

Annual Parish Meeting – Sibford Ferris

Monday, 8 May 2017 – 7.30pm

Held in the classroom above the Sports Hall, Sibford School, Sibford Ferris

Apologies – There were none although Cllr Robinson and County and District Councillor Reynolds had advised they would be late.

Attendees – Tim Huckvale (Chair), Maureen Hicks (Deputy Chair), Ginny Bennett, Adrian Lamb, Peter Robinson, Anita Spencer (Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer), Cllr George Reynolds (from 8.15pm), Oliver Helm of Sugarnet until 8pm and four members of the public.

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting on 18 April 2016 – these were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chair. Matters arising from the last meeting would be dealt with during the meeting.

Sugarnet Presentation

In view of the delay in BT providing superfast broadband to Sibford Ferris, Councillor Huckvale had agreed that Oliver Helm of Sugarnet would present his company to the meeting and explain the service offered. Mr Helm advised that Sugarnet provided broadband to homes via wireless connections from a receiver that could typically be sited on a church tower and would reach most residents, even those outlying the settlement. A small device would be fitted to the TV aerial of the property and wired to the router equipment inside. He advised that a major difference between the wireless broadband offer was that incoming and outgoing speeds were the same, currently being up to 50Mbps with no download limits or line rental. Following a public meeting in liaison with the Swalcliffe broadband working group, which a number of Sibford Ferris residents had attended and had expressed interest in improved speeds, Sugarnet had been asked to supply their service. Mr Helm confirmed that there was an initial installation fee but advised that where speeds were particularly low eg. below 2Mbps, grants were available to offset this cost. Mr Helm's view was that signing up to a service such as Sugarnet would not prejudice a village's chances of receiving BT faster broadband in the future. The next step would be to gauge interest in the Sibfords and it was suggested that this could be done initially via the Sibford Scene and on the village website. Scheme viability would require interest from twenty to twenty-five homes.

The Chair thanked Mr Helm for attending the meeting and returned to the Agenda for the reading of the annual reports. He invited those present to ask questions or make comment as subjects came up within reports.

Chair of the Parish Council's 2016/17 Report

As usual, there have been six regular meetings of the Parish Council during the year. In addition we called an Extraordinary meeting in January specifically to respond to Cherwell District Council's Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review. In order to deal with planning applications more effectively and properly in the public eye, we set up a Planning Committee that met three times. We responded to 15 planning applications in total, about 10 fewer than the previous year.

There has been no change in membership of the Council. All councillors' terms of office end in May 2018, when an election will be called.

The main topics of interest over the year have been housing developments, the Bishop Blaize, broadband speeds, mobile phones, bus service.

Although there are fewer trips per day, we are fortunate to still have a **bus service**, thanks to the subsidy provided by Warwickshire County Council.

The status of **superfast broadband** has changed only slightly over the year. Both the Gower and Burdrop now have it, and we expect it to come to the Ferris later this year.

There have been two failed attempts by **mobile phone providers** to obtain planning permission for a mast in our area. The first was vigorously opposed by near neighbours and was withdrawn by the landowner; the second, on the main road near the end of Pound Lane in Sibford Gower, although not so controversial was turned down by council officers because of its impact on the landscape and the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The site is in fact just outside the AONB boundary and an appeal against the refusal has just been lodged.

The Cotswold Close **play area** is probably the most popular amenity provided by the parish council, but is beginning to show its age. We have renewed several timbers that were rotting at ground level, and we have just replaced one of the benches. During the coming year we will begin to plan for its redevelopment.

About 100 people from the Sibfords attended a public meeting about the **Bishop Blaize** in June to discuss ways in which the community as a whole could make a bid to purchase the pub and turn it into a community asset. Little has happened since then other than the pub being opened occasionally for pre-booked lunches. In theory, if the premises are not operating as a pub, the owners are not allowed to live there, which they have been. However, Cherwell recently decided against taking enforcement action; this is being challenged strongly by Sibford Gower Parish Council who, amongst other things, are concerned that the lack of action may in the future affect the continuing status of the pub as an Asset of Community Value.

