Council we are doing what we can, within the remit of the rather chaotic 'Central Government management' of the Ukrainian 'guest' arrangements. I have been informed, by the Chief Executive Mark Stone, that based on the initial level of host interest one could have expected an enormous variation of guests in South Oxfordshire. The arrangements are mostly reliant on the hosts making either

personal contact on line or contacting guests through non-governmental organisations, church etc. The process appears to be both lengthy and difficult. In these circumstances it is highly unlikely that all initial offers from hosts will realise and hopefully the back-up system is going to materialise and I would encourage any of those in a position to be able to give shelter to these people in their terrible hour of need to either contact myself who can put you in touch with the already very efficient voluntary village backup groups. Alternatively you could attempt to obtain information directly from SODC who might be able to offer advice.

The offices have resonance with the Marie Celeste but I am informed by Mark Stone that there is no plan to alter the status quo because Officers working mostly from home meets both the Officers comfort and the productivity better. I personally would dispute this: certainly from the Councillor/Officer point of view.

At the end of the year SODC will be moving out of their current rented offices at Milton Park and into Abingdon. Plans for building the new offices in Didcot are still ongoing.

The Council is working on a joint Plan with the Vale of White Horse. I have never been in favour of this as the Vale and South Oxfordshire have different outlooks and priorities. Also, should there be different coloured parties in both I can envisage ensuing problems.

As was predictable, given that it was blatantly evident that the proposed number of houses promised in the Local Plan exceeded those historically actually built, we have now had to admit that we have lost our 5 year land supply.

The current coalition have had a difficult time negotiating a predetermined avenue. I remain extremely disappointed with the Local Plan but am doing all I can to ameliorate the damage that the Northfield and Grenoble Road developments are going to do to our villages and am having regular meetings with Brasenose College and the developers.

You are fortunate, in Tim Bearder, to have one of the most proactive Councillors in this coalition. But what has impressed me is that the majority of them are very intelligent, full of integrity and working hard for the good of our residents. I am confident that they will do all they can to steer our ship to as safe a harbour possible in the circumstances.

Thank you to everyone for your help and support.

Mrs Oakley stated that due to Covid, SODC stopped sending out paper copies of planning applications to Parish Councils and asked if SODC now resume sending paper copies. Mrs Gillespie will raise this issue at the meeting next week.

10. OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – Mr Tim Bearder.

It's amazing to think of all the things that have changed in the last year. It started with my election to SODC in the by-election held for Forest Hill and Holton to replace Sarah Gray (an erstwhile resident of Horspath) and then quickly with my appointment to the County Cabinet as the member for Highways Management.

It has been a real honour to serve my local residents on both councils over the last year. I have cemented a strong working relationship with your District Councillor Elizabeth and hopefully the Parish feel that we work well together, I certainly really value the time and energy given by Horspath's dedicated Councillors.

I know you have already met in person but, ironically due to Covid, this will be my first face to face meeting with the Parish since the Pandemic hit!

As you can see from the attached graphic I'm now involved in a huge range of services and this is incredibly rewarding and exciting. Taking control of both councils I am able to be part of sculpting policies that work in our interests.

The guiding philosophy that steers me is the desire to protect and conserve the rural village character of Horspath. I am determined to respond boldly to the climate emergency and enhance and develop the natural ecosystem and our local wildlife. With all of the developments planned for the future, Mr Bearder is trying to bring in policies to reduce the number of cars permitted on the developments, and

on some of the developments attached to the city he is trying for zero cars, with residents using public transport.

In that vein I am delighted to have introduced 20mph, allowing all parishes in the county to apply for a free scheme to reduce the pace and create a safer place in Oxfordshire.

I continue to support the village's wonderful bus service and continue to investigate ways to make this better and more sustainable going forward. Horspath Stone Pit Charity has also helped to fund the bus service. I have invested in improving the bus stops (though appreciate there is still a bit more work to do at the top of Gidley Way!).

I am delighted to have played a part in saving the bridge from plans given the green light by the previous administration and think the work saving the bricks by residents like Spencer Timmo has been a tremendous success and makes me proud to see every time I cycle through. I have asked officers to improve the signing to minimise the risk of future damage.

The big tasks going forward is to bring in new highway and building standards at County and District respectively to ensure that all the all the construction imposed upon us by the national government do the least harm possible to our fantastic villages and the climate.

