

ROTHERFIELD PEPPARD: ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MINUTES
Held at Peppard War Memorial Hall, GallowsTree Road, Rotherfield Peppard
on Saturday 23rd April 2016 10:00 am.

joiners and thank them in advance for the many hours they will no doubt dedicate on a voluntary basis to the Parish Council's ongoing work!

Tony Rancombe is currently acting as our Vice Chairman. Tony, although now retired, he has held many senior positions within the Civil Engineering industry – in the UK and abroad.

Viv Mitchell has experience of running and administering small businesses; and also acting as a Magistrate. We have no shortage of legal advice on the Council!

Councillor Tony Cotton kindly agreed to take on the leadership of the Council during 2015 as Chairman. Time pressures mean that he cannot continue doing this in 2016 and so I (as acting Chairman) am standing for election as Chairman early in May 2016. I am pleased to say Tony is staying on the team as a Councillor – as Chair of the Finance Committee he is a longstanding member from whom we all seek advice from time to time.

A special thank you must be said to our departing Clerk. Linda has served for 7 years all told – 2 years as a Councillor and 5 years as a Parish Clerk. All Councillors will join me in saying thank you and agree that our Clerk has been the backbone of our team over these last years.

I am pleased to report that Karl Musson will be joining us this month as our new Clerk – he arrives with Parish Council experience and strong recommendations from Cholsey Parish Council. He will share his working week between RPPC and CPC. In his spare time he also follows his interest as an art historian and consultant. The Parish Clerk is the main point of contact between Parishioners and the Council.

Our Achievements

Your Parish Councillors have achieved a great deal through the year:

- New energy saving measures have been introduced resulting in significant savings in the Pavilion electricity bill.
- New technology and media are being introduced – a new style web page and a PC projector for Pavilion use.
- A new 20 year contract has been prepared by the Sports Pavilion and Field charity for the PSRCC (Peppard Stoke Row Cricket Club)
- A very successful 'Litter pick ('Cleaning for the Queen' on 5th March resulted in 20 to 30 bags of rubbish being removed from our Parish lanes and by-ways.
- Communal Parish car parks have been re-surfaced.
- Comprehensive submission of detailed (RPPC) comments on nearby Neighbourhood Development Plans
- Parish children's Play Area – the Council has successfully obtained planning permission to site the Play Area on a site located on Peppard Top Common, adjacent to the B481.

The Parish Budget (Precept) – benchmarking with others...

The table below provides an overview of what Parishioners pay towards the Parish Council 'element' of Council Tax. These figures are based on a 'Band D' house – which is taken regionally as an average.

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Band D Parish Council tax/year 2015/16

Henley on Thames	£87.00
Cholsey	£66.56
Sonning Common	£62.85
Kidmore End	£51.96
Checkendon	£47.70
Rotherfield Greys	£40.41
Binfield Heath	£38.62
Nettlebed	£36.78
Stoke Row	£35.51
Harpsden	£30.99
Rotherfield Peppard	£30.47
Shiplake	£28.10
Highmoor	£25.27
Bix and Assendon	£21.93

The figures show that Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council has been a reasonably careful spender. It is dangerous to deduce too much from this simple chart – suffice it to say that larger ‘town-like’ Parishes charge more per house or dwelling.

Notwithstanding the above, our Parish is going to spend more money on both the Memorial Hall and Pavilion over the next few years – so we will see the Parish element of our Council tax bill increase a little above average (see below). We always plan to be below the half way position in the league tables.

Band D Parish Council tax/year 2016/17

Henley on Thames	£87.00
Cholsey	£69.89
Sonning Common	£64.99
Kidmore End	£53.05
Stoke Row	£51.76
Checkendon	£47.39

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Rotherfield Greys	£38.61
Binfield Heath	£38.23
Nettlebed	£36.53
Rotherfield Peppard	£34.98
Shiplake	£28.71
Harpsden	£26.35
Highmoor	£24.94
Bix and Assendon	£21.77

2016 and Future Challenges...Planning Applications and Neighbourhood Plans

Fiona Berry (Chairman of the Planning Committee) will be giving her own detail of current challenges within her report – I wanted to add a few comments about our future strategic challenges. Obviously we are facing more and more planning applications to build new houses within the village – this reflects the nationwide shortage of housing.

Sonning Common Parish Council have prepared a Neighbourhood Development Plan (SCNDP) which is now in the final consultation phase with SODC. RPPC's comments were duly submitted in March 2016. Your Parish Council is not against the plan in principle – but we can see alternative ways of allocating the required housing quota – and have said as such in our response. We have also represented or parishioner's views that the AONB should be protected.