The most controversial issue we are dealing with at the moment concerns **housing development**, so I'll summarise the present position. It comes in three parts, all associated with two pieces of land that have been proposed to Cherwell DC for housing development by their common owner. One site is the four fields surrounding Folly Farm, about 22 hectares (55 acres); the other is a field of 6 hectares (15 acres) between Hook Norton Road and Woodway Road.

1. Cherwell DC recently included those two sites (along with about 200 others around the district) in their **Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review**, in which they were looking to identify potential sites for development of over 100 houses to help meet Oxford city's housing needs. During the period of public consultation on that Review in January, we called an Extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council, to which about 20 residents came. The meeting was unanimous in its objection to such a large housing development in the village, and gave us plenty of material to flesh out our response to the Review. We don't expect to hear any more about the outcome of that until about July this year. In my opinion, it is EXTREMELY unlikely that our two sites will go forward for development in this context.
2. The same two sites are also being evaluated by CDC for smaller developments of up to 10 houses in their **Local Plan Part 2**. The public consultation on this was supposed to begin at the end of January, but we are still waiting for it. It's only my opinion, but I think it likely that the Hook Norton Road site will be recommended for some development, but the Folly Farm site not. We will of course call a meeting to discuss it during the consultation period.
3. The third part of this issue relates to the northeast corner of the same Hook Norton Road site. Outline planning permission was granted in 2014 for a development of about 10 houses. That application included **affordable housing**, which was the main reason that the parish council supported it, backed up by the 2012 Sibfords Community Plan, which showed strong support for such a scheme. However, there was a falling out between the parties involved and that scheme was withdrawn last year. A new developer has been in touch with us about the same site, again proposing to include some low-cost housing, but the parish council is waiting to see what is proposed in Local Plan Part 2 before getting involved in any discussions.

Finally I'd like to thank:

- My fellow councillors and our Parish Clerk for their support and individual work, whether it be representing the parish at external meetings, repairing parish assets, giving us the benefit of their professional expertise, or turning up on a cold morning to wash the Cotswold Close play equipment
- The litter pickers, not just the annual ones, but those who every day pick up other people's litter rather than walk past it
- Lynn and John for carrying out the weekly play area inspections
- The villagers who took it upon themselves to wash the green algae off our bus stop, village and speed limit signs
- District and (newly re-elected) County Councillor George Reynolds who does his best to attend all our meetings, and provides invaluable advice on County and District affairs
- Sibford School for use of the room for Council meetings and assisting with the maintenance of the play area and fitness equipment.

I will now hand over to the Responsible Financial Officer for her report:

Financial Report to 31 March 2017

(Read by Councillor Adrian Lamb)

Good evening. Here is the financial report for Sibford Ferris Parish Council for the year 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

It should be noted that this report is based on unaudited, draft accounts.

The precept for the year was kept at £6858 for the third year running. This amount was boosted by a New Homes Bonus of £790 and a precept grant of £46. The parish council also receives burial ground fees.

Payments totalled £5864 excluding VAT which is reclaimable. There were some items which were budgeted for payment in the year but which were invoiced in April and will therefore be recorded in the 2017/2018 accounts. The precept amount also makes allowance for anticipated expenses that will occur in future years, such as parish council elections in May 2018 and ongoing repairs and replacements at the Cotswold Close play area, in addition to building and maintaining a reserve.

The total bank balance at the end of the period, taking into account uncashed cheques, was £12426. This is an increase of £2047 on last year's balance.

The internal auditor for this year is once again Sue Rowley of Burdrop and thanks must go to Sue for once again agreeing to take on this role.

The accounts will be submitted for external audit in June. The procedure will change for the 2017/2018 accounts, which will be presented for inspection by the public in the usual way but not externally audited. However, an independent auditor will be appointed who will be able to answer queries from residents should the need arise. The cost of any queries will be paid out of the precept.

