

ROTHERFIELD PEPPARD: ANNUAL PARISH MEETING DRAFT: MINUTES
Held at Peppard War Memorial Hall, GallowsTree Road, Rotherfield Peppard
on Saturday 25th April 2015 10:00 am.

Present:

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| RPPC: | Barry Wood (BW) | Chairman |
| | Tony Cotton (TC) | Vice Chair |
| | Simon Crouch (SC) | |
| | Leeanne Flett (LF) | |
| | Valerie Ross (VR) | |
| | Terry Ryan (TR) | |
| | Veronica Treacher (VT) | |
| | Linda Collison (LC) | Parish Clerk |
| OCC | David Bartholomew | County Councillor |
| SODC | Paul Harrison | District Councillor |
| Peppard Primary School | Ian Heriot | |
| Peppard Education Trust | Amanda Coull | |
| Peppard News | Jennifer Smith | |
| Peppard Relief in Need | Sue Nickson | |
| Peppard War Memorial Hall | Clive Mills | |
| Peppard Bowls Club | Frank Acton | |
| Peppard Tennis Club | Vic Fry | |
| Peppard Luncheon Club | Valerie Ross | |
| Chiltern Society | Philip Bennett | |
| Sonning Common NDP | Barrie Greenwood | |
| | Leigh Rawlins | |
| Guest Speaker | Lord Tom Camoys of Stoner | |

And 17 Members of the Public

1. Introduction and welcome:

BW welcomes everyone and introduced the Council Members and the presenters.

2. Minutes of 2014 Annual Parish meeting

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Annual Parish meeting held on Saturday 26th April 2014 should be adopted as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

3. Chairman's Report. (BW)

I trust it has not gone unnoticed that I am new on board, but I am conscious that I am in a long line of succession of Chairmen of RPPC who have served this Parish diligently, effectively and with some style Nick Launders, David Hammond, and Tony Cotton. Although I feel experienced with 12 years at Henley Town Council and as Mayor in 2005-6 I can summarise my feelings by paraphrasing the great Richie Benaud

“chairing the Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council is 90% luck and 10% skill – but let me strongly tell you, don't try to do it without the 10% skill.”

Apologies to Richie Benaud, Tony Cotton and Rory Bremner in that order.

This has been a good year for your Council – we are a band of committed energetic Councillors, and a Parish Clerk who is second to none and now CiLCA certificated to boot. There are strong administrative processes leading to sound finances and reserves so there is little future risk

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down the line. There are challenges ahead but these are known knowns and I will speak to these later. Let us look at our successes.

In June, just as Jeni and I were moving into Peppard, we were told that a boundary movement with Sonning Common was a possibility. I was impressed by the strong voice of our Community and coupled with a resolute Council and David Hammond the threat was repulsed. We may forgive our neighbours but we must never forget!

We have forged good relationships with SODC and OCC – they have helped us to state our case on a range of issues and to simply get projects done. We are indebted to Councillor David Bartholomew in helping on several flooding issues and annual tussles with hedgerows notably along Blounts Court Road and Gallowstree Road. He is also helping to secure road markings on Blounts Court Road to stop unneighbourly parking. We are extremely grateful to Council Paul Harrison on planning issues- a Councillor who does not seek personal popularity when trying to get a fair deal for Peppard. We shall miss Paul after the local elections.

We have had some new assets in the village. Early in the year we had a defibrillator installed near the school and many of us received training. I have not given up on a further defibrillator in the vicinity of this Hall – please keep this on the agenda Clive. If you had been watching in March you would have seen a scene from last of the Summer Wine as 3 mature gentlemen and two ‘Kevins’ (Kevin of Ridgeway oak and Kevin Browne) erected a new Notice Board at the Pavilion – and it is still standing despite the gales. Thanks to OCC for paying half the costs.

Regretfully we have had our share of damaged assets – the Bus Stop was hit by the local bus service, but they responded to Linda’s requests and paid up. Who wouldn’t? We are still negotiating over the Unicorn posts but also looking for an improved solution if possible. Then, of course, we had the “German accident”, when a German lorry hit the street furniture at the car park on the corner of Stoke Row and Gallowstree Roads. A local resident, John Milne, secured photographs which are allowing OCC to recoup costs on the German insurance.

In September we were indebted to local residents paying for the felling of 2 very large spruces in Carlings Orchard. We now have a new long term contract for maintaining Carling Orchard for you all to enjoy.

But what are our future challenges in the next 4 years?

