

COMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 12th June 2024 – Approved

Present

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

The Botley West Solar Farm Debate – the need for more sustainable green energy – 20 members of the public attended for this item.

The Chair opened the meeting by saying that the Parish Council has not formally adopted a position with regard to the proposed Botley West development, but would like to open up debate about green energy alternatives. Our guest speaker, Rosemary Lewis of the Stop Botley West (SBW) campaign group, outlined the key findings of their Adequacy of Consultation Report and the results of their survey of consultation experiences, the next stage in the development process, and what we can do now. People were given the opportunity to voice their opposition to, and support of, the SBW campaign and to ask questions. A key issue for Combe is that we were not included in the initial consultation despite being only 2km from the site boundary. SBW are looking for someone to help deliver their campaign leaflets in Combe – if you can help, please let the SBW campaign know via their website.

Police Briefing – European Political Community Meeting at Blenheim – This major event will take place on the 18th July. There will be some road closures at the time of the event. The Foreign Office will hold an open meeting in the Reading Room (RR) to outline how this will affect the village and surrounding area. Proposed date: Tuesday 2nd July at 7pm. **Action: Clerk to book RR and liaise with Police.**

66/24 Apologies

Peter Sloan – Vice Chair.

67/24 Questions from the Public

Concern from an anonymous person about the overgrown state of the verge, overhanging trees and dog mess along the Little Lane that runs between Orchard Close and Chatterpie Lane and general weeds in the gutters in Orchard Close was discussed. The Chair reported that some remedial work to cut back overhanging branches had already been done. **Action: It was agreed to look at the areas of concern on the August village walk, speak to the coordinator of the wildflower area and include a general statement regarding the picking up of dog mess in the Courier.**

Stonesfield Road verge – damage caused to the verge during the time that the SSE generator was in place was discussed. **Action: Clerk to write to SSE requesting further repair and report pothole on fix-my-street.**

68/24 Register of Interests

None.

69/24 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting, the annual meeting of the Parish Council and the report of the Annual Parish meeting held on Wednesday 8th May 2024 were read and signed as correct.

70/24 Report from County Councillor

Cllr Graham reported that OCC officers were still working and that services were being provided during the pre-election period. With regard to Combe activities, he reported that he was still chasing OCC for a solution to the flooding and pothole situation from the Railway Bridge to Swan Hill Bridge and that he had reported a large pothole on the Akeman Street turn on fix-my-street.

71/24 Report from District Councillors

The Chair welcomed Cllr Genny Early to the meeting.

Cllr Early reported together with Cllr Tim Sumner, her role is to connect the four parish councils and the residents in the Stonesfield & Tackley ward with the help that residents need on all WODC matters, and others. It also involves supporting community groups, and connecting them with sources of help. In particular she highlighted the following WODC initiatives:

Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2) – funding was awarded in 2023 to Oxfordshire County Council to retrofit the homes of low-income residents living in energy inefficient homes (up to £38,000 per property). Residents who could benefit from the funding should be directed to register their interest with the delivery partners: <https://www.welcomethewarmth.org.uk/register-your-interest>.

YouMove – provides low-cost activities for families with a child or children in receipt of benefits-related free school meals or are in need of support across the county. There is 50% discount on all pay as you go activities at Better Leisure Centres, including during weekends and school holidays. It also includes a free access pass to Blenheim. <https://www.getoxfordshireactive.org/youmovewestoxfordshire>.

72/24 Clerk's Report and Progress on Actions

Playpark update – the clerk reported the need for minor repairs to the fence and sandpit maintenance. An estimate quote to deal with the sandpit was accepted.

SID update – the new SID is in place and data will be collected at the end of June.

Oxford Airport – DC reported that based on the responses received from stakeholders, the airport has responded by changing the design principles around noise and the environment into two separate categories. The consultation is a multi-stage process which DC will continue to monitor.

PC website and .gov.uk addresses – arrangements are in hand to ensure that the website is compliant by October. It was agreed not to pursue changing email and website addresses at this time.

Verge erosion outside Blacksmiths Cottage – no update.

West End and Akeman Street (Alma Grove Field) verge – no update.

Flood risk management funding – application declined.

Parish noticeboard – the clerk reported that maintenance repairs have been made to the noticeboard.

73/24 To Approve Payments and Note Sums Received

Payments	Gross	VAT
D. Phillips VDS Booklet	£6.25	
J. Sharpe – Clerk's wages – May	£272.83	
Solagen (Data Logging)	£408	£68
WODC – Grass Cutting	£588	£98
WODC – Emptying litter/dog bins	£522.29	£87.05
P. Merry – Village Maintenance	£190	
J. Sharpe (TsoHost, Dragon IT, Barlows, B&Q, stamps)	£308.38	£44.38
Received		
Hiscox (SID Insurance)	£340	

74/24 Planning Applications

There were no planning applications to consider.

75/24 Donation to Stonesfield Scout Hut

A donation to the Stonesfield Scout Hut was discussed. In line with the S137 budget allocation the Chair proposed making a grant of £150, ES seconded the proposal, all were in agreement and a resolution passed. **Action: Clerk to raise cheque for signature at the July meeting.**

76/24 Financial Regulations

Updated Financial Regulations circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting were considered. ES proposed that the Regulations be adopted, DC seconded the proposal, all were in agreement and a resolution to adopt the Regulations passed.

77/24 Smoke-Free Signage at the Playpark

Following discussion, it was agreed not to install any signage at the playpark.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of Combe Parish Council will be on Wednesday 10th July at 7.30pm in the Reading Room, Combe.