

Sibford Gower Parish Council Annual Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on **Tuesday 21st May 2019** at 7.30pm in the ICT Suite Sibford Gower Endowed Primary School.

Councillors Present: David Allen, Roger Mallows, Hugh Pidgeon (Chair),

In attendance: The Clerk, Vanessa Mulley and 17 other members of the community.

Introduction

The chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and spoke briefly about the success of the Combined Annual Parish Meeting held two weeks previously which many present had attended and enjoyed. He opened the meeting by reminding those present that as the Annual Parish *Council* Meeting, this was an opportunity for the Council to hold themselves accountable to their electorate for their management of the Council's formal responsibilities and financial affairs.

No new Declarations of Pecuniary Interest were made.

Meeting Recordings

No requests to record were received.

Election of Chair & Vice Chair

Cllr Hugh Pidgeon had completed his year as Chair and expressed his willingness to stand as Chair again. Following no further interest in the position Cllr David Allen proposed in favour and was seconded by Cllr Roger Mallows.

Cllr David Allen wished to run again for Vice Chair and with no further interest was proposed by Cllr Roger Mallows and seconded by Cllr Hugh Pidgeon.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

All 3 councillors were happy with the minutes from the last meeting. Updates on various points raised at the last meeting were mentioned briefly:

- No further news on the Mawles Barn development.
- Research into the Council's purchase of a defibrillator is still ongoing but we have now identified an appropriate model of machine and storage container. **To be actioned**

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 12th February 2019 were approved by all and signed by the chair.

Correspondence

Emails had been received from a resident and these had been passed onto Cherwell District Council's Standards Monitoring Officer who will be dealing with them.

Co-Option

Only one application has been received so far for the vacancy and this was from Amanda Ransom. The council had all received a copy of the application form prior to the meeting. A vote was taken and it was unanimously decided that Amanda join the council.

Cllr Amanda Ransom was welcomed to the group and joined the table for the remainder of the meeting.

Revised Documentation

The existing Standing Orders were in need of a review and following lengthy work a new proposed Standing Order has been created which all councillors had seen prior to the meeting.

Cllr Roger Mallows proposed and Cllr David Allen seconded the adoption of the new Standing Orders. All councillors voted in favour of the new document. The document will be formatted as soon as possible and will be uploaded to the website. **To be actioned**

Finance 2018/2019

Year End & Accounts

The total income for the year was £10,215.15

The total expenditure for the year was £10,761.30

The net deficit for the year was (£546.15). This was less than previously forecast due to: improvement in shared funding claim process; improved groundworks contractor control; reduced discretionary spend.

Copies of the 2018/19 Annual Accounts were made available.

Two bank accounts are still being used but with only a nominal fund remaining in the Bank of Ireland account. A letter signed by the previous councillors has been sent requesting funds are transferred to Lloyds Bank and the account closed.

Internal Audit - The previous Internal Auditor wished to step down from the position and we now have David Watson who has taken up the role. No material issues have been found, and the audit is now completed subject to minor detailed checks.

AGAR (Annual Governance & Accountability Return) - The AGAR forms are substantially complete, and the Certificate of Exemption will be submitted following this meeting. The Accounting Statements and Account Variances will be discussed and approved at a future meeting to be arranged for mid June.

Our thanks go out to Cllr. David Allen for all his work on ensuring the AGAR forms are completed correctly.

Public Rights & Transparency – The Notice of Public Rights will be published following this meeting with the six week period planned to commence on 24th June.

All Councillors approved the Annual Accounts and the sections of the AGAR form completed to date, proposed by Cllr Roger Mallows, 2nd by Cllr Hugh Pidgeon.

There were no questions on 2018/19 finances raised by those present.

Finance 2019/2020

Banking receipts – Clerk confirmed that only a few new payments had been made, aside from those agreed at previous meetings, and it was reasonably quiet at the moment. A full list of transactions can be located on Appendix C.

Bank of Ireland Account – As previously mentioned the Bank of Ireland account is still active but we are waiting to hear back from them confirming that the account has been closed and all remaining funds transferred to our Lloyds Bank account.

