

**Minutes of Sibford Gower Annual Parish Meeting  
held in Sibford Village Hall  
on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

**Present**

Parish Cllrs Peter Abbott, Oswyn Murray (Chairman), Mrs Sue Bannister and Mrs Gilian Soden. Peter Hardman (Clerk).  
County & District Cllr George Reynolds, Mrs Maureen Hicks (Sibford Ferris Parish Council)  
22 Local Residents.

**Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Alan Parkin.

**Minutes**

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

**Matters arising**

There were no matters arising which did not feature in the agenda items.

**Chairman's Report**

Cllr Oswyn Murray presented his Report.

He said that this year, the Rev Ronald Hawkes had been invited to speak on behalf of Holy Trinity Church and Judith Weeks to speak on behalf of the Friends Meeting House. Next year invitations to speak will be extended to the Primary School and the Surgery.

He reported on planning applications received during the year – a major one being Muddle Barn Farm, the Annual Village Spring Clean, Miram Tebbs' Land, Matters jointly with Sibford Ferris Parish Council, Sibfords Community Plan and the Bishop Blaize.

The Report in full is given at Appendix A.

**Holy Trinity Church** was represented by the Rev Ronald Hawkes who spoke on church connected matters. He thanked the Parish Council for taking on the maintenance of the churchyard. He spoke of the efforts being made to get the church clock back into good working order and he felt that the clock and the chiming on the hour are very much valued by the local community. He involves himself in the Primary School, the pupils of which visit the church on occasions. Finally, he drew attention to an event at 6pm on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2015 in the Primary School hall that will be a short celebration of the church's 175<sup>th</sup> year in the village.

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**The Friends Meeting House** was represented by Judith Weeks who spoke of its history from start to the present day. She gave information about the services which are held there and the welcome that would be extended to anyone who may care to visit.

**Clerk's and Financial Report**

Peter Hardman presented the following report:-

The Council's Financial accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 have been prepared and, as always, thanks are expressed to Mr David Soden for agreeing to carry out the Internal Examination. They will be submitted to the External Auditor after approval by the Parish Council.

The financial year started off with £9,590 in the bank and ended with a balance of £10,971. Of this sum, £2,987 relates to the residue of a bequest of £5,000 by the late Miriam Tebbs. As most residents know, she bequeathed this money to the Parish Council to be used for the benefit of the Parish as and when suitable situations arise. Also contained within the bank balance is £1,000 held specifically in reserve for expenditure that may occur in connection with the developing Sibfords Community Plan. Holy Trinity churchyard is now formerly closed following an Order in Council and the cost of maintenance now falls on the Parish Council shared equally with Sibford Ferris Parish Council, During the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 Grants were made of £350 to Sibford Village Hall. Donations were made of £120 to the Sibford Scene and £100 to Sibford Gower Endowed Primary School.

With regard to the Village Pond, the Parish Council's application submitted in January 2014 to register it as a town or village green is still with Oxfordshire County Council. We have been advised that the time being taken for a decision to be received is not unusual and the matter is awaiting the attention of the Solicitor in Council.

Reports of all Parish Council Meetings are published in the Sibford Scene, The Banbury Guardian and the Parish Council's webpage.

All financial information and details are freely available to residents from the Clerk upon request.

He thanked the Parish Councillors for the support that they give to him in his role as Clerk with special reference to the Chairman to whom he is most grateful, as always, for his guidance.

**Thames Valley Police Matters**

Nobody from Thames Valley Police was available to attend the Meeting and no specific matters raised.

**Highway & Footpath Matters**

No one from Oxfordshire Highways was available to attend the Meeting.

The Clerk reported that on 4<sup>th</sup> February Mr Pete Egawhary of Oxfordshire Highways visited the Parish, at the Parish Council's request, to make site inspections of areas which gave concern. They were joined by Mr Fred Inns. The places mainly were where there are blockages in gullies along Colony Road and Acre Ditch causing the roads to flood at certain times. Mr Inns provided photographs by way of evidence. Mr Egawhary undertook to ensure that remedial work would be carried out and this appears to have been done but see below.

