

ROTHERFIELD PEPPARD PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of The Meeting of the Parish Council
held at The Sports Pavilion, Stoke Row Road, Rotherfield Peppard
on Monday December 9th 2013 at 7:30 pm

Present:

Councillors:	David Hammond	(DH)	Valerie Ross	(VR)
	Tony Cotton	(TC)	Hadley Cooper	(HC)
	Terry Ryan	(TR)	Lee Rawlings	(LR)
	Fiona Berry	(FB)		

Clerk: Linda Collison (LC)

SODC Councillor Paul Harrison (part) (PH)

Press: Dan Robinson, Henley Standard.

Members of Public: 5 (part)

Key: "The Charity" = The Sports Pavilion and Field, Rotherfield Peppard Charity

Open Forum:

It was agreed to hear comments from the public regarding possible parish boundary changes when the Governance Review (agenda item 4) was being considered.

1 Apologies:

Apologies were received prior to meeting from Parish Councillor Simon Crouch and from County Councillor David Bartholomew.

Member's declaration of Pecuniary Interests: None.

2 Minutes:

It was MOVED by LR, SECONDED by FB and RESOLVED unanimously that the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday November 11th 2013 be signed as a true record of the meeting.

DH thanked Councillor Crouch for chairing the meeting on Monday November 11th 2013.

3 Matters relating to South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC):

• **District Councillors Report: (PH)**

- **Recycling leaflet:** A new recycling leaflet has been delivered to homes across the district. The leaflet, which is also on the SODC website, contains information regarding what happens to recycling and landfill after it is collected; what the recycling symbols mean; why not everything can be recycled and a special section about Christmas waste.
<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/recycling-sort-it-out>

- **Community Investment Grant Fund Review:** The Community Investment Fund Grant Scheme started in 1998 and has approved £13 million of grants to nearly 300 community projects across the district. These projects vary from new swings in play areas to new community buildings. Generally the scheme supports projects that show that they will enable new activities to take place that will benefit a wide proportion of the community. Applicants need to provide evidence of local need and support for the project usually through consultation with the local community.

Two changes to the scheme are being considered:

- The Community Investment Fund Grant Scheme is renamed the Communities capital Grant Scheme
- That the current policy is amended to include 'that because education is a function of Oxfordshire County Council, we will not accept application from schools. We will also not accept applications from academies or free schools.'

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- **Pay and display machines in Crowmarsh car park.** Two new pay and display machines (which require number plates being entered at time of payment) have been installed outside the Council Chamber at Crowmarsh. This is part of a test to decide whether this type of pay and display machine should be installed across South Oxfordshire.
- **Officers moving to Crowmarsh:** A number of the services currently in Abingdon will, over the next year, revert to Crowmarsh because 'The Vale' have found a private company interested in acquiring a number of their sites in Abingdon.
- **District ward Review** – draft Order. The draft Order for the South Oxfordshire Ward Review has been laid in Parliament and is now subject to the parliamentary process.

- **Community Governance Review:**

DH reminded members that the Community Governance Review was now at the stage where Terms of Reference are being considered, prior to proposals being finalised in January 2014 for public consultation. DH added that Sonning Common Parish Council had now clarified their proposed boundary change with a factsheet and map, which can be found at:

<http://www.sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk/Parish-Boundary-Review-Factsheet.pdf>

This document shows that the proposed Sonning Common Parish Council boundary change would move all properties on the following roads into the Parish of Sonning Common:

Shiplake Bottom,
Blounts Court Road,
Priory Copse,
Gravel Hill,
Gravel Hill Crescent,
Hill Crest Lane,
Butler Yard,
Green Trees
Part - Stoke Row Road (from B481 to Gallowstree crossroads)

It is unclear, but possible, that the proposal also includes Gallowstree Road and Sally's Piece.

*Meeting temporarily suspended while members of the public raised their concerns regarding the proposal from Sonning Common Parish Council to move the parish boundary.
Meeting re-opened.*

DH thanked the members of the public for their comments and advised that they also write to the Strategic Management board at SODC with their concerns.

Having listened to the members of the public, and following a lengthy debate, it was unanimously AGREED that:

1. Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council are strongly against the proposals made by Sonning Common for the following reasons:

- Residents of the area concerned have shown no desire to be in any other Parish than Rotherfield Peppard. This is confirmed in Rotherfield Peppard's 2011 Community Plan which was completed by 85% of the households in the Parish.
- Rotherfield Peppard has a strong community spirit as shown by the annual Beating the Bounds and the Revels' activities.