Budget, Precept & Council Tax – The Budget and Precept have been previously approved at the meeting on 10th December 2018, and copies of the approved Proposal were made available.

Current Year Budget Progress – records are being monitored and we are currently on track and in line with the approved Budget.

Risk & Insurance – There had been no formal risk assessment previously, but a Working Group was held in April 2019 to look at our risks. An Action Plan is being prepared, and risks will be addressed in order of priority. An example of this would be clarification of liability for the Millennium Field insurance, which was raised during the Working Group. This issue will be reviewed in conjunction with the Towns Estate Charity.

The Council's Insurance is due for renewal, and is currently being reviewed to ensure we have appropriate cover.

There were no questions on 2019/20 finances raised by those present.

Planning

Recategorization of Villages. – The classification of the village is a complicated issue. The Sibford Action Group are now looking into this issue following the success of all their hard work with the recently rejected development.

The council wished to thank the group especially Katherine Roussel who has been fundamental in keeping the council updated on progress. Katherine was present at the meeting and reported on various aspects of the Action Group's work. Investigation had been made by group members including substantive evidence which demonstrated that CDC were 5% ahead of where they should be regarding redevelopment in the area. CDC had not completed this investigation themselves so had been unaware of the figures.

One issue raised regarding the classification of the villages was why they were classed as a category A in the first place in 2014? In order to prevent other developments similar to that of the Hook Norton Road development, in the view of the Action Group, both Parishes would need to revert back to the class B village status. The previous Chair of the council had instigated conversations with CDC in regard to the recategorization without receiving any response. Current information indicates that a proposed review of the categories is scheduled for late 2019 and would be a lengthy process. The Sibford Action Group will now take this issue up as their next mission.

Cllr Roger Mallows proposed that in conjunction with the Sibford Ferris Parish Council and the Sibford Action Group, we will seek to further investigate the recategorization of Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower as separate category B villages, as identified by the Cherwell Local Plan 2016 – 2031 Part 1. Cllr David Allen seconded and all councillors approved. **To be Actioned.**

Cllr Hugh Pidgeon spoke briefly in appreciation of the group and the way it exemplified the kind of initiatives the Council most sought to encourage and support: the community coming together for the common good.

Highways & Footpaths – A member of another initiative, the speeding group was also present and was invited to update the council on its progress. It was confirmed that investigations are being made as to possible methods to slow down drivers. In the discussion that followed, mention was made of the village/boundary gates option which had been looked at. Contact had been made with Milcombe Parish Council to ascertain if they felt their gates had been successful but they felt that this was not the case. Some drivers felt they worked but that they lost their effectiveness over time.

The group's next meeting will be held in June where members of the group will be able to come together to share their separate investigations and more news on progress will follow. Cllr Amanda Ransom who is already an existing member of the group asked if finances had been looked into but it was confirmed that this was too early to make an appropriate assessment.. The group are nevertheless keen to establish what will work and then look at costings.

Various residents spoke briefly to share their concerns and felt that this would be a worth while cause to raise money for. It was also mentioned that the Town Estates Charity could also be approached for funds towards this. Cllr David Allen confirmed that there are plenty of funding avenues available and expressed the importance of determining what is needed before jumping into funding. Obtaining funding from external sources can be a lengthy process but worth looking at once the time is right.

Community Development

Pond Action Group – The issue of cleaning and maintaining the pond has been a historical one but thanks go to another of the initiatives being taken in the village, the Pond Action Group who have been looking at all the issues with the pond to ascertain the best possible course of action. Members of the group had been present at the community meeting and the visual material prepared for that occasion was brought along again for the community to see.

William Gray a member of the group with experience in this field spoke of the plans the group has developed following investigations of what the major issues were with the very neglected pond. Two main issues were identified – algae & fish. The carp in the pond are now very large and in too large a number for the size of pond. It has been confirmed that the fish definitely need to be rehoused ASAP as they are suffering with the shallow water depth and are eating all the other wildlife which would normally be found in there.

The algae have been feeding off the waste products from the fish and with the warmer weather will increase dramatically. It was advised that once the fish have been removed, the pond is left to settle for a period before moving forward with possible planting etc. The 6-point plan set out by the group will be in the next issue of the Sibford Scene for the public to see.