Mr Inns reported that the drains are again blocked in Colony Road and residents have commented on potholes still requiring filling. Questions need to be asked as to what is used in filling as it appears that it is washed out after two or three heavy downpours of rain. The Clerk was instructed to liaise with Oxfordshire Highways.

Mr Ian Warden raised concern about cars partly parked on pavements which present difficulties from time to time for those who use mobility vehicles.

Mrs Mollie Mulley once again raised the matter of using part of the land fronting The Old Rectory for parking purposes to reduce the number of cars parked at the kerbside in particular parts of Main Street. The Chairman stressed that the subject had been discussed very recently and it had been agreed not to revisit it for three years.

**Report by The Town Estate Charity**

A Report on the recent many activities of the Town Estates Charity was given by Jean White. During the year the Trust has acquired Wheathills Farm which had been sold by a local resident. This would continue to be used for livery and would be managed by the advisers to the Trust. The south side buildings and land of the Sibford Gower Endowed Primary School are now registered with the Trust and negotiations are underway for the northside buildings to be taken into Trust ownership. A number of village residents and organisations had benefited from Trust funds during the year and the total donations and grants amounted to £4,705.

It was agreed to write to Mrs Tracey Morbey to thank her on behalf of the village for her great generosity in offering Wheathills Farm to the Trust rather than disposing of it on the open market, thus preserving the open land between the two villages.

The full Report is given at Appendix B.

**Report by The Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator**

The Report was presented by Mrs Mollie Mulley who spoke of the aim to look after neighbours, to make Sibford Gower and Burdrop unattractive to unwanted visitors and to help the police to help us. She thanked the members of the Neighbourhood Watch Team for their involvement. She referred to the 'Message In A Bottle' pots which are supplied by the Lions Club. She thanked Mr Adrian Lamb for allowing space in the Sibford Scene to help keep the village informed.

The full Report is given at Appendix C.

**Sibford Village Hall Report**

The Report was presented by Muriel Chandler giving information about users of the Hall, fund raising, refurbishment programme, hiring rates etc.

The full report is given at Appendix D.

**There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman declared the Meeting closed at 8.50pm.**

**Chairman's Report 2015**

1. Each year we invite representatives responsible for various activities in the village, on a traditional but fairly random basis; it's not clear why some organisations are invited to speak and not others. Here are the missing ones I have identified:

Parish church (after all we look after their churchyard)

Quaker Meeting House (the Sibfords are very proud of Quaker heritage back to origins of the Quaker movement at Battle of Edgehill; this makes the Sibfords unique in England).

Primary school: we are never consulted, and not even informed when the head changes, or what the situation is with the Academy status application.

The surgery: should they not be offered the opportunity to tell us of their achievements and plans?

So in the interests of making the Annual Parish Meeting a better forum for the activities of the community as a whole, not just the Parish Council, we have this year invited reps from the Church and the Quaker Meeting House to address us; and in future we will also write to primary school and surgery, asking whether they have anything they wish to report on to village.

The PC held 3 meetings this year in June, October, and January; in addition the chairman attended Ferris meetings when items of common interest to both villages were on the agenda. Items discussed during year were:

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**Planning:**

Planning publicity: at present information about planning applications are confined to a street sign and immediate neighbours, and the Sibford website. In future we propose also to put all applications on the notice board at the crossroads.

There were 7 applications last year apart from tree pruning: none raised serious issues.

One major application is outstanding at Muddle Barn Farm, where demolition and rebuilding as a large neo-Georgian mansion is proposed. The PC raised objections to this on the following grounds:

**National Planning Policy Framework 59-60** do not permit prescription on style but do suggest concentrating on overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout ... in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally', and state that 'it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness' (quoted in Planning Statement 3.5-6).

**Local Plan H 17** (quoted in Planning Statement 3.7) permits replacement of a dwelling outside the limits of an existing settlement provided that 'the proposed replacement is similar in scale and within the same curtilage'. This proposal is of a quite different scale, and is stated by the applicants to be in terms of floor area approximately five times the size of the original dwelling (Design and Access Statement 4.1). The claim that this discrepancy can be mitigated by invoking permitted development guidelines seems to us irrelevant, and still leaves a shortfall of over 1000 sq. feet.