Wheathills Report

Councillor Maureen Hicks gave a short resumé of the history and remit of the Town Estates Charity and its ownership of Wheathills, the Millennium Field and the primary school, then read out the short annual Wheathills Report sent from the Secretary of the Town Estate Charity as follows:-

"I am pleased to be able to report that our hedgelayed received an award for his work on the roadside hedge at Wheathills and has been back recently to trim it.

The Trust has now moved the entry to the field so that heavy farm machinery does not have to be driven through the field to get to the barn but can use the track alongside and enter through a new gate at the bottom. This should improve the appearance of the field. The tenant has also been put under pressure to keep the area tidy and remove non-agricultural waste or risk losing his tenancy. It was felt that this had been done and the tenancy has now been renewed.

During the year, the Trust acquired the Millennium Field and access for maintenance to this is necessary through Wheathills where there is now a removable fence.

The trustees shared the concerns of our tenant about the use of the field by dog owners. They confirm that there is no right of way through this field."

Village Hall Report

(Written by Joan Broady, Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, and read by Ginny Bennett)

	2016/17	2015/16	% +/-
TOTAL HOURS HIRED	1440	1238	+16.34
TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL HIRERS	591	583	+1.5
LARGE HALL	668	428	+55.96
SMALL HALL	660	483	+36.70
AVERAGE HIRE PERIOD	2.44	2.12	+14.61
PRIVATE HIRE	268	167	+60.47
TOP FOUR HIRERS IN 2016/17: TOTS & BABES (175), SCOUTS, CUBS & BEAVERS (149); FIELDING DAY CENTRE (112); YOGA (110)			

From the figures given, it is easy to see that Sibford Village Hall is a well-used venue, and the refurbishment of the large hall has created a modern environment with an impressive lighting system, making it suitable for many different uses. Together with our excellent kitchen and the small hall, it is a venue to be proud of.

Fundraising is now starting and grants investigated to re-construct the lavatories to bring them up to the standard of the rest of the hall. We also have to bear in mind that the shingle roof is nearing the end of its life and the car park will soon need re-surfacing. The car park is not only used by the Village Hall but also provides useful parking for the Church and Primary School.

Ricky Winnifrith has been our caretaker for nearly twelve months and has also taken on the role of cleaner; this is proving to be successful but more the committee members are having to take an active role in the running of the hall in order to keep it in good condition. We would love to have new committee members with fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

The financial support given by both Parish Councils, the Town Estates Charity and residents in the villages of Sibford is greatly appreciated and makes a huge difference.

Community First Responder Scheme Update

This scheme was run by the charity wing of the South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS), who had recently appealed to the parish council for funding. Since the launch of the scheme in the Sibfords in 2015, there had not been the progress that had been hoped for, training had not been provided to at least one potential volunteer and communication with the organisers had been difficult. Cllr Bennett had been asked to find out the latest situation and reported that she had made email contact with the local responder co-ordinator, James Clarke of Hook Norton. Mr Clarke advised that there were six responders in Hook Norton, who were often called to the Sibfords. There was one trained responder in the Sibfords. Mr Clarke had not by the time of the meeting provided information on the training situation. It was agreed that a decision whether to support the SCAS appeal should be based on knowledge of the situation for the Sibfords and the reasons for the issues with training: whether they were organisational or financial. A recent email from SCAS had invited interested parties to a forum in Chipping Norton at the end of the month and Cllr Bennett agreed to attend for the parish council in order to discuss the problems with accessing training and what could be done to improve cover in the villages.

A member of the public asked Cllr Robinson if members of Sibford School staff could be trained as responders but was advised that it would not be possible for personnel in charge of students to leave their posts at very short notice. However, the School was still actively considering the purchase of a defibrillator.

Report from Thames Valley Police Rural Neighbourhood Team, PC Carrie Cook

(Read by Cllr Huckvale)

“Over the last year Thames Valley Police has reviewed the way in which we respond to and investigate incidents and crime in our communities. Our structure and processes have been accessed to ensure we effectively manage the demands from and the needs of the public.