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- The housing in the majority of the area that Sonning Common proposes to be moved is significantly different from those in Sonning Common.
- The boundary suggested by Sonning Common to the north runs through open land and does not have a clear geographical division.
- The removal of this area from Rotherfield Peppard would reduce the households in Rotherfield Peppard Parish by approximately 207 properties or 33%. This would have a major impact on the viability of Rotherfield Peppard as a stand-alone Parish. It would also put at risk RPPC's support of the Parish Hall, the Sports Pavilion and Field and Carlings Orchard as well as other local charities.
- The effect of the removal of the properties would probably mean that the remaining properties in Rotherfield Peppard would face increased Parish Council Tax.
- Parish Council Tax for the properties moved would be likely to increase. Sonning Common rates for a Band D property in the current year are £53.75 - 76% higher than a similar property in Rotherfield Peppard.
- The removal of this area from Rotherfield Peppard would result in the loss of the only shop in Rotherfield Peppard (Peppard Stores) and one of the two Churches in the Parish (Springwater Church).
- The land included in the proposed boundary would become part of the Sonning Common 'settlement'. As Sonning Common is categorised as a 'large village', this would allow unlimited infill development under policy CSR1 of the SODC Core Strategy.
- The inclusion of this land into Sonning Common would result in over 200 homes in the Parish of Sonning Common that are not included in their Neighbourhood Plan designated area.
- In their Neighbourhood Development Plan Sonning Common are focussing on developing new homes to the North rather than to the South. Moving the Parish boundary northwards provides more areas for Sonning Common to develop to the North, encroaching further into AONB and Rotherfield Peppard.
- There is no benefit to Rotherfield Peppard nor any of its residents for this proposed boundary move.

It was noted that the Sonning Common proposal fact sheet contained some inconsistencies between the map and the road names listed on it.

Action: LC to respond to SODC, Strategic Management Board accordingly.

2. Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council maintain their support for their previously submitted proposed boundary change suggestion to include properties in the area east of the B481 south of Blounts Court Road and north of Widmore Lane, for the following reasons:

- To encourage children in this area to attend All Saints Church School in Rotherfield Peppard. This school has advanced plans with OCC for redevelopment. All Saints school is currently not totally full whereas the primary school in Sonning Common is.
- A number of children in this area already attend All Saints but do not qualify for free transport.
- This area used to be in Rotherfield Peppard and a number of residents in this area believe they are already in the Parish of Rotherfield Peppard.
- The area suggested follows significant road boundaries.

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Action: LC to respond to SODC, Strategic Management Board accordingly

3. **Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council will deliver leaflets** (before the end of 2013) explaining the proposal made by Sonning Common Parish Council to all homes that could be included in the area that Sonning Common proposes are moved into their Parish. It was estimated that this would be about 250 leaflets, and it was AGREED that the cost to produce these could be covered by the Parish Council. (LGA 1972 s142 (2A)).

Action: DH to draft leaflet, all to agree and LC to arrange printing. Members of the Public volunteered to help deliver the leaflets with members of the Council

Councillor Harrison left the meeting.

4 Local Neighbourhood Development Plans:

- **Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan (SC-NDP)**

FB confirmed that the SC-NDP Public meeting had been held on Saturday 16th November 2013 which had told the 'story so far'.

Concerns were raised that RPPC has received no official consultation from the SC-NDP Committee.

It was AGREED to defer this subject to the next meeting.

- **Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Development Plan (JHNP)**

At the Planning Committee meeting on 27th November 2013, it was AGREED to submit the following response regarding the Joint Henley Town Council and Harpsden Parish Council Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report:

- The scoping report is 'Henley' centric and does not recognise Henley as a hub for surrounding communities, and some consideration should be made towards local villages and their needs from a local town. e.g. comments on Table 4.1
 - **Road traffic congestion and consequent adverse environmental, economic and safety impacts.**
Large lorries use Gravel Hill as a cut through to the M40 causing damage to the verges because of the narrow nature of the road. Concern was raised that the plan could result in more traffic along this road impacting all villages along the B481.
 - **20. Road Traffic Congestion**
Henley College catchment area is much wider than Henley and is the only provider of sixth form education for children not in Private education in South Oxfordshire. The bus service to transport pupils is important as the alternative is more care journeys to Henley.
 - **21. Threats to the vitality and viability of town and village centres.**
The shops in Henley are used by residents of surrounding villages however the lack of parking spaces in the Henley Town Centre car parks acts as deterrent and encourages people to go to Reading instead.