**Local Plan C 30** requires compatibility with appearance, character, layout, scale and density of existing dwellings in the vicinity. This has not been demonstrated in relation especially to New Barn Farm.

**Local Plan C 13 Areas of High Landscape Value:** The valley in which the property stands is open farmland designated as an Area of High Landscape Value. While this designation does not affect permitted development rights it must be asked whether the development is compatible with the aim of the Council to seek to conserve and enhance the environment in such areas.

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**Emerging Planning Policy ESD 16** (quoted 3.15-16) require justification in terms of complementing and enhancing the context and an explanation of the design rationale. This has not been provided.

**In short we believe that this proposal contravenes all the cited policies, especially Local Plan H 17, and is an inappropriate development in open countryside in an Area of High Landscape Value.**

[In the event the application was withdrawn at the last moment, but we expect it to return]

The annual village clean-up and sign-washing was well attended, and 18 sacks were collected. Thanks to all who participated.

Earlier in the year we asked for possible new councillors: a couple of residents showed willingness to join the PC. But in the event existing councillors decided to continue for the moment, to give new people chance to attend meetings and familiarise themselves with the business.

**Miriam Tebbs land:** a preliminary clearing of the land has taken place, and I propose forming a small committee of Philippa Martindale, Fiona Pidgeon and myself to carry plans forward over the summer. The present idea is to replant it with half a dozen eating apples as a community orchard, available for juvenile scrumping. Anyone with other ideas is invited to get in touch with the committee.

**Matters jointly with Sibford Ferris:**

Temple Mill: SFPC rejected our suggestion for traffic calming measures.

Allotments: these were advertised in the May Sibford Scene in connection with the new development ; they are open to both villages. Matters are proceeding.

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Churchyard: the new arrangements have been continued for a further year's contract, and appear to be working satisfactorily.

Broadband: no further information available.

Village Power Consumption Project: both PCs decided not to participate, since we have no village owned buildings.

2015 is the year for celebrations of Magna Carta and VE day: any parishioner interested in organising events is invited to get in touch with the Clerk.

First responders and defibrillator: Gil Soden to report.

**Sibfords Community plan:** I propose we formally thank Richard Hartree, who is leaving the village for his tireless work in organising this very successful project.

**Bishop Blaize:**

At a magistrate's court hearing in Oxford on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2014 Mr and Mrs Noquet were found guilty of the criminal charge of failing to comply with a lawful requirement to cease residence of the Bishop Blaize except as ancillary to its use as a public house. They were given a conditional discharge for twelve months in recognition of their previous good character. They were ordered to pay prosecution costs of £17,000 at the rate of £200 a month.

On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 the PC agreed that, whilst the Parish Council should not get involved directly in any way to purchase the property (let alone run it as a pub) it would be ready to support any village initiative to buy the pub, including convening a public meeting when plans come forward, and **providing backing and advice.**

Further actions: Cherwell Enforcement is pursuing the owners for removal of shed/mobile home. A list of actions by Cherwell since 2006 in relation to the Bishop Blaize has been received, and can be consulted from the Clerk.

## **APPX B**

### **THE TOWN ESTATES CHARITY**

#### **SIBFORD GOWER AND BURDROP**

CHARITY NO 253440

REPORT TO PARISH COUNCIL 2014-2015

For many years now I have reported to the Parish Council with something of an apology for having so little to say. This year, however, it is different! We have had an exceedingly busy year.

Early last year we appointed a new adviser. Throughout the year the workload increased to the point where he required a second professional so we now have two young and lively minds working on our behalf. They undertook a review of all the Charity's properties and submitted a very comprehensive report in October. Several management efficiencies were identified but fixing the water supply at the farm is the priority.