In response to this we will, during the summer, be making changes to the way we are structured, working within three key areas: Investigation, Response and Neighbourhood. Our aim is to create a more effective and efficient police service which will ensure that we can provide the best service to you when you need us.

We have mapped out where our demand for service is, ensuring that resources are targeted at the areas of greatest need, at times of greatest need and to the most vulnerable in our communities. This will mean that in some areas and at certain times we will have more or less police officers available.

I would like to reassure you now that this is not about withdrawing our resources from our communities it is about providing a better service.

We are committed to delivering an improved service: one which ensures we have the right number of officers on duty to respond quickly to a call for service if needed; one which supports our communities with dedicated officers working with you to solve local problems and one which sadly, if you are a victim of crime, ensures the right people are there to get you justice.

PS Rebecca Fishwick will be in contact with the Parish Councils over the coming weeks to explain in more detail how the new structure will work in our local area.

In the last 12 months the following crimes have been reported in Sibford Ferris:

- 1 offence of Theft of Motor Vehicle in April 2016, which occurred in Cotswold Close. The vehicle was later recovered burnt out near Shenington.
- 1 offence of Vehicle Interference in Ferris Court.
- 3 offences of Theft from Vehicle in Walford Road and Woodway Road.

If there are any points the Parish Council would like to raise or question please email the neighbourhood team on BanburyRuralNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk ”

A member of the public asked if it was possible to obtain crime statistics for other villages in the area for comparison and it was agreed that the Clerk would ask PC Cook.

Sibford School Report

The new Head of Sibford School, Toby Spence, had been unable to attend the meeting and Peter Robinson gave a headline summary of the School's activities for the year.

“The new academic year started with the arrival of our new head, Toby Spence, and his family (wife Jill and children Isobel, Oscar and Eliza plus latest addition, dog Toto).

Author visits

Our programme of Author visits continues and we have been delighted to invite pupils from other local schools, including Sibford Gower Endowed Primary, to join us for these events. Speakers have included: Matt Haig, author of 'A Boy Called Christmas' and 'The Girl who Saved Christmas'; Young Bond author Steve Cole and Christian O'Connell, DJ and author of 'Radio Boy'.

Sporting events

We were pleased to welcome Irish International and part of Team Ireland's men's hockey team for Rio 2016, Chris Cargo, who took sessions with pupils. Also on an Olympic theme, Gold Medalist Hollie Webb, joined us for our annual sports awards. We have hosted the North Oxfordshire Schools Sports Partnership Triathlon, a number of Cross Country events (involving more than 400 children) and our annual Rugby Sevens tournament, which saw 33 different schools playing more than 280 games. The school has been awarded the Silver Schools Game Mark. Once again, we are delighted to be acting as home ground for Sibford Cricket Club.

Music

Highlight of our music department in the year to date was the Friends Schools Joint Choir Festival which saw us joined by pupils from Quaker schools in Yorkshire, Saffron Walden and Ireland to perform Fauré's Requiem. This event also raised more than £900 for Banbury Young Homelessness Project.

Drama

Actor Michael Mears joined us to perform his one-man show 'This Evil Thing' which was enjoyed by both the school and local villagers. Our pupils performed Cabaret to critical acclaim. We are looking forward to the annual visit from the Rain or Shine Theatre Company who will be bringing their production of 'Twelfth Night' to Holly House Garden on 29th June (tickets on sale now!).

Science

Our involvement with the School's Science Partnership and the Ogden Trust continues and we were delighted to welcome other schools to join us for a Physics Seminar. Richard Hobbs, Professor in the Earth Sciences Department at Durham University (and a pupil at Sibford from 1966 to 1973) joined us as guest speaker for our March Café Scientifique.

Community Events

Our Arts Hubs continues with evening classes in Painting and Drawing, pottery and textiles. Swimming lessons remain fully subscribed. Our Fun in the Country holiday club continues to be extremely popular. We have also launched a Community Orchestra which meets monthly on a Sunday.