It was AGREED that RPPC had no further comments to add.

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5 Finance and Staffing:

- LC presented the Accounts as at 30th November 2013. (Appendix 1)
- It was agreed that the existing Electricity contracts with British gas should be terminated before they default to a new (more expensive) contract.
LC to action.

6 Approval of Spend and Cheques to be signed:

It was RESOLVED unanimously that the following payments are approved. TC and HC were instructed to approve the internet payments.

Ref #	Account	Payee	Description	Power	£
14-097	SP&F Grant – Elect	B Gas	Electricity	LGA (Misc Act)1976 s19	£22.37
14-098	SP&F Grant – Elect	B Gas	Electricity	LGA (Misc Act)1976 s19	£138.20
14-099	Staff Costs	T Parisi	December wages	LGA 1972 112	confidential
14-100	Staff Costs	M Bowles	December wages	LGA 1972 112	confidential
14-101	Staff Costs	L Collison	December wages	LGA 1972 112	confidential
14-102	Staff Costs	OCC Pension	December pension	LGA 1972 112	£151.88
14-103	Staff Costs	HMRC	December PAYE	LGA 1972 112	£32.91
14-105	Hall Hire	Charity	Pavilion Hire	LGA 1972 111	£70.00
14-106	Subscriptions	OPFA	subscription	LGA 1972 111	£40.00
The following were approved in November but not yet paid:					
14-094	SP&F Grant – Maint	Henley Elect	Elect fault & PAT test	LGA (Misc Act)1976 s19	£264.30
14-095	SP&F Grant – Maint	D J Scott	Electrical Inspection	LGA (Misc Act)1976 s19	£640.00

7 Peppard Wood

LR referred to his email circulated prior to the meeting (appendix 2) stating that there was still a lack of information about the lease (especially in relation to the size of the agreement) and that he was still concerned that the Woodland Trust would not accept a 5 year break clause.

It was AGREED that Woodland Trust should be asked to provide references of other Parishes (or similar organisations) that have taken on a Woodland Trust leases recently.

The decision regarding the Peppard Wood lease should be deferred until these references are considered.

8 Peppard War Memorial Hall (PWMH):

HC reported that he had attended a Peppard War Memorial Hall Committee meeting on Thursday 5th December 2014 and confirmed that funding for the PWMH was needed in the current financial year. He explained that some large expenses have been made (flower boxes, new signage) and asked that a donation was made to the PWMH to help towards these.

It was agreed that all donations would be considered at the next Finance and Staffing meeting (Tuesday 7th January 2014) and for ratification at the full Council meeting on Monday 13th January 2014.

HC added that financial support for the refurbishment of the toilets was also needed, and asked for this to be included in the 2014-15 Budget. The total cost was estimated to be around £25,000. HC asked to obtain a copy of the estimate (or quote) prior to the Finance and Staffing meeting when the 2014-15 budget will be considered in detail.

HC confirmed that a link has been set up from the RPPC website to the PWMH website, but not vice versa.

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9 Energy Audit

No update.

10 NDCC - Commons:

TC confirmed that the NDCC had no objections to a Play Area on the Top Common, but added that permission for the fence is required from DEFRA under Section 38 of the Commons Act 2006. This would be at the expense of RPPC.

TC also explained that concern had been raised with the NDCC regarding an A-Board advertising Peppard Stores which was being placed on the Common Land opposite the shop. LC added that this was in addition to the other advertising boards for Peppard Stores at the Gallowstree Crossroads. It was AGREED that LC should liaise with clerk to NDCC regarding the A Board on Common Land and also to send the 'illegal notices letter' to the owner of Peppard Stores.

11 Carlings Orchard

No update.

12 Play Area

TR thanked NDCC for their response regarding the possible siting of a Play Area on the Top Common. It was AGREED that the Clerk should contact the owners of the Top Common (Nettlebed Estate) to obtain their permission to build a Play Area on the Top Common.

13 2014-15 Budget and Precept

Members reviewed the 2014-15 draft Budget and were asked to provide the Clerk with any suggested changes before the Finance and Staffing meeting on Tuesday 7th January 2014 when a final budget would be prepared in readiness for ratification at the Full Council meeting on Monday 13th January 2014. At this time the precept would also be AGREED.

LC confirmed that she had received an extension to the Precept submission date to 24th January 2014 – latest.

It was AGREED that the 2014-15 precept should be paid into the Unity Trust Bank Account.