However, before work could begin on this we received a letter from Tracey Morbey indicating her wish to sell Wheathills Farm. Our advisers were very keen that we should buy this and on March 25 this year the land was passed to the Trust thereby preserving for all time a green wedge between the Ferris and the Gower. The existing tenants were invited to continue to stable horses there and new contracts were drawn up. One tenant decided to leave and another has been given six months to find somewhere else for his business equipment to be stored.

As there are some changes in the status of the school planned for the next academic year, we decided we should hasten our registration of the land and buildings on the south side with the land registry. This has been difficult as hard copy proof was required of a transaction that took place some 400 years ago. Registration of these buildings and land has now been achieved.

Early in the year we brought forward our meeting to discuss and then, endorse, the submission for Academy status at the Sibford Gower Endowed Primary School. It was later discovered that part of the government plan to grant academy status to schools, involved passing LEA ownership of all buildings to other organisations which part own the buildings - in this case the Trust. These are then leased back on very long leases. At the moment negotiations are going on with the LEA for the north side buildings.

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Wheathills field has been discussed on several occasions during the year. Our tenant was asked to remove discarded machinery which he has, although there is still some tidying up to be done. A tree has been felled in the hedge with the neighbouring property and another has still to be felled. The roadside hedge has been debated but as this has not grown evenly it was decided to wait for another year to see what growth the shorter end achieves and then decide whether this is sufficient to lay.

The chimney on the School House was rebuilt and now a second chimney awaits maintenance.

Unfortunately only a few weeks ago there was a serious fire in the roof of Heath Farm. The substantial damage has been assessed and a claim has been submitted on the Trust's insurance.

Fifteen elderly residents have benefited from the chiropody service paid for by the Trust which also continues to fund half the cost of the coach for the Friendship Club outings. Two residents are provided with personal alarms and the Sibford Scene received a grant of £1200 for a new photocopier. A half contribution was made toward the cost of a defibrillator to be kept in the village hall and a donation was made for goalposts which are now erected in the village hall field. The school requested help with paying for doors for storage but later withdrew this although the Trust did pay for individual students who could not fund themselves on trips.

In accordance with Charity rules income for this year has been allocated as follows:

Sibford Gower Primary School	£200
Relief in Need	£2075
General Benefit	£2430

Jean White  
Secretary  
April 2015

## **APPX C**

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT**

Our aim is to look after our neighbours, to make Sibford Gower and Burdrop unattractive to unwanted visitors and to help the Police to help us.

We have continued to ask our neighbours to remain aware, observant and to follow Police advice, also to report any suspicious behaviour or activities.

Deborah Hextall is the Regional Watch Co-ordinator, Cherwell Area and West Oxfordshire. She remains helpful and supportive.

We have the same Neighbourhood Watch Team. I would like to thank each member of the team for the effort they put in and the work they do to help the residents of Sibford Gower and Burdrop.

Security remains very important. Michelle Miller gave a helpful and informative talk in the Village Hall, independently arranged by a resident in Sibford Ferris. Michelle Miller can be contacted at Banbury Police Station. She is in charge of Security and is always willing to give advice. I have given each team member a selection of advice sheets on security for reference.

We continue to have warnings and requests for information concerning thefts etc., also telephone and computer crime both are seriously on the increase.

We keep 'Message In A Bottle' pots and information sheets which are supported by the emergency services, they can save time and life. They are supplied free by the Lions Club and are distributed by Neighbourhood Watch for residents of any age who are on regular medication.

I would like to thank Mr Ian Warden for supplying 'Message In A Bottle' pots as needed to the Fielding Centre.

We would like to thank Mr Adrian Lamb for his help and support in allowing us space in The Scene to help us keep the village informed.

Next week I will be attending a Neighbourhood Watch meeting at Bodicote House arranged by Mrs Deborah Hextall.

## **APPX D**

ANNUAL VILLAGE REPORT FOR SIBFORD GOWER ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON  
15th APRIL 2015:

THE VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE VERY MUCH APPRECIATES THE DONATIONS FROM SIBFORD GOWER PARISH COUNCIL AND ALSO THE HELP FROM THE TOWN ESTATES CHARITY.