In the spirit of never forgetting the past – our number one priority is to retain Peppard’s boundaries now and in the future. The issue will come again and we must constantly rehearse our arguments and have vigilance to any neighbour suggesting that a boundary line could be moved to the advantage of all. We are not luddites and we should not apologise for our obduracy.

During 2012 the Village Consultation indicated that you, the residents, did not want change and that overall you were happy with the Village – this leads to our second challenge. It is that of recognising the threat to village communities and especially Peppard from Developers and the increasing urbanisation of the South East of England. We need to maintain the rural nature of our village for the benefit of all parishioners whilst responding positively to the need for future sustainable progress. We are already seeing the challenge in action- Vine Lodge and Broadlands, Mulberry Cottage and other cottages towards the Kingwood Commons. Knock 1 down and build two or three is too often becoming the Holy Grail for Developers – however, too often they are also finding that Holy Grail. It is your Council’s intention, once the elections are out of the way- to construct a Village Working Group of volunteering Councillors and residents to see how we can defend our village against too rapid development and destruction of our precious environment. You will hear later that during the last year some 15 houses have increased the number of houses in the Parish to approximately 700 – over a generation the character of the village will change radically – the number of houses doubling by 2050 - I suggest time is of the essence.

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Our third big priority is to assist Peppard School into new accommodation. It is a very good school that parents love. But the accommodation is simply not good enough and it restricts the curriculum despite the School's innovative methods of getting around problems. Oxford County Council has simply run out of money so we have a gap in fundraising at this moment which is delaying any move. Help if you can please.

Our fourth priority has to be encouraging our Community to work and play together and to play a role. It is highly likely that we shall be short of 2 Councillors on the Council. Any person will be welcomed with open arms and made to feel a part of the team. All our organisations are getting older so please try to encourage younger people into your groups and give them responsibility – good luck.

Well, all in all it is going to be an exciting ride. We are back to Richie Benaud – I hope my 10% skills will be brought to bear on the challenges and that the luck will follow. Even Napoleon was heard to mutter *en francais* – I like my generals to be lucky.

4. Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council Financial Statement to 31st March 2015 (TC)

Our income for 2014-15 from your Council Tax called the Precept was £26,895 -very slightly lower than the previous year. For the middle ranking Band D house this is just £30.23 per annum.

Due to our size we account on a cash basis ie just for what we pay out or receive in. Therefore there can be some large swings between years if a payment just falls into a year or is just outside.

Our major item of expenditure is again payroll for our Clerk and two other part time employees totalling £11,097.

We also spent £3,201 supporting the Sports Field and Pavilion Charity. As well there were other Grants – donations - to local organisations amounting to £4,646 which included over £2000 for this hall The Memorial Hall - towards the new toilets. Another large area of expenditure is Carlings Orchard which cost last year £1,430 and I am afraid this is a cost which will increase in future years.

In total we had a surplus of receipts over payments of £2,142 which is added to our reserves making a total at the end of the year of £23,410 – about the level that is currently recommended for a Council of our size.

We also own assets – benches salt bins railings bus shelters etc with an insurance value of just over £47,000. This excludes the Pavilion which I will mention during the Charity AGM.

For the year just started we will receive a Precept slightly higher than the previous year of £27500. Band D Council tax of £30.47 (24p increase)

5. Planning report. For the year 2014-15 (VR)

The Planning Committee

There are seven Committee members: Fiona Berry (Chair), Tony Cotton, Fiona Berry, Hadley Cooper, Valerie Ross, Barry Wood and Veronica Treacher, with Terry Ryan and Leeanne Flett who step in when the meetings would otherwise be inquorate.

- 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.

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Statistics:

- This year (2014-15) 56 unique applications were considered – some considered more than once. This compares with 78 in the previous year and 57 in the year before that. (2012-13)
- The Planning Committee recommended 37 for approval (41 in 2013-14) and 17 for refusal (26 in 2013-14). That's 30% were recommended for refusal.
- In contrast SODC Planning approved 45 (50 in 2013-14) and refused 1 (6 in 2013-14)
- The net result of development in the Parish was 28 extensions (same as last year), 6 demolish and rebuild (7 last year) and 7 applications for new build (6 last year). A net increase of 15 new dwellings in the parish (3 from change of use)

Recommendations made by the Planning Committee are guided by the SODC Core Strategy which sets out the vision for the district and the supporting planning policies to deliver it. The increase in new houses from 6 to 15 is partly down to changes in the policies to allow infill development in the small villages to address the shortage of housing.