14 Correspondence

LC advised that she had received emails regarding another accident on the B481 at Bolts Cross. Residents said that there have now been 9 accidents in 12 years and requested speed cameras or similar to be installed. It was agreed to add this discussion to the January Agenda.

15 Matters relating to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

- **Oxfordshire Councillors Report:** (sent prior to meeting from Council Bartholomew)
 - **The Budget.**

Since 2010, we have saved £127 million, with plans set to save another £74 million over the next few years. Despite this, further cuts to our budget by Central Government mean we must find **another £64 million** bringing the total reduction to **£265 million**. The exact figure will not be known until the Local Government Settlement that is due on 19th December.
 - We have held six public meetings across the county called *Talking Oxfordshire*. They were attended by over 1,000 residents, with over 400 responses to the online consultation. The draft proposals will be published 6th December ahead of the Performance Scrutiny Committee on 16th December. There will then be a period of consultation with Cabinet agreeing its budget on 28th January 2014. The proposals will then be debated by all councillors on 18th February 2014 when a Budget is set by the full Council.

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- **Budget Letters to Ministers.**

During the public meetings, there were calls to challenge Central Government over the amount of funding that had been removed from Oxfordshire. The Council's Cabinet is always in close contact with the six Oxfordshire MPs, and even more so during the Budget process.

However, Councillors of all parties agreed on 5th November to write to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The letter to Eric Pickles is outlined below.

"Mindful of the fact that Oxfordshire has already cut £127m and has in place plans to cut a further £74m from its budget, Council has asked me to write to you, to the Prime Minister and to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, asking you to:

- *Consider the impact on services of a further cut of £60m given that the additional cut will have to be made on services which are not statutory and will hit the rising number of vulnerable elderly people and children in all communities.*
- *Mitigate the damage, which these further reductions in expenditure will have on communities across Oxfordshire through the Autumn Statement and the Local Government Finance Settlement by a combination of giving greater local determination to elected councillors in relation to the Council Tax and providing a less onerous settlement to local government.*
- *Consider in the longer term a new approach to securing the financial stability and sustainability of local government."*

Part of the Minister's reply states, 'we have consulted on the local government settlement for 2014-15 and 2015-16 and exactly how Revenue Support should be distributed, in the usual way. We are grateful for Oxfordshire's response to this consultation and we are considering this at present.'

- **National Adoption Week.**

The County Council is encouraging more people to consider whether they could change a child's life by becoming an adopter. Following National Adoption Week (4th to 10th November), the Council's Adoption Team wants to hear from anyone interested in finding out more – especially those willing to adopt older children, children with disabilities and siblings who need to stay together.

Cllr Melinda Tilley (Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Families) says "We welcome applications from a diverse range of people with different backgrounds and experiences – so it's important that people don't assume they are unsuitable and automatically rule themselves out."

To find out more visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/adoption or call 0800 783 5724

- **Thriving Families Progress**

With the support of the Government, Oxfordshire has been running a project called 'Thriving Families'. This aims to identify the most troubled families in society and directly tackle problems such as crime and antisocial behaviour, poor school attendance and unemployment. It is also aimed at making long-term savings by reducing the financial burden these issues place on society.

Families are assigned a dedicated worker from the county council's Thriving Families team who acts as the single point of contact. The worker liaises with other agencies to deliver an agreed plan of action geared towards achieving specific results. Families' progress is

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measured through real-terms improvements in school attendance, behaviour, and reductions in levels of offending over a sustained period of time.

So far 55% of the 558 families the Council has worked with have turned their lives around. This makes Oxfordshire the tenth best nationally and fourth when the number of families making progress is taking into account.

The council has invested £1.6million in the scheme and is on course to secure a further £3million through the Government's 'payment by results' model for work to continue in future years.

- **The Home to School Transport Consultation**

It was AGREED that RPPC had no strong views regarding The Home to School Transport Consultation.

- **Overgrowing hedges**

LC reported the following update from OCC Highways regarding overgrown hedges at:

- **Blenhiems** – A letter will be issued this week to the owners informing them that cutting will be carried out at their expense.
- **Gravel Hill** – Still awaiting the works to be priced from OCC head office and without this no work can go ahead,
- **Blounts Court** is being monitored and letter will be issued as required.