Residents spoke regarding their concerns that members of the community were acting independently regarding the pond and that it should very much be a village pond once again. Concerns were also raised regarding rapid growth of new planting and this was addressed on how these would be maintained during the winter months and some plants contained within baskets.

Residents also spoke of concerns about the water level and the fact that it appears someone is topping it up with tap water. William confirmed that although the best of intentions are being made it is not healthy for the pond and it should be left as is.

Residents spoke of a total drain and clean of the pond that had been done historically and that any pond life was saved and returned to the pond after cleaning. During a total clean the edge of the

pond could be repaired to stop further water leaking from the pond. William Gray said the downside to a complete drain and clean of the pond would be that it would strip the pond completely of the natural processes which have already begun.

Cllr Hugh Pidgeon spoke of his appreciation of the different perspectives represented and felt further discussion was needed. He also expressed his thanks to William on behalf of the Council for all his help and support, and indicated he would be writing further of his appreciation for these many initiatives in the Chairman’s Report he would be publishing with these minutes.

Possible Provision of Play Area – Cllr. Roger Mallows raised the possibility of using the triangular grassed area across Miriam Tebbs land in Burdrop for the possible location of a play area for the younger members of the community. The Ferris do have a playground located in Cotswold Close which is itself the subject of a working group who had been present at the Combined Annual Parish Meeting. The view was expressed that many parents of older children would not want their children walking that distance unsupervised. The play area behind the village hall is for the very small children of the village and should remain so.

It was proposed that investigations be made as to who owns the grassed area next to the Pig Path between the Gower and Burdrop. **To be actioned**

The meeting closed with a short exploration of the issues raised by the fact that the speed limit is removed in the dip between the villages. Cllr Amanda Ransom felt this was crazy but another resident advised the council that conventionally this acknowledged the separation between the two villages, and that any change could have an effect on the planning and development of the area.

A resident very kindly took this opportunity to thank the Council and express his gratitude for a successful 1st year.

There being no further business to discuss, the chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.07pm

Future Meetings

Next Open Meetings: Monday 17th June 2019 and Thursday 5th September 2019

Signed.....

Dated.....

APPENDICES

Appendix A to Minutes of SGPC Meeting – 21st May 2019

Chairman's Report for the year 2018/19

My Chairman's Report this year will be brief.

This was the first year of the newly elected team in operation. Alongside the more routine responsibilities we have for local planning, for example, or the maintenance of the village's Burial Ground, the minutes of our most recent Annual Parish Council Meeting - to which this report is attached - are testimony to the diligence with which I believe as a Council we have applied ourselves over the year to ensuring our financial probity, and reviewed all the major contractual and operational procedures and protocols which govern our work.

In this I have to extend my thanks again to my colleagues David Allen and Roger Mallows, and pay tribute to both Tony Skowronski and Trina Crilley who supported us for much of that time before, in each case, they needed to step down under pressure of work. It was a reminder that all of us on the Council fulfil what at times can be quite onerous responsibilities entirely as volunteers.

But the minutes also convey the extent of our appreciation for the development over the year of the regular Open Meetings of the Council as a Forum where villagers can deliberate together on matters of common interest or concern. Ultimately we take responsibility for the decisions made by the Council in the light of these conversations, but they have served not only to inform our decision-making but in their own right have become the source of many initiatives, which we have greatly welcomed.

The minutes have already highlighted a number of these. Some are specific to the Gower: for example, the initiative to resolve long-standing differences of view over how best to maintain the village pond or the Millennium Field. Others by their nature have involved both villages: for example, the issues associated with speeding on the villages' roads, or the emerging initiative to negotiate the return to the original categorisation of the Gower and the Ferris as Category B villages, as they were right up until 2014.

In this, there is now to be a joint initiative involving both village councils in collaboration with the Sibford Action Group to engage Cherwell District Council directly on this matter. And at Ferris Councillor Simon Rayner's initiative, the District council have also become involved in identifying options for the Speeding Group to consider developing further.

The creative invitation Norman and Mary Nash initiated - to put drivers in both villages in touch with those for whom transport in and out of the villages or between them is more problematic - is another example of the regard for the common good that makes our community so very special. At the last count the number of drivers involved had topped 30.

As I said at the meeting, it is initiatives of this kind that exemplified exactly the kind of initiatives the Gower Council has most sought to encourage and support over this last year.

Many of you reading this note will have participated in the hugely engaging and well supported Annual Parish Meeting which this year involved both Parishes. Through this note I particularly wanted to thank our colleagues on the Ferris Council for their willingness to work with us on this.

It was something of an experiment, and the more we looked into the history of the 1972 Local Government Act which underpins the declared purposes of this day, the more contradictions and anomalies we found. Within the same act, the responsibilities of Parish and Town Councils as an arm of local government are defined alongside this once-a-year Parish Meeting. The meeting is defined more as a form of direct democracy - uncommon in the United Kingdom, which primarily uses representative democracy.

The Annual Parish meeting is defined in the legislation as “a meeting of the electors of a parish” and the purpose of the meeting is for the community “to come together to discuss parish affairs”. As we discovered, over the years that has left the gate wide open for any number of interpretations up and down the country! *

Happily we did not get mired in some of the more dramatic collisions of view that have come to characterize the current debate between the direct democracy of the 2016 referendum and the responsibilities for the outcome claimed by the representative democracy of local members of Parliament. Following our experience for the very first time of coming together as two Parishes to hold a shared meeting of the community as a whole, the two councils of the Gower and the Ferris have agreed to set up a cross-parish group to continue to investigate how best to honour the spirit of the original legislation in a further developed structure and design that is continues to be actively supported by the two councils but is not led by them.

Hugh Pidgeon

Chair, Sibford Gower Parish Council

*A more detailed review of our research into the original legislation, and examples of how other parish councils have chosen to interpret it, is available from Vanessa Mulley:
sibford.gower.pc@thesibfords.org.uk

Appendix B to Minutes of SGPC Meeting – 21st May 2019

Planning Applications

Since the previous Meeting, the following planning applications had been considered and decisions received: -

Date	To be in by	App. ref	Site	Owner	Application	Comments	Council Decision
05/09/2018	26/09/2018	18/01505/LB	Barn Close, Street Through Burdrop, Burdrop, Banbury, OX15 5RQ	Mrs S Downes	Amendment to approved planning 16/01954/LB - Garage Building to include "In-line" Photovoltaic panels	Supported with no additional comments	
22/09/2018	11/10/2018	18/00374/DISC	Quince Cottage, Ponds End Lane, Sibford Gower, OX15 5RT	Ms R Watson	Discharge of conditions 4 (Slate Sample) & 5 (Brick sample) of 13/00659/LB	Supported with no additional comments	
03/10/2018	23/10/2018	18/01501/F	The Pheasant Pluckers Inn, Burdrop, Banbury, Oxon, OX15 5RQ	Mr G.R Noquet	Change of use from class A4 (ACV Listed) to class C3 dwelling house	Application not supported with various comments	
22/11/2018	12/12/2018	18/01859/F	Nicholas Corner, Burdrop, Banbury, OX15 5RQ	Mr & Mrs T Woolhouse	Demolition of existing and erection of replacement stables	we strongly recommend that due consideration is given to potential parking difficulties in regard to the Village Surgery which is accommodated adjacent to the property. This can be achieved by utilising the available track across the paddock for all vehicle movements associated with the works to be undertaken, together with any subsequent parking.	Granted subject to the conditions set out in the schedual

Date	To be in by	App. ref	Site	Owner	Application	Comments	Council Decision
22/11/2018	12/12/2018	18/01872/F	Nicholas Corner, Burdrop, Banbury, OX15 5RQ	Mr & Mrs T Woolhouse	Erection of a cabin	We strongly recommend that due consideration is given to potential parking difficulties in regard to the Village Surgery which is accommodated adjacent to the property. This can be achieved by utilising the available track across the paddock for all vehicle movements associated with the works to be undertaken, together with any subsequent parking.	Application withdrawn
21/11/2018	10/12/2018	18/00441/DISC	Barn Close, Street Through Burdrop, Burdrop, Banbury, OX15 5RQ	Mrs S Downes	Discharge conditions 4 (external walls and roof materials), 5 (stone sample), 8 (proposed rooflights) and 9 (hard landscaping treatments) of 16/01953/F	No comments	