We believe this Parish has real 'rural' needs and our culture is different to that of Sonning Common – which is now really a small town. If the SCNDP housing allocation goes ahead (up to 150 houses?) this will have a knock-on effect within our own adjacent Parish – for example, not least on our roads. Traffic will increase significantly! We have underlined the impact of more houses (and the effect on road traffic and safety) in our response.

Local Unitary Councils

One significant change coming down the pipeline is that of 'Local Unitary Council' introduction. What does this mean?

In a nutshell – the County Council level of government will be removed, further rationalisation will take place, and in summary, 6 current administrations will be reduced to 4 Unitary Council administrations in the future, taking direct relationships with National government.

The challenge will be to 'combine' County and District responsibilities below.

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Current status is that there are 2 different ‘flavours’ of Local Unitary Councils being proposed and discussed. No conclusions have yet been reached, other than it seems a good idea in principle. We may not see the outcome of the debate for another 12 to 24 months.

One outcome of the re-organization is that more administration may be devolved to local administrations (i.e. Parish Councils). RPPC will follow developments with interest!

County council responsibilities	District council responsibilities
Adult social care	Leisure
Children’s services	Waste collection
Highways and transport planning	Housing
Fire and rescue service	Environmental health
Education (support to schools, school admissions and school transport)	Collecting Council Tax
Libraries	Street cleaning
Waste management	Benefits payments
Public health	Homelessness support
Trading Standards	Electoral registration

Today’s split of responsibilities...County vs District

Finally...

The Council is always interested in Parishioner’s views on Parish matters.

- E.g. does the Parish think the new 3rd bridge over the Thames a good thing or not, *from the Parish’s point of view?*

Our Clerk can be contacted on clerk@rppc.org.uk and would be pleased to hear your views on this and other issues.

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

TC presented the following 2 statements:

<u>Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council</u>	
<u>Financial Report 2015-16</u>	
•	By law we account on a receipts and payments basis
•	£26,577 in bank includes expenditure already earmarked
-	£4,700 War Memorial Hall re-roofing
-	£2,500 Play Area
•	Majority of spend on Payroll Costs
•	Admin includes more than £500 on audit
•	Two Parish assets cost almost £5,000 to maintain
•	Donations are local charities only
•	Assets valued at £47,000

<u>Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council</u>	
<u>Receipts and Payments 2015-16</u>	
	£
Cash at Bank April 1st 2015	23,410
Receipts	
Precept	27,754
Payments	
Payroll Costs	-12,070
Admin and IT	-3,072
Village Upkeep	-826
Carlings Orchard	-2,200
Sports Pavillion	-2,760
Donations	-3,309
Other	-350
Cash at Bank March 31st 2016	26,577

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5. Parish Planning report for the year 2015-16 (FB)

There are four Committee members: Fiona Berry (Chair), Valerie Ross (part year), Veronica Treacher and Tony Cotton. Simon Crouch joined during March 2016.

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.

Fiona Berry presented statistics to the audience – presentation as shown in Appendix 1.

Nettlebed and District Commons Report (Rod D’Ayala)

Rod D’Ayala presented his report as shown in Appendix 2. This covered Nettlebed, Kingwood and Peppard Commons.

His report was very well received and thanks were given to Mr. D’Ayala for speaking.

6. The Housing Dilemma: What future for rural Oxfordshire? (Prof Richard Harding)

Professor Richard Harding [Chairman Wallingford Office - Campaign for the protection of Rural England (CPRE)] presented as Guest Speaker. An excellent presentation was received – please see Appendix 3.

The presentation sounded many chords with our Parishioners: in terms of (i) where the optimum development should take place and (ii) do we really need all of the houses proposed by Oxfordshire County Council?

The presentation stimulated much debate and Professor Harding was formally thanked by RPPC Chairman for his presentation

7. Open Forum/Questions from the public

Questions and comments were received from the public as from the public were received as follows:

1. Mr Richard Clark (Unicorn Pub, Peppard Common) offered to place a notice Board within his Pub to support local activities. Mr Clark was formerly an Officer within Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Council. Chairman thanked Mr Clark for his kind offer.
2. Mr Barry Wood asked if there may be interest from Peppard Primary School in using the Pavilion and Sports Field facilities. Chairman undertook to discuss with Headmaster Mr Steele.
3. SODC District Councillor Mr David Nimmo-Smith offered to speak for a few minutes on the options for a Unitary Council. Chairman thanked Councillor Nimmo-Smith for adding more ‘up to date’ information.

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The meeting ended at 12:30pm

Adopted as a true and accurate record:

Signature:

Date: