

ROTHERFIELD PEPPARD: ANNUAL PARISH MEETING : MINUTES
Held at Peppard War Memorial Hall, GallowsTree Road, Rotherfield Peppard
on Saturday 26th April 2014 10:00 am.

Present:

RPPC:	David Hammond (DH)	Chairman
	Tony Cotton (TC)	Vice Chair
	Simon Crouch (SC)	
	Leeanne Flett (LF)	
	Terry Ryan (TR)	
	Linda Collison (LC)	Parish Clerk
OCC	David Bartholomew	Councillor
SODC	Paul Harrison	Councillor
Peppard Primary School	Nick Steele	Head teacher
Peppard Primary School	Ian Heriot	Governor
Chiltern Society	Philip Bennett	Rights of Way Representative
Members of the Public		

1. Introduction and welcome:

DH introduced the Council Members and the presenters.

Nick Steele – Head teacher at Peppard Primary School

Ian Heriot –Peppard School Governor

Philip Bennett – Chiltern Society Rights of Way – Representative for Rotherfield Peppard.

2. Minutes of 2013 Annual Parish meeting

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Annual Parish meeting held on Saturday 20th April 2013 should be adopted as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

3. Chairman's Report. (DH)

Firstly to Linda Collison who is the Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer of the Council. Linda does a tremendous job – both as a paid part-time employee of the council and in extending that work as a volunteer so that everything gets done. I commented last year on some of the initiatives Linda has taken to make the council more efficient and this continues. Over the last few months Linda has taken a larger role in managing the Planning Committee. She is also planning to look at ways to reduce the time and effort needed to maintain the parish website. So thank you Linda.

Secondly, I would like to thank all my fellow Councillors. Being a Councillor means having to comply with a rather arcane and complex set of rules relating to how meetings should be conducted, how Councillors should behave and the rules regarding spending of public money. This can make it frustrating at times. It can also be hard work – especially doing the homework on Planning Applications, making sure you understand the accounts and keeping up with the stream of information about which decisions are required. It is great to have such a friendly and committed group of people who come together once a month to serve the Parish.

As well as thanking all my fellow Councillors I would like to thank Paul Harrison and David Bartholomew for all the support they give us. We are very dependent on the District and County Councils. David Bartholomew became our new County Councillor shortly after this meeting last year. He has been very active and supported us with funding for traffic speed surveys along the B481 and outside the school. Both the County and District are under pressure on budgets in the coming years as government grants are reduced. Further efficiencies at South Oxfordshire have resulted in a lower Council Tax demand from them for this year – although increases from the County mean that we have all actually finished up

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paying a little bit more. Note that the Parish element has remained at the same level as last year.

We are just coming to terms with the changes to planning rules introduced by the government in the National Planning Policy Framework and implemented in the SODC Core Strategy and other planning guidance. Paul Harrison has been a steadfast supporter of ours and has got involved in a number of planning issues. So thank you Paul.

There have been changes to the Country Division Boundaries and the District Ward Boundaries. The next District Council Elections in 2015 will be held with new boundaries. We will no longer be with Sonning Common, but with 9 other parishes to form the new Woodcote and Rotherfield Ward. There has also been a review of Parish Boundaries in the Local Governance review held by SODC – more of that later!

Last, but not least, I would like to thank all those unsung heroes around the Parish who do so much to make this a special place to live. The Peppard Revels Team, the Peppard News team, the Wyfold RDA, Fish, the Cricket Club, the Kingwood and Peppard Commons Volunteers, the Green Gym, the War Memorial Hall Management Team, the Lunch Club – the list goes on. Thank you all.

So what have been the particular highlights of the last year? Let me run through some of the key points and we will then have time later to discuss points that you would like to raise. I reported last year on the problems caused by the Challenge Henley Triathlon. After many meetings, the organisers decided that last year would be their last in Henley. Whilst being sorry that a major sporting activity will no longer take place here, I would echo John Howell's comments of frustration in dealing with the organisers of what was a very disruptive event. Our plans for a play area in the parish continue to develop. We now have agreement in principle to consider a site on the top common and work is now going on to come up with a scheme which local residents can have their say on. We are keeping residents around the top common informed by leaflets and expect to have more to say in the summer.

Speeding traffic continues to generate many complaints. During the year there has been additional speed enforcement along the Stoke Row Road and two speed monitoring exercises along the B481 and outside the school. In spite of this there continue to be significant accidents at the Gallowstree Crossroads and along the B481. David Bartholomew will be joining us for a meeting next week with Oxfordshire Highways at Bolts Cross to see what other steps might be taken.

We were approached during the year by the Woodland Trust asking us to take responsibility for Peppard Wood on a fixed lease. This would allow them to focus their resources on new woodland and reduce their other costs. The Green Gym volunteered to help with maintenance and we started discussions about the lease. The Parish Council wanted to have a limited exposure by putting a break point in the lease after five years. However, that wasn't acceptable to the Woodland Trust – so they continue to be responsible for it. What happens in the medium term is not clear.

Carlings Orchard continues to be maintained by the Parish. We have been approached by a resident who would like the large spruce tree near their house removed. We have had a report on the tree that says it is structurally sound. However, it is not a local native tree and has little amenity value and so we have said we don't have objections to the tree being removed at residents' expense. Before this is confirmed, however, we would like to hear from anyone who has a different viewpoint on this. The major issue that has taken time this year is the question of Parish Boundaries. South Oxfordshire District Council set up a Community Governance Review which invited comment on all aspects of Parish and Town Councils. As you are all aware, proposals were made that the boundary between Rotherfield Peppard and Sonning Common should be changed. After many representations by Rotherfield Peppard residents, the recommendation from the Working Group set up to consider all the changes was that the

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boundary should stay as it is. There is now a further period of public consultation on this running up to the end of May. Sonning Common are mounting a rear-guard effort to reverse the recommendation and take over part of our parish, so if you feel that the current boundary should be maintained, you MUST write to SODC to express your view as part of the consultation.

Another activity that has been taking place this year is the preparation of the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan which was described at the meeting last year by Barrie Greenwood. The area covered is Sonning Common Parish plus some parts of Kidmore End and one potential housing site in Rotherfield Peppard – the so called “SON13” off Blounts Court Road. We agreed to this area in return for being consulted on all aspects of the plan.

Fiona Berry joined the Neighbourhood Plan group in Sonning Common on our behalf. We have now reached the stage where we have expressed our frustration to Sonning Common about the lack of consultation and inadequate or misleading communication. Fiona has stood down from the group. A draft Scoping Report has recently been published and we have been invited to comment on it. Hopefully this will mark the start of better communication and consultation. Another highlight this year has been the restoration of the old phone box outside the school on the top common. Many thanks to the Flat Earth Society who have spent many hours renovating it. We have now been approached by the school to use it to house a defibrillator. This is going ahead and we are planning to have an unveiling ceremony once everything is installed.

Whilst we were immune from the worst aspects of the floods affecting some communities (that’s not 100% true as at least one resident on the Stoke Row Road had real problems from an overflowing gully) many local residents experienced traffic problems as a result of the closure of both Sonning Bridge and Whitchurch Bridge. This increased focus on the question of whether or not a third bridge should be built over the Thames at Reading. Reading and Wokingham are keen to support a bridge over the Thames from the A329M to a point on the Reading to Henley road near Caversham Park village. Oxfordshire and South Oxfordshire are opposed to such a plan which could lead to increased traffic into South Oxfordshire without adequate road infrastructure to support it. What do you think?

Many of you will have noticed, or used, the new bright green Lime 2 gas powered buses into Reading. These are offering an extended timetable (the last bus to Reading now leaves the Unicorn at 9:00pm and the first leaves before 6:00am) greater comfort and zero emission gas engines. However a consultation is currently taking place about proposals to change the service to break it in Reading. North of the river would be served by a new Pink 25 from July. The reason for this is concern over maintaining the timetable with major road works due to take place on Reading Bridge over the summer. Whilst this will ultimately improve capacity with a “tidal flow” arrangement, it is likely to cause significant disruption during the work.

We get our fair share of complaints. The problem of cars parking on the pavement in Shiplake Bottom is causing concern to those trying to walk down the road with baby buggies. We have a supply of notices prepared by the police which people are welcome to use against offenders.

Another subject we would welcome your views on: Would it be helpful to have a village email distribution list which could be used to send out important information? It could save the Parish Council having to leaflet households when it wants to communicate. If we did this, what information would you like to hear about?

Finally, let me remind everyone that it is the Annual Litter Blitz on Saturday 10th May – meet at 10:00am outside the Unicorn. On Sunday 25th May we have our Annual Beating the Bounds walk. This year we will start at the Red Lion at 2:30 and cover parts of the north east edge of the Parish. Everyone is welcome for a gentle walk on a summer afternoon.

So, there is much to be done. Whatever the issue, the Parish Council needs to understand your views. There’s lots of information on the Parish Council website – and there’s also a facility to

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send us a message. Use it – let us know what you want – and help us make Rotherfield Peppard an even better place to live.

We will now turn to reports on various aspects of the community. Once these are complete I'm going to open up the meeting for everyone to ask questions or make points on any of the issues I have raised or anything else.

David Bartholomew and Paul Harrison will join the Parish Councillors for this.”

4. Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council Financial Statement to 31st March 2014 (TC)

In 2013-14 year we had a Precept – our income from your Council Tax - of £27,094. For the middle ranking Band D house this is just £30.51 per annum.

Our major item of expenditure is wages and National Insurance etc for our Clerk and two other part time employees totalling £10,180. We also spent £4,414 supporting the Sports Field and Pavilion Charity. This was approximately double the previous year due to a catch up in electricity bills – we account on a cash basis ie just for what we pay out or receive in – plus some required electrical maintenance. As well there were other Grants – donations - to local organisations amounting to £1,985 and maintenance of carlings orchard £1,410.

In total we had a surplus of receipts over payments of £5,520 which is added to our reserves making a total at the end of the year of £21,268 – about what is currently recommended for a Council of our size. We also have assets – benches salt bins railings etc with an insurance value of just over £ 46,000. This excludes the Pavilion which I will mention during the Charity AGM. For the year just started we will receive a Precept similar to the previous year of £27,226. For technical reasons which I will not try to explain here - this is equivalent to £30.23 for a Band D home.

We have already committed funds for an upgrade to the toilets in this hall and to the proposed skate park in Sonning Common.

5. Planning report. For the year 2013-14 (LC)

The Planning Committee

- Five Committee members: Valerie Ross (Chair), Tony Cotton, Fiona Berry, David Hammond and Hadley Cooper
- The Committee as delegated powers to consider applications and to make recommendations to SODC.
- The Committee meetings are held twice per month. These are open to the public and need at least 3 Committee members attending to be quorate
- Planning applicants are advised when their application is being considered by the Committee – and whenever possible a site visit is made.

Statistics:

- In 2013-14 the Committee considered 78 applications considered – about 3 per meeting. This compares with 57 in 2012-13
- The Planning Committee recommended 41 for approval and 26 for refusal.
- SODC Planning approved 50 and refused 6. (8 withdrawn after RPPC considered)
- Some applications are submitted (and considered) several times and some withdrawn – the net result of development in the Parish was 28 extensions, 7 demolish and rebuild and 6 applications for new build

Permitted Development rights

Permitted development rights give the right to make certain changes to a building without the need to apply for planning permission. These derive from a general planning permission granted from Parliament, rather than from permission granted by the local planning authority.

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In some circumstances local planning authorities can suspend permitted development rights in their area. Local planning authorities have powers under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 to remove permitted development rights. While article 4 directions are confirmed by local planning authorities, the Secretary of State must be notified, and has wide powers to modify or cancel most article 4 directions.

In May 2013 controversial changes came into force to allow permitted development for home extensions; to increase the size limits for the depth of single-storey domestic extensions from 4m to 8m (for detached houses) and from 3m to 6m (for all other houses), in non-protected areas, for a period of three years. A neighbour consultation scheme on new extensions was introduced by Government in response to concerns about the original proposals.

6. Commons Report (TC)

Jeremy Simon - Chairman of the Nettlebed and District Commons Conservators unfortunately cannot be here today - and sends his apologies.

There are 9 conservators, including TC. It is the aim of the Conservator to protect the Common and to preserve the rural life of the area. In Rotherfield Peppard there are 2 Commons – Kingwood Common and Peppard Common.

Key Issues: are maintaining the footpaths, roadside verges and roads on the Commons

The Conservators are funded by Subscription, SODC and Donations

The Kingwood and Peppard Commons' volunteers meet twice each month, on the first Monday and third Saturday.

7. Annual Report of Peppard Sports Pavilion and Field Charity 2014

- Charity Name: Sports Pavilion and Field Rotherfield Peppard
- Registration Number: 801262
- Date of Registration: 29th March 1989
- Governing Document: Deed of Gift dated 4th November 1946
- Trustee: Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council
- Charitable objectives: For the purposes of a public open space and War Memorial Playing Field for the village of Peppard, and to the provision of a pavilion thereon to be used in connection therewith.

Charity Summary

The pavilion was erected after the Second World War as both a memorial and a facility for our sports clubs. Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council is the Sole Trustee of this charity. The Trustee has endeavoured to provide this facility and to raise funds for its maintenance and improvement. The Cricket Club have provided support both in maintaining the fabric of the building and taking full responsibility for the pitch

The Club continues to maintain at least two teams and run popular events for children.

Matches are played throughout the summer both at weekends and sometimes during the week.

The Trustee acknowledges the club's considerable contribution over the past year. Rotherfield United Football Club is now based at Bishops Wood. However some of their teams have played at Peppard through the autumn. Wet weather conditions in the spring have reduced their use of the football pitch. It is likely that they will not continue to play here in 2014.

