

Sibford Gower Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on **Tuesday 10th December 2019** at 7.30pm in the ICT Suite Sibford Gower Endowed Primary School.

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

In attendance: The Clerk, Vanessa Mulley and 15 other members of the community.

Introduction

All attending residents were welcomed by the Chair

No new Declarations of Pecuniary Interest were made.

Meeting Recordings

No requests received to record the meeting.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

3 councillors present were happy with the minutes from the last meeting but Cllr Pidgeon requested that two amendments be noted as below by way of update to two matters minuted at the previous meeting

- Burial Ground - Cllr. Ransom will be sharing her expertise regarding the upkeep of the area as previously noted, but the council are now seeking professional help with this and other areas of the village to ensure we are making the best of those areas and to provide the Council with options on their maintenance (see notes under **Assets and Services** below).

Cllr Pidgeon had anticipated at the previous meeting that he would be presenting a report on the updating of documentation and procedures associated with the Burial Ground, but wanted to involve the Councillors of the Ferris Council fully before doing so. The Gower Council presently takes entire responsibility for the management of the Burial Ground, and liaison with Funeral Directors, but the Ferris Council shares 50% of the fees and contributes to 50% of the long term costs.

- Millenium Field - The Gower Council had originally proposed a joint working group with the Town Estate Charity on the field's maintainance. Cllr Pidgeon referred to correspondence with Peter Morgan in which he reported that the trustees felt that maintenance and management of the field were entirely the responsibility of the Parish Council, and that the Council should get on with the job as they saw fit, subject only to the proviso that the Charity, having agreed to make grants to fund 50% of the relevant costs incurred by the Council, should be notified if any decisions or plans on the maintenance / management regime would lead to be any significant additional costs.

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 5th September 2019 accommodating these updates and changes will now be approved and signed at the next meeting, a planning committee meeting to be held on 14th January 2020.

Correspondence

A formal letter of resignation has been received by the Chair from Vanessa Mulley, our clerk. Vanessa is needing to step down from her role to achieve a better balance in her work commitments

and will be formally stepping down from her role at the end of March 2020. The Council will be seeking a replacement and adverts for the vacancy will be issued before the end of the year.

Vanessa has kindly agreed to be on hand to support the transition to a new clerk taking office, and to offer them help and guidance as needed. Cllr Pidgeon spoke warmly of the Councillors' indebtedness to Vanessa over the last year and a half for the scrupulous way she has managed the whole organisation of the Council to date. The view was echoed by other councillors speaking of their appreciation of Vanessa's work during this time, and anticipated that they would be taking occasion to thank her more fulsomely towards the end of her period in office in March 2020..

Cllr. Pidgeon had also received an e-mail from Claire Buller, assistant to Mr Nick Graham, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer for Oxfordshire County Council following an extensive investigation of the Code of Conduct Complaint that had been made against him earlier in the year by Mr and Mrs Noquet, owners of the former Bishop Blaize. The e-mail was accompanied by a full report in which Cllr Pidgeon was entirely exonerated from all charges made against him, and which Cllr Pidgeon passed on to the safe keeping of the Clerk.

The report remains confidential, but the summary email was read out in full to those present by the Clerk. The report found that there had not been a breach of the Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer had concluded, together with the Independent Persons consulted, that the matter did not warrant any further investigation into those matters raised by Mr and Mrs Noquet, and had been declared closed.

Assets & Services

There are 4 main areas of the village which fall under assets and some of the do require skilled maintenance and oversight. Cllr. Ransom had previously shared her thoughts regarding these areas and the Council had concluded that due to the nature of these areas a professional approach is required. An initial meeting has taken place between Cllr Pidgeon and Jeremy Sacha of Sacha Barnes, a company which Cllr. Ransom has worked with in the past. Provisions for the financial provision of this service have been allocated into next years budget and Jeremy Sacha is keen to work with the council, and subject to the approval of the Council would be reporting on his suggestions for the maintenance and upkeep of the identified areas in the future, notably the Millenium Field and the Churchyard and Burial Ground.

The council voted unanimously in favour of proceeding with Jeremy.

Finance

Banking – Details of the last quarter's payments were not discussed at the meeting however, details of all payments made can be located in Appendix A.

Grants & Donations – Small changes have been made on last years donations list as set out in the Donation & Grants proposal which was available to view by those present and is now also available on the website

The council voted unanimously in favour of proceeding with the donations identified in the Proposal and the Clerk will make these payments in the New Year.

Budget – Cllr Allen presented a budget for the forthcoming year in accordance with the the Council's financial Regulations. This which was available to view by those present and is now also available on the website. He reported that the Council had accumulated a surplus of funds this year with a few savings having been made with the clerk's expenses, a reduction in our insurance premium and a

larger VAT-refund than previously expected. An additional cut was made to the millennium field this year which did incur an extra cost, but all in all he reported the budget to be in good shape. The Chair expressed his appreciation of the meticulous work done by Cllr Allen and Vee Mulley in managing and overseeing the Council's financial affairs.

The Council is also required at this juncture of the year to notify Cherwell District Council of its Parish Precept Requirement for the coming year and Cllr Allen indicated that there will be a very slight increase to next year's budget which will result in a 2% increase in the precept, thus achieving an approximately neutral year-end balance with the Budget just proposed.

The council voted unanimously in favour of the budget proposal. and identified precept requirement.

Defibrillator – This will be funded from our reserves as well as grants and provision has been made within the next budget for consumable for the unit. A resident wished to be certain we had a location for the unit before we requested grants as this had been an issue some years back. Cllr. Allen confirmed a location had already been agreed with the Village Hall.