UNFORTUNATELY WE DO NOT HAVE THE FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2015 AT THE MOMENT BUT WE STILL HAVE THE REGULAR CLASSES AS LAST YEAR IN KARATE/PILATES/YOGA/ART AND ALSO NOW HAVE A WEEKLY MEN'S FITNESS CLASS AND A WEEKLY BOXERCISE & METAFIT CLASS PLUS ANOTHER ART CLASS WHICH BRINGS THIS UP TO THREE ART CLASSES A WEEK. WE ALSO HAVE THE REGULAR VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS USING THE HALL AND HAVE HAD AN INCREASE IN PRIVATE HIRINGS INCLUDING THE FIRST WEDDING FOR SOME TIME.

FUND RAISING HAS INCREASED THIS YEAR AND AT OUR EASTER EGG HUNT WE HAD 80 CHILDREN COMPETING AND WE ARE HAPPY TO REPORT THAT THE POPULAR BAND "DAMN RIGHT I'VE GOT THE BLUES" ARE BACK ON SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE WHEN WE HOPE TO SEE AS MANY OF YOU AS IS POSSIBLE. I HAVE TO ADD A PERSONAL THANK YOU FOR ALL WHO HAVE JOINED OUR VILLAGE HALL LOTTERY GAME WHEN £1,824 WAS DONATED GIVING £912 TO VILLAGE HALL FUNDS WITH £912 GOING INTO THE LOTTERY GAME PRIZE FUND. WE HAVE OUR ANNUAL DOG SHOW ON SATURDAY JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup> AND THE COMMITTEE IS VERY GRATEFUL TO ONE OF OUR NEW RESIDENTS WHO IS ORGANISING ANOTHER MUSIC NIGHT ON 29<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST. WE ARE HAVING OUR ANNUAL VILLAGE HALL SHOW ON SATURDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR.

WE HAVE STARTED OUR REFURBISHMENT PROGRAMME BY HAVING THE FRONT DOUBLE DOORS REPLACED AT A COST OF £2,384.00 AND THIS WAS ACHIEVED BY THE GENEROSITY OF OXFORD CC VIA OUR DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLOR MR GEORGE REYNOLDS THROUGH THE COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY BUDGET SCHEME OF £1000 PLUS AND OUT THANKS GO TO MR REYNOLDS FOR HIS HELP, ANOTHER £1000 GRANT FROM THE DORIS FIELD CHARITABLE TRUST AND THE BALANCE OF £384 FROM THE VILLAGE HALL LOTTERY GAME.

THE VILLAGE HALL WAS BUILT IN 1957 AND WAS CONSTRUCTED WITH A CEDAR SHINGLE ROOF WITH A LIFE SPAN OF 30 YEARS. THE ROOF WAS RENEWED IN THE LATE 1980'S AND THE VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HAVE SUGGESTED WE SHOULD HAVE A CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE ROOF WITHIN THE NEXT FEW YEARS AND POSSIBLY AS EARLY AS 2017 AT AN ESTIMATED COST OF UP TO £20,000 AND IT WAS AGREED THAT ALL PROFITS FROM VILLAGE HALL FUNCTIONS SHOULD IN FUTURE BE RESERVED TOWARDS THIS, PLUS SOME OTHER REFURBISHMENTS, AND NOT BE USED AS A GENERAL SUBSIDY TO HIRE RATES. THE HALL CURRENTLY COSTS £10.45 AN HOUR TO RUN AND THIS GIVES US AN OPERATING LOSS OF £4.45 AN HOUR WHICH IS COVERED BY FUND RAISING EVENTS AND SOME DONATIONS. THEREFORE WE HAVE HAD TO INCREASE OUR HIRING RATES BUT HAVE MADE IT LESS COMPLICATED BY GIVING A 'LOCAL PARISHIONERS PRICE' AND A PRICE FOR PEOPLE LIVING OUTSIDE THE PARISH. THIS WILL ENABLE US TO USE AT LEAST SOME OF THE FUND-RAISING PROFITS FOR THE REFURBISHMENTS ALTHOUGH WE WILL STILL BE APPLYING FOR ANY GRANTS THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE.

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