

COMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10th April 2024 - Approved

Present

Deborah Phillips (DP) – Chair, Elena Softley (ES) – Vice Chair
Denise Cripps (DC), Alan Revell (AR), Michael Green (MG), Peter Sloan (PS)
Cllr Graham (OCC), Cllr Sumner (WODC)
Julia Sharpe - Clerk

Members of the Public – None

41/24 Apologies

None

42/24 Questions from the Public

None

43/24 Register of Interests

None

44/24 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 13th March 2024 were read and signed as correct

45/24 Report from County Councillor

Cllr Graham reported that OCC are planning two new special schools in the Didcot area, a £7m programme to refurbish nearly 100 roads across the County will take place between 8th April – 3rd June, a grant of £2.384 million has been awarded for improving walking and cycling infrastructures which will be used for the expansion of the school streets in Abingdon and Witney. In addition, a further £3.6m has been awarded for the EV infrastructure and a buy loose to reduce food waste campaign has been launched. More locally a 20mph speed limit is being introduced in Woodstock and following a series of accidents on the 50mph road between Long Hanborough near the Lower Road junction cabinet members have been asked to prioritise the junction for action.

46/24 Report from District Councillor

Cllr Sumner reported that WODC have published their Biodiversity Policy which is available on line and provides funding sources for grants.

47/24 Clerk's Report and Progress on Actions

Annual Meeting Arrangements – The Clerk confirmed that invitations have been sent to representatives of all village organisations.

S137 Payments – The Clerk informed the Council that the allowance for 2024/25 is £10.81 per electorate.

Playpark Update – The Clerk reported that new seats would be needed for the four swings and that enquiries were in hand to obtain specifications and prices.

SID Update – The Clerk reported that it had not been possible to download data from the new SID. **Action – Clerk to follow up with Solagen.**

PC Website Update – The Clerk reported that she had been unable to make contact with our website designer. It was agreed to seek advice elsewhere. **Action – Clerk.**

Village Spring Clean Update – The Chair reported that the spring clean had been well attended by a mixed age group and that a good amount of rubbish had been collected. Everyone was thanked for their involvement.

Lower Westfield Bench Update – Pending.

Verge erosion outside Blacksmiths Cottage – Site visit from OCC outstanding.

Botley West Speaker for June Meeting – Cllr Sumner offered to contact John Orme.

Blenheim's proposed development sites Update – WODC consultation expected in June.

EC charging points Update – PS and AR reported that there had been no response to the Courier article, asking for expressions of interest. Other enquiries are continuing and a response to the grant application is pending.

Flooding and road repairs from the Railway to Swan Hill Bridge – The cleared ditch is proving to be effective. OCC have indicated that the potholes will be fixed within 2 weeks.

Verges – Meetings to agree work to West End and Akeman Street verges to be arranged. Concern about Combe House contractor's vehicles parking by the green resulting in damage to the edges of the green and verges in the immediate vicinity was discussed. **Action - Clerk to write to Combe House.**

Alma Grove Wall – The ongoing frustration with Blenheim's failure to repair the Alma Grove wall was discussed. **Action – Clerk to contact Cllr Graham and Blenheim.**

Flood risk management funding opportunity from Oxfordshire County Council – It was agreed to register an expression of interest to obtain a grant to upgrade the drainage system to elevate flooding under the Railway Bridge. **Action – Chair, Clerk and MG to complete application.**

48/24 To Approve Payments and Note Sums Received

Payments	Gross	VAT
J. Sharpe – Clerks wages – March	£253.63	
HMRC – PAYE	£507.27	
J. Sharpe – Viking order	£75.14	£12.53
Received - Nil		

49/24 To Approve Bank Standing Order Mandates for 2024/25

DC proposed that the bank mandates for the Clerk's wages and HMRC PAYE payments for 2024/25 be approved, PS seconded the proposal, all were in agreement and a resolution passed.

50/24 To Approve 2023/24 End of Year Accounts and Summary Payments

ES proposed that the 2023/24 end of year accounts and summary payments be approved and accepted, PS seconded the proposal, all were in agreement and a resolution passed.

51/24 Planning Applications

None.

52/24 Village Transport Network

ES reported that at The Village Travel Network (VTN) AGM Colin Carritt had stood down as Chair and Mick Heduan from Stonesfield Parish Council had been elected as the new Chair. The group are working on the next objectives, including a cycle route from East End to Long Hanborough station and future funding possibilities. **I will ask Elena if there is anything else she wants included.**

53/24 S3 Update

DC reported that both the S3 and S7 service contracts have been extended until March 2025. DC offered to complete the Bus Service improvement plan questionnaire to include requests for the continuation of cheap fares and for more services including at the weekend, together with a plea for a more strategic approach locally and nationally to improved public transport to tackle the climate crisis and help people make the change from their cars. It was agreed to update the posters with the new timetable QR code, include a link in the Courier article and request that people inform DC or the Clerk when expected services fail to arrive.

Action: DC to complete questionnaire, Clerk to include in Courier article.

54/24 Biodiversity Policy

ES proposed that the policy be adopted, DC seconded the proposal, all were in agreement and a resolution passed. It was agreed to include appendices on the Parish Council website with the village organisations responses and suggestions to householders, including advice to maintain dark night skies and to limit the use of close board fences and pesticides. **Action – Clerk to add to Website.**

55/24 2024 – 2026 Grass Cutting Contract

Three tenders were considered. Following discussion and due considerations DP proposed that the contract be awarded to Ubico, MG seconded the proposal, the majority were in favour and a resolution passed. **Action – Clerk to notify all parties.**

56/24 Airspace Change Proposal

DC reported that the current consultation is just the first step of a seven-stage process and mainly covers design principles internal to the airport. DC agreed to draft a response to the proposal to include comments asking for consideration of local communities including noise and over flying. **Action – DC to draft response and circulate prior to deadline date of 24/4/24.**

Next Meeting

The next meeting of Combe Parish Council and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will be on Wednesday 8th May at 7.00pm, followed by the Annual Parish Meeting at 8.00pm in the Reading Room, Combe