This is currently being reviewed as part of a new Local Plan which will determine where the development to accommodate about 3,600 additional homes identified in a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) should take place.

The plan will operate until 2031 and will identify appropriate areas for development, with the necessary infrastructure to support it and will update the associated planning policies. This will impact on the Parish, so the Planning Committee has responded to the two rounds of consultation to input community needs and influence the final plan. We are particularly concerned that new houses built in the parish should be more affordable. There will be further stages of consultation and we encourage parishioners to view the information on the SODC website and comment when possible.

The Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan is also in its final stages of development and the Parish Council had some working sessions to review the draft documents. Sonning Common is important to our parish as a local service centre for shops healthcare and social activities and we have concentrated on how the plan will develop those amenities.

The responses to both of these consultations are available on the parish website and registering for the village email will ensure that you are kept up to date. We also welcome input from residents and hope this will develop through the village working party.

6. Peppard Organisations Reports

Peppard Primary School - Ian Heriot (Governor)

The school is thriving under a very good, very hardworking Head Teacher – Nick Steele, with 98 pupils, and is over subscribed for next year. In the past year there had been two new teachers, excellent, young, dynamic and enthusiastic. The funds for the new school are still not forthcoming from OCC therefore the build has been split into two phases – the first phase is the construction of play-area and sports field (which should be ready after summer), the second phase to be built when the funds are available. It may be necessary in the meantime to replace the existing Portakabin.

Peppard Education Trust - Amanda Coull (Chair)

When Peppard Senior school closed, the site was sold and the proceeds used to set up three Educations trusts – Greys, Highmoor and The Peppard Education Trust. Peppard Education Trust supports one-of educational projects for Peppard residents under 25 years, examples include purchasing lap-top, a canoe and paying for a vacation course..

Peppard News - Jennifer Smith (Contributions Manager)

The Peppard News team has 6volunteers who produce the Newsletter four children from the school who write the Junior pages and a team of people who help deliver. It's a not for

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profit entity reporting news and events but maintaining a neutral position. There is also a website which is very popular – especially with residents who have moved away. RPPC were thanked for the grant given to Peppard News..

Peppard Relief in Need - Sue Nickson (Trustee)

Earlier this year RPPC donated £150 to Peppard relief in Need – this was the first time a donation had been asked for, this year there were insufficient interest raised on funds. Formed in 1962 by three charities (dating back to the 1600's) combining. All requests are dealt with in confidence and the requests considered by all five Trustees. Donations are made as items rather than by giving money eg purchasing washing machine, paying for a bill.

Sue has just written and published a book about the parish "In Common Memory" which will can be purchased at the Revels event in May – all proceeds will go to the Peppard relief in Need Trust.

Peppard War Memorial Hall - Clive Mills (Chairman)

Built in 1921 the hall is a memorial to the soldiers who did not return from the 1914-18 war. A number of improvements have been made in the past few years but the Committee is about to start biggest project to date – to replace the roof at a cost of about £60k – the aim is to get the roof back to the condition it was when first built. Hopefully the work will start in 2016, but more fund raising is necessary.

Peppard Bowls Club – Frank Acton (Treasurer)

Peppard Bowls Club is based at the War Memorial Hall – a sociable, friendly club, with free coaching for new members, weekly games between members and league games for the more experienced. This is the start of the season and new recruits of any standard will be given a warm welcome and soon making new friends.

Peppard Tennis Club - Vic Fry (Chairman)

A very established club – over 60yrs old (Tim Henman's grandmother played at the club when the club house was a railway carriage). Now with a new club house, this is attractive club, located near Peppard Top Common, has six all weather courts and flood lights (now with timers that prohibit lights being left on) has 280 members (165 juniors). Weekly coaching available and weekly junior and senior training sessions.

Peppard Luncheon Club – Valerie Ross (Committee member & cook)

Over 20years old, this club provides lunch for up to forty over 60's on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. A two course meal for just £4.00. In 2014 the then organiser (chair) of the committee and several of the cooks all left, leaving just June Nichols on the Committee. However she was soon joined by Betty Butler Valerie Ross, Dee Windass, Jenny Cole and Barbara Chadwick.

Chiltern Society – Philip Bennett (Area representative for Peppard)

Inspects the footpaths regularly, reporting issues to the land owner, Chiltern Society, OCC and RPPC. There are 31 public rights of way in the village – 20 public footpaths, 10 bridleways and 1 restrictive by-way (Dog Lane).