11. NORTHFIELDS. – Mrs Oakley.

Northfield is going to happen, but a planning application has not yet been submitted. Before a planning application is submitted a planned performance agreement has to take place, but OCC are delaying this from happening. Mrs Gillespie, Mr Harris, Mrs Julian and Mrs Oakley have met several times with Chelgate Public Relations Consultants who are employed by Brasenose College. Until a planned performance agreement has been ratified, they will not be submitting a planning application. There will be 1800 houses built between Horspath and Garsington. Discussion have taken place and there will be a large buffer zone between Horspath and the housing. OCC own part of the land in the middle of the land owned by Brasenose College and they want this piece of land to be a car free zone. When an outline planning application is received, HPC intend to hold a village meeting. Mrs Gillespie is working tirelessly to ensure that Horspath village is not too badly affected. Mrs Gillespie stated that OCC is causing delays with the planning by wanting their land to be car free and it might help if members of the public could write to OCC.

12. 20MPH SPEED LIMITS.

Cllr Bearder stated that OCC has made it free to any Town or Parish Council that want to apply to the scheme. Applications can be submitted online by completing an application form. OCC will then put a legally enforceable 20mph speed limit in the village. The scheme will run over the next three years. A residents asked how the 20mph speed limit will be enforced. Mr Bearder stated that OCC is trying to change the pace and character of Oxfordshire so that driver's default to 20mph in urban areas. There are five pilot schemes in the County and the results are showing that it is reducing speeds. Mr Bearder is working with Matthew Barbour from Thames Valley Police in trying to install average speed cameras. Mrs Oakley asked how many residents were in favour of 20mph speed limits. 12 members of the public present supported the scheme.

13. HORSPATH BURIAL GROUND.

Mrs Oakley stated that a complaint has been received from a resident regarding the burial ground. There is a problem with the entrance gate which is difficult to open and the path only goes half way across the burial ground which makes it very difficult for wheelchair users to access the graves as the ground is boggy. Mr Ewart, Mrs Riley and Mrs Oakley have recently cut back the branches of the trees to clear the pathway. A resident has proposed that a bench is installed, the pathway is extended to the graves, a memorial garden is created and more trees planted. This will be an Agenda item at the May Parish Council meeting. Mrs Oakley asked residents to express their views in time for the HPC meeting.

14. IMPROVING HORSPATH PARISH COUNCIL'S COMMUNICATION WITH RESIDENTS.

Mrs Oakley stated that HPC has received a request from Mrs Wendy Knerr for this item to be included on the Agenda.

Mrs Knerr – Often for some residents, HPC only hears from them when they are complaining. Communications from HPC to residents can be improved but it can also be improved from residents to HPC. Having lived in the village for 8 years Mrs Knerr finds it challenging to understand how she can participate in meetings. Mrs Knerr asked if she allowed to raise issues. Mrs Knerr wasn't aware of the difference between monthly meetings and the APM meeting. The APM is for the residents of the village, and how many residents were aware that this meeting is the APM. Communications work two ways. Mrs Knerr suggested that HPC should clarify on the website what the meetings are for and how residents can participate. It would be great at the monthly meetings if residents could have some input earlier in the meeting, which would mean residents don't have to wait until the end of the meeting. Mrs Knerr asked that now Zoom meetings have finished, is it possible to live stream meetings and also record meetings for the benefit of residents who cannot attend the meetings. Mrs Knerr thanked all Parish Councillors for their efforts.

15. AOB.

- a. Ms Sergeant agreed with the comments from Mrs Knerr. As a new resident to the village, introductions from Councillors would be helpful. Mrs Oakley introduced all Parish Councillors. Mr Taylor also agreed with the suggestions from Mrs Knerr.
- b. Mr McBrady endorsed the comments from Mrs Knerr and suggested that HPC could have Councillors at the Hub on a Friday morning which would be a good informal way to keep residents updated. Mrs Oakley stated that she is always in the Hub on a Friday morning along with Mr Burgess and Mr Ewart, all of who are available to discuss any issues. Other Councillors are also regularly seen around in the village.
- c. Mrs Legg asked if the football nets are going to be put back up. Mrs Oakley stated that a request for football goals and nets has previously been received and the resident was informed that a grant application would be submitted to HSPC if he was able to provide costs for the equipment, but no reply has been received.
- d. Mrs Amos asked if it would be possible to have an orchard on the Bowley Field and plant fruit trees. Mrs Oakley stated that it is a great idea.
- e. Mrs Gray stated that the existing trees that were planted in the Bowley Field are being neglected and need attention. If HPC is asking for volunteers these trees should be attended to before planting any more trees. Mrs Amos stated that she is willing to help.
- f. Mr Stacey asked what is the difference between the types of funding from HPC and HSPC. Mrs Oakley stated that it would depend on the cost. HPC funds are earmarked by the Precept and HSPC funds are for grants for projects. HPC can apply to HSPC for a grant in the same way as other applicants, which has to be supported by Independent Advisors.
- g. Mr Underdown stated that communication is really important, not everyone has access to the internet. He hasn't heard anything positive about HPC or HSPC in the sense that nobody knows what is going on. Residents hear about HSPC and they are aware that there is a lot of money coming in but they don't know where it is being spent, which starts rumours due to the lack of transparency. Mr Underdown suggested that a leaflet from HSPC is circulated to residents. Mrs Oakley stated that Parish Councillors are the Trustees of HSPC and meetings are held quarterly to discuss any issues and also consider grant applications. Organisations can apply for £5,500 in any twelve months and individuals can apply for a grant of £100 towards many different criteria. Grants are not means tested and names of applicants are not made public due to data protection. Mrs Oakley stated that the Minutes of each meeting clearly states the amount of grants that have been awarded. Mr James Dobson stated that in January a decision was taken to produce an annual report to include the types and amounts of grants allocated as well as instigating a new type of fund, the Infrastructure Fund. Mr Underdown asked where the money has been

spent in this last financial year. Mr Timbs stated that a large proportion of the money is in the bank in readiness for the Infrastructure Fund for organisations. Mr Burgess stated that HSPC also gave out Hardship grants during the pandemic.

- h. A resident has been informed that some village organisations are bidding for grants of up to £75,000. How did the organisations become aware of the Infrastructure Fund? Mr Timbs stated that village organisations were invited to a meeting to introduce the Infrastructure Fund. The resident stated that an organisation can also be a business. Mr James Dobson stated that HSPC is a charity and we have to serve charitable purposes. Mr Timbs stated that the grants to organisations will also be for the benefit of the village. The resident stated that village organisations are made up from people who do not live in the village, and it is not the correct way to use the money, it should be used to benefit the residents of the village. Mr Brooks stated that HSPC funds are for the benefit of the residents of Horspath. Mr Timbs stated that HSPC also has a Hardship Fund in place. The Infrastructure Fund is better than giving each resident a one-off payment each year. Mr Timbs stated that HSPC does need to be more transparent. Mrs Legg stated that she agrees that transparency needs to be improved but if facilities in the village are not supported by people from outside of the village, we will lose the facilities as we are not a big enough community to sustain what we have.
- i. Mr Brooks asked if applicants have to provide receipts to show how a grant has been spent. Mrs Oakley stated that if receipts are not provided the applicant will not be entitled to any further grants.
- j. Mr Clarke stated that it has never been said that HSPC are open to the public. Mrs Riley stated that before she became a Parish Councillor, she used to attend the HSPC meetings. Mrs Oakley stated that HSPC meetings are open to the public but the meeting closes to the public when considering grant applications. Mr Clarke stated that the names of the applicants do not have to be disclosed.
- k. Mrs Knerr stated that posting information on the village noticeboards and on the website is ideal as lots of people use these and it is a useful resource. Mr Burgess stated that there will be a new noticeboard at Gately in the near future.
- l. A resident suggested that HPC allocate money to the Precept for someone to improve communications and maintain the website. Mr Timbs stated that HPC needs to agree a process first for transparency and this will be all part of the process.
- m. Mr Brooks asked if there are a set of HSPC rules on the noticeboard. Mrs Oakley stated that this isn't on the noticeboard. Mrs Oakley stated that all issues raised regarding HSPC will be raised at the next HSPC meeting.
- n. Mr Ewart reported that the usage of the 46 bus service is now better than it was pre-covid.
- o. Mr Clarke asked if the font can be made bigger in the village magazine. Mrs Oakley stated that the magazine is produced by the Church not HPC.

Mrs Oakley invited residents to stay for refreshments.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING. – To be confirmed.

Signed Date