16 Matters for next meeting:

- Trustee meeting
- 2014-15 Budget & precept request.
- Peppard Wood lease.
- Energy Audit – next steps
- Process for co-option new members onto the Council
- Process for handling communication ,
- Processes for ensuring the Council meets the legal requirements for data protection, freedom of information and publication.
- Inspection / Footpath logs and actions.
- Bolts Cross

Meeting ended at 9:45 pm

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Appendix 1: Accounts as at 30th November 2013

	Actual Apr '13 - Nov 30th	Forecast	Original Budget
Income			
Precept	27,094.49	27,094.49	27,094.49
Other Income	6.15	5.00	5.00
VAT Reimbursement	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Income	27,100.64	27,099.49	27,099.49
Expense			
S137	50.00	50.00	0.00
Staff Costs	6,717.42	10,076.14	9,764.00
Councillor and Clerk	437.30	2,500.00	2,500.00
Finance, Admin and IT	733.17	2,000.00	2,000.00
Insurance (RPPC)	300.00	300.00	300.00
Subscriptions	265.00	520.00	520.00
Village Upkeep	310.05	1,100.00	1,100.00
Carlings Orchard	1,410.00	2,300.00	2,300.00
Grant to SP&F Charity	2,523.47	3,410.00	3,410.00
Donations and Grants	1,735.00	2,750.00	2,750.00
Projects	0.00	1,750.00	1,750.00
Miscellaneous	788.93	788.93	700.00
VAT	-1,069.13	425.66	0.00
Total Expense	14,201.21	27,970.73	27,094.00
	Over Budget :	-876.73	
Cashbook at beginning of year:	16143.82	= £15,747.22 + 3 lost cheques (£396.60)	
+ Total Income	27100.64		
- Total Expense	14201.21		
Cashbook Current	29043.25		
Bank Balance at 30/11/13:			
Current Nat West	1916.55		
Reserve Nat West	24212.98		
Unity Trust	2979.54		
	29109.07		
Difference	65.82	=	
		14-079 PAYE & NI Oct	32.91
		14-089 PAYE & NI Nov	32.91
			65.82

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Appendix 2: Peppard Wood - Woodland Trust/

Notes regarding terms for possible lease

- Earliest break clause that the Trust could consider would be in year 10.
- Details of the lease will not be issued Heads of Terms are agreed, However, some key lease items (for illustration only) would be –
 - The rent would be a peppercorn.
 - Not to carry out on the Property any trade or business whatsoever but to use the Property only as amenity woodland for the use and enjoyment of the public for amenity purposes and for the purposes of nature conservation and to allow members of the public unrestricted access to the Property on foot at all reasonable times and not to change the name of the Peppard Wood at any time during the term of this Lease. (Woodland conservation and educational activities would be acceptable so long as this isn't being run as a trade or business).
 - To manage the Property in accordance with the principles of good woodland management as a native broadleaved woodland and not to carry out or permit to be carried out on the Property anything which in the opinion of the Trust (acting reasonably) would be prejudicial to or likely to be prejudicial to the conservation of the Property.
 - To replace or replant with stock of native provenance (and where possible local native provenance) any trees and hedges that are present at the commencement of this Lease and that have been damaged by fire flood storm or similar event or where such replacement or replanting shall be necessary and in the interest of conservation of the Property as an amenity woodland or public safety and to maintain an overall tree and shrub canopy of no less than 80% of the land area of the Property at any time in accordance with the principles of good woodland management as aforesaid.
 - To preserve so far as may be all timber and other trees pollards and saplings provided that this covenant shall not preclude the Tenant from cutting felling lopping and topping timber trees saplings or pollards in accordance with the principles of good woodland management
 - To keep in good repair and in a stock proof condition all boundary fences, hedges, walls, ditches, gates etc for which legal responsibility does not lie with a third party.
 - Not without the prior written consent of the Trust to erect any new building or other structure or create tracks or drives or 'gardenification'.
 - Not without the prior written consent of the Trust to allow services to be placed on over or under the Property
 - Not to cause or permit pollution on the Property and not to allow the Property to be or become contaminated as defined in environmental legislation.
 - Not to assign charge underlet licence or otherwise part with possession or share occupation of the Property or any part thereof without the prior written consent of the Trust
 - A general indemnity clause to protect the Trust against claims arising directly out of the existence of the lease.
 - To have public liability insurance in £5m in place in joint names of trust and tenant.
- Costs for maintenance last couple of years for Peppard Wood
 - Total for 2012=£5358 – includes removal old tree shelters in 2012 (£4800)
 - Total for 2013=£1258 – includes restoring an orchard (£640)
 - The annual path mowing cost is £558 - 2 mows per season.