Footpath 19, starting at the entrance to Dog Lane and running alongside the future site of Peppard School, has, over recent years, become a *de facto* bridleway while the permissive path, running parallel to it, is used by walkers in its place. Discussions are taking place between OCC and the landowner for the permissive path to be used as a public footpath and for path 19 to be reclassified as a bridleway.

7. Commons Report (TC)

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We are most fortunate in this Parish to have two large Commons - Peppard Common and Kingwood Common. These are regulated by a dedicated 1906 Act of Parliament. This Act charges a body called the Conservators with the protection and maintenance of the Commons. Jeremy Simon is Chairman of the Nettlebed and District Commons Conservators and unfortunately cannot be here today – he sends his apologies and has asked me to speak on his behalf.

I am one of 8 Conservators and am one of the two Conservators appointed by SODC.

As with the Parish Council it is very much the aim of the Conservator to preserve the rural nature of the area. The key issues are as ever maintaining the footpaths, roadside verges and roads on the Commons.

In this we are indebted to the Kingwood and Peppard Commons volunteers who meet in the morning normally on the first Monday of the month and on the third Saturday. They always welcome new volunteers and if you are interested please contact Sheri Kinghorn on her email shkinghorn@aol.com

The Green Gym also work on both Commons several times a year and this year we have had work on Peppard common funded by the Chiltern Conservation Board.

The Conservators are funded by Subscription, SODC and Donations.

8. Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) – Barrie Greenwood (Chairman) with Leigh Rawlins (committee member)

An NDP takes many years of hard work and commitment by volunteers. Across the UK about 130 NDP have started – only about 30/32 are completed. The Sonning Common NDP began 3 years ago and would not be possible with the hard working committee members, task forces, volunteers and the support of Philip Collings (Sonning Common Parish Clerk) and Ross Varnes (Deputy Clerk).

Key objectives for the plan are to spread development evenly, to provide recreation and sporting facilities, to provide more affordable housing, to maintain rural nature off the village and to improve parking and traffic movement.

The Sonning Common NDP had the additional complexity with the need to plan for an additional 138 (maybe more) new properties between now and 2031 (ref SHMA)¹. A process of data gathering, analysis and consultation has identified 4 designated sites and 3 reserve sites to be proposed for these additional houses.

Designated sites to take these properties being proposed:

- SON2 with SON3 (North of Chiltern edge School) as a package. SON 2 to take 52 dwellings and SON3 for recreation facilities
- SON 6 (aligning Kennylands Rd) 26 dwellings
- SON 9 (next to herb farm) to take 60 dwellings

Current situation:

Consultation of the Pre-submission Draft plan. Final closing date is June 12th 2015. (Note has been extended to take into consideration the recently published Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report).

Next steps:

The Plan is submitted to SODC where it is checked (legal compliance), formally publicised (6 weeks) and an independent examiner is assigned. The examiner, as part of the examination,

¹ SMHA = Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Ref: <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-studies/strategic-housing-market->

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will decide the area to be included in the final referendum² . For adoption 51% of the referendum votes should be in favour of the plan.

For more information: <http://www.scpc-ndp.co.uk/>

9. Thoughts on Local Government.- Lord Tom Stoner, 7th Baron Camoys

Lord Camoys is a British peer and banker who served as Lord Chamberlain of the United Kingdom from 1998 to 2000. He was the first Roman Catholic Lord Chamberlain since the Reformation.

Lord Camoys discussed the difficulties of **Local Government** which he explained has not kept pace with people's behaviour – there is a gap in legislation where there is no obligation for a Parish Council to be consulted on many issues – such as cycle rides. Lord Camoys added that Local Government is an important part of government - the glue that enables society to get through difficult periods.

On **cycle rides** – Lord Camoys explained that the country are seeing more cycle races causing the well know disturbances on our roads, but more worryingly - there is a movement to make cycling on public footpaths legal.

On **the shortage of young people in government** Lord Camoys suggested that this is partly due to the salaries for senior politicians being less than similar roles in large, international corporations. Need to encourage more young people into the government.

10. Open Forum/Questions from the public

Concern was raised regarding speeding in the village, the substantial lorry traffic emanating from the golf course redevelopment and also that the page in the Henley Standard for Peppard, Sonning Common and Kidmore End was only ever half a page – insufficient for the many things going on in the Parishes.

The meeting ended at 12:50pm
The Annual meeting of the Charity to be rescheduled

Adopted as a true and accurate record:

Signature:

Date:

² This could include some or all of Rotherfield Peppard as Sonning Common is a service hub for Rotherfield Peppard