Date	To be in by	App. ref	Site	Owner	Application	Comments	Council Decision
21/12/2018	10/12/2018	18/01935/LB	Barn Close, Street Through Burdrop, Burdrop, Banbury, OX15 5RQ	Mrs S Downes	Amendment to form and layout of Barn staircase as previously approved under 16/01953/F and 16/01954/LBC for use by partially disabled users and addition of ground floor bathroom for disabled use.	We note the term "residential amenity" in the planning application (p3) and consider that greater clarity would be helpful in regard to anticipated useage. Perhaps this could be addressed through an appropriate condition.	Granted subject to the conditions set out in the schedual
30/11/2018	19/12/2018	18/00346/TCA	The Court House, Main Street, Sibford Gower, Banbury, OX15 5RW	Mrs Ann Walker	T1 x Yew cube - Fell T2 x Holly - Fell to near ground level, treat stump to discourage re-growth	Supported	No further comments or objections
27/12/2018	14/01/2019	18/02159/F	Methodist Chapel, Temple Mill Rd, Sibford Gower, OX15 5RX	Mr N Alcraft	Alterations to & conversion of existings redundant chapel to residential use & alterations to front boundry wall to create single parking space	Supported	Application permitted
			Woodhall, Backside Lane,		Variation of condition 2 of 17/02579/F - Make minor amendments to the approved scheme, including the removal of the proposed loft conversion, dormer windows & balcony, along with small amendments to the internal	No objections to this	Granted subject to the conditions set out in the

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Date	To be in by	App. ref	Site	Owner	Application	Comments	Council Decision
03/01/2019	14/01/2019	18/02142/F	Burdrop Farmhouse Acre Ditch, Sibford Gower, OX15 5RN	Mr Chris Hall	Addition of two conservation rooflights	This application is directly related to the provision of emergency means of escape, as required by Building Regulations, and is to be resolved by the relevant Planning Officer	Granted subject to the conditions set out in the schedule
13/03/2019	02/04/2019	19/00077/TCA	Cedarholme, Bonds End Lane, Sibford Gower, OX15 5RT	Mr David Ballard	lowest branches overhanging neighbours property and resting on their slate roof, prune other low branches to maintain symmetry and balance	No Comment	No further comments or objections
29/03/2019	19/04/2019	19/00485/LB	Goodmays Burdrop Banbury OX15 5RQ	Ms Nicola Heales	Reinstatement of the partition and door to the dining room; reinstatement of the ceiling to the master bedroom (bedroom 1); and reinstatement of correct detailing to the chimneys etc	No Comment	

Appendix C to Minutes of SGPC Meeting – 21st May 2019

Cheques issued/Bank Transfers made

Date	Cheque No.	Amount	Payee	Details	
20/02/2019	BACS	£102.00	OALC	Clerks year training	
27/02/2019	BACS	£138.97	OALC	Subscription	
07/03/2019	BACS	£656.95	Vanessa Mulley	Wages Dec-Feb	
	BACS	£46.72	Vanessa Mulley	Expenses	
08/03/2019	BACS	£804.75	Greenbarnes Ltd	Noticeboard	
		1	£400.00	Village Hall	Donation
		2	£200.00	Sibford Scene	Donation
		3	£100.00	Sibford Gower Primary	Donation
22/03/2019	BACS	£33.43	SFPC	Share of Internet services	
	BACS	£100.00	SFPC	50% share burial charge	
25/03/2019	BACS	£252.56	Opus Property Services Ltd	Install notice board	
	BACS	£48.05	Cherwell Council	Emptying of Dog bin x 1	

No.	Date	Cheque No.	Amount	Payee	Details
53	05/04/2019	Bacs	£126.60	Thomas Fox	Mowing of churchyard 27/03/19
54		Bacs	£110.99	LexisNexis	The Bible
55	13/05/2019	Bacs	£72.00	W.C. & E.F. Lovesey & Sons	Mowing of Millenium Field paths x 2