And last but not least

On 16 January 1842, nine-year-old Lucy Endall became the first pupil to register at Sibford School ... which means that 2017 is our 175th anniversary. Celebrations began in January when we held a Ceilidh for parents and friends, and we will be further marking the occasion at our annual Open Day on Saturday 17 June and also in October.”

County and District Councillor George Reynolds

The Chair congratulated Councillor Reynolds on his recent re-election to the County Council. In his role as District Councillor, he spoke about progress on the Local Plan (LP) Part 1 Partial Review and Local Plan Part 2. Councillor Reynolds reported that the LP Part 1 Partial Review had been delayed by the forthcoming national election but believed that the anticipated date for publication was late June. The consultation on LP Part2 had been pushed back as a result and was expected later in the year. He confirmed he would check this with the Planning Department. He advised that the Community Infrastructure Levy proposals were being re-considered and so

Section 106 was still in operation. In addition, he reported that it was likely that planning fees would be increased with the additional revenue going towards an improved service; he hoped that some of the problems with enforcement would also be addressed. Also on planning matters, Councillor Reynolds reported that the application for Muddle Barn Farm that had been refused had gone to appeal. Councillor Reynolds reminded the meeting that the Cropredy, Sibfords and Wroxton Ward was represented by three councillors, the other two being Ken Atack and Douglas Webb.

Reporting on the County Council activities, Councillor Reynolds commented that the unitary debate had taken a lot of the officers' time and energy. It had been put on hold because of elections. He reported that the complexion of the Council had not altered greatly following the County Council election. On Highways, Councillor Reynolds had spoken to the Area Steward, Maurice Sheehan, who had advised that there had been staff cuts in the department. However, the feeling now was that there would have to be capital investment to address the state of roads. On Belle Isle Farm, where there had been infill without planning permission, Councillor Reynolds reported that a stop notice had been served until a planning application was submitted and considered.

Councillor Hicks asked how Sibford Ferris Parish Council could support Sibford Gower Parish Council about the lack of enforcement on the Bishop Blaize situation. Councillor Reynolds suggested a letter to the District Council.

Open Discussion

i) 'Great Get Together' on 17 June

Peter Robinson explained to the meeting that the Great Get Together was an initiative by the husband of Jo Cox to try to bring communities together and the School had wondered if there would be local interest in such an event following their Open Day on 17 June. However, it was felt that the time frame would be too tight for this year and so any plans would have to be for 2018. There was positive feedback from those at the meeting and it was also agreed that there would need to be a planning committee involving residents to organise such an event. Peter Robinson said that everyone was welcome to attend the School Open Day in the meantime.

ii) Dog bin/s in the parish

There was agreement from residents at the meeting that a dog bin on Woodway Road could reduce the amount of dog mess in that area of the village. It was decided to take this matter forward to the parish council meeting on 25 May.

iii) Design for a village logo

Councillor Huckvale proposed to the meeting that a village logo could be used on social media, letterheads, etc and had wondered if any residents would be interested in coming up with a possible design. Peter Robinson offered to speak to the School's head of Sixth Form to see if it could be part of a competition.

iv) Parking

Councillor Lamb raised the issue of cars parking along the Hook Norton Road and obscuring the view of those exiting from Back Lane. It was agreed to take the matter forward to the next parish council meeting.

v) Kerbstone Repairs

A resident asked about repairs to kerbstones adjacent to his drive way and was advised to report the damage via the FixMyStreet website.

vi) The Future of the Horton Hospital

Councillor Bennett advised that planned meetings of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group at which the transformation plans were to be discussed had been postponed due to the forthcoming national election. Councillor Bennett advised residents to view the OCCG website for revised dates for the meetings. Councillor Reynolds warned that the judicial review being conducted on the legality of the two-part consultation process could alter how matters progressed. There was no date for the decision on the judicial review.

There were no further questions and the Chair closed the meeting at 8.54pm with thanks to all for attending.