The Trustee has made every effort to increase the use of the pavilion throughout the week, especially in the winter months. Current bookings include a local art group, a music group for the very young, private parties, holiday clubs, annual general meetings and of course Parish Council meetings. Many people have commented on the homely atmosphere and a wonderful view of the common. There is still scope for an increase in bookings in the coming year.

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There is a Management Committee which meets four times a year and includes representatives of the Parish Council and users of the pavilion and field.

During the year an audit of energy usage in the pavilion has been undertaken with financial support from the Trust for Oxfordshire Environment (TOE2). This has resulted in recommendations to Increase loft insulation, insulate the loft hatch, consider Internal Wall Insulation (IWI), add double/secondary glazing, and manage heating and hot water. These recommendations are currently being followed up.

A Risk Assessment document is maintained and updated regularly.

The Parish Council supports the Charity by meeting running costs of the pavilion and by employing a part-time cleaner / caretaker. It also arranges insurance for the Charity's assets.

Charity Accounts as at 27th March 2014

Bank Reconciliation		
Balance as at 31/03/2013		£10,422.46
Receipts		
Cricket	£767.85	
Football (2012-13)	£417.00	
Hearns	£512.25	
Kinder Musik	£1,010.00	
RPPC	£280.00	
Other Hiring	£215.00	
Interest	£13.41	£3,215.51
Payments		
Cigarette Bin	-£27.90	
Toilet	-£394.00	
Bank Charges	-£1.50	-£423.40
Cash Book balance		£13,214.57
Reconciliation:		
Bank Balance		£13,054.57
Difference		£160.00
Unpresented receipts		
Kinder Musik	£90.00	
RPPC	£70.00	£160.00

Debtors	
RUFU 2013-14	£500.00

Savings (M&G) :	
23 units at £184.12 each	£4,234.86

2013-14 Costs paid by RPPC	
Insurance	£389.51
Water Rates	£170.65
Electricity	£2,120.46
Dog Bin Emptying	£103.45
Electrical Work	£1,104.25
Cleaning Pavilion	£332.69
Fire Ext Check	£32.85
Energy Audit	£160.00
	£4,413.86

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8. Chiltern Society Rights of Way (Footpaths).- Philip Bennett

Philip has lived in the parish for 15 months and was a member of the Ramblers Association and was also the Chiltern Society Footpath representative for Rotherfield Peppard.

The Chiltern Society path maintenance Volunteers help to keep paths in a good state of repair for the enjoyment of walkers, horse riders and cyclists, so this means the maintenance of footpaths, bridleways and some other less common rights of way. The work ranges from the routine cutting back of nettles and brambles, the heavier annual growth of trees and hedges, to removal of fallen trees, way-marking, repair of stiles and the installation of kissing gates.

No particular skills are required to join the groups but training will be given on the use of tools as and when necessary. Tools are provided and all volunteers are covered by the Chiltern Society's insurance.

There are 18 public footpaths, 11 bridleways as well as a number of permissive footpaths in the parish.

For more information go to The Chiltern Society website (<http://www.chilternsociety.org.uk/>)

Any issue with public rights of way in the parish should be reported to the Parish Clerk who will notify Philip.

9. Peppard School.-

Nick Steel (Head Teacher)

Nick's vision is to provide the best opportunities and experience for the children that we can. To achieve this, a number of new initiatives have been introduced such as the new Children's Running Club (25 children regularly running); using Use Peppard War memorial hall and Thames Valley for sporting activities and hopefully purchasing our own mini bus.

The school can accommodate 105 children, there were 84 children at the beginning of the year, there are now 98 – and there are 60 applications for 2014-15.

Nick expressed his thanks to all who help at the school particularly FOP and the Governors.

Ian Herriot (School Governor)

Ian explained that the Governors had been through a period of change with a number of new members. Ian explained that Nick had 'hit the ground running' and made a number of excellent improvements.

The new school project is still live but OCC are still unable to provide the funds needed. Ian thanked County Councillor David Bartholomew for his helps obtaining the Section 106 funds from new build in the parish.

10. Open Forum/Questions from the public

Boundary Debate

Members of the Public raised concern regarding the Boundary debate with Sonning Common and it was agreed that it would be helpful if as many people as possible wrote to SODC with their concerns. Several members of the public offered to deliver leaflets to Peppard residents about the request by Sonning common to move parts of Rotherfield Peppard into their Parish.

3rd Reading Bridge

At the Sonning Common Annual meeting expressed their support for the new bridge. Rotherfield Peppard is divided on the subject.

Flooding on Stoke Row Road

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This flooding was now a serious issue needed urgent attention -.member of the public said that the drains along the edge of the road needed clearing

The meeting ended at 12 noon

Adopted as a true and accurate record:

Signature: -----

Date: -----