A resident wished to know what the reserves were standing at currently and details of this were confirmed by Cllr. Allen.

Planning

Applications – A list of newly received notices of outcomes on planning applications can be located in Appendix B

Hook Norton Road Development – John Perris from the Sibfords Action Group was welcomed by the Chair to the meeting as the Council's guest. He spoke to those present with a brief update. The appeal against the development has been granted which seems to be as a result of the determination by Cherwell District Council in 2014 for planning purposes to have the Gower, the Ferris and Burdrop to be classified as a single self-sustaining Category A village equivalent to Bloxham or Deddington. John spoke about the possible ways that this decision could be revoked but both avenues were likely to be difficult, costly and protracted. During the hearing, it was agreed that there was some uncertainty regarding why exactly we were now classed as a category A village, but this was not a matter which they could resolve. John kindly ran through other points which had been raised at the hearing.

A resident was concerned to know what could be done to change the category status and it was confirmed that members of the Gower and Ferris Councils are looking into this. A review by CDC is due sometime during 2020 but the date of these keeps getting put back.

Cllr. Allen wished to know why during the hearing it seemed one councillor could trump another and John confirmed that it was a difficult situation as aspects are subject to an individual opinion. The situation regarding the appeal now lies with CDC and the Sibford Action Group are waiting to hear how they will be proceeding. A resident who had experience appeals of this nature before thanked John and the group for their hard work. He felt that achieving a reclassification of the villages would be a difficult one and was pessimistic that we would have much joy in reversing the 2014 decision.

Highways & Footpaths

Cllr. Ransom raised some issues regarding paths, and it was recommended that she discuss these further with the villages' Footpath Warden, Ian Sharp. She also asked if anything could be done

regarding the weeds covering the footpaths by the crossroads as these combined with the rats were making things difficult for children and their parent. The clerk recommended it be logged on Fix My Street. Since the meeting the area has been cleared.

Community Development

Plastic Free Sibford – Pam Ascott spoke to those present with an update following a meeting held for residents who are keen to reduce their usage. The editor of the Sibford Scene who attended the meeting has dedicated a page in the Scene to the cause and will be sharing findings and ideas with the village. Pam spoke regarding the possibility of increasing the number of trees planted within the village and has some interesting thoughts regarding people sponsoring them. Conversations have taken place with the Woodland Trust who will be helping with this issue. However, Pam would welcome any suggestions as to possible locations for new trees., Ways to reduce plastic within the village are still ongoing.

A resident commented on how reasonably priced the trees purchased from the Woodland Trust were and recommended using them when sourcing. Cllr. Pidgeon thought that the whole issue of plastic reduction could be made a good theme for a re-designed Annual Community Meeting in May.

Annual Parish Meeting

Those residents present offered a generally favourable response to the experimental format of last year's meeting although the Chair acknowledged that a format that involved representation from nearly every organisation, institution, club or group in the two parishes would not be easy to replicate.

Cllr Mallows observed that the format had provided an excellent opportunity to showcase the current wide range of village activities, but identified a number of reservations, namely that the design of the evening's event did not offer a structured forum in which residents could properly discuss particular matters of common concern. Cllr Pidgeon pointed out that the original intention of the creators of the Annual Parish meeting in the original 1971 Local Government Act had been to provide in statute exactly such a forum, but that it should be a forum under the direction of electors themselves rather than be a meeting organised by the Parish Council.

A conversation then followed between Cllr Meadows and Cllr Pidgeon, in which Cllr Meadows questioned whether the concept of leaving the broader community to devise an appropriate format would ensure the necessary focus and objectivity required. A resident expressed some concern that the previous format had offered greater opportunity for residents to discuss particular issues with the Parish Council.

A further reservation addressed was whether in the light of recent planning decisions, involving both Councils as one community might appear to weaken the importance both to the Ferris and the Gower of maintaining a clear differentiation between their two councils. A counter-view was offered by another resident that the two issues were quite separate. Cllr Pidgeon expressed his warm appreciation for the wide range of views expressed, and anticipated both that more thought needed to be given to the matter, and that he would be discussing the matter further with the councillors of the Ferris Council.

Sibford Speeding Group – Richard Irons spoke to those present to update us on the group's progress. Newsletters are being written as a way of getting the word out into the community and will contain information regarding areas of concern, suggestions etc. The group is looking at a softer

approach to combatting speeding. They are looking to validate current problem areas and will be looking at measuring speeding to ensure what they believe is correct before moving forward with proposals and funding requests.

Signs have already been put up along the Colony road although sadly two of these have already been vandalized. Sibford School are working with the group and they are hoping to get the students involved wherever possible.

Cllr. Ransom feels very strongly about this issue and feels that the school area is a major congestion zone during school hours and a speeding zone should be established during the evening. She would like to look at possible areas where additional parking could be provided for teachers and staff who are having to park on the road. Insufficient parking available at school has been a problem for some time, and should be addressed as part of the same issue. A resident reminded the Council that in some circumstances, cars being parked along a road actually contributed to reducing the speed of passing vehicles, but it was agreed that the School was a special case in point.

Cllr Pidgeon thanked the group for the initiative they were taking on behalf of the community. The group's next meeting is planned for some time in February.

Council Town Estate Charity Nominations – Following several applications for the trustee position made vacant by Liz Hawkes stepping down from the Trust's Board, the council put forward Joan Broady as the Council's nominee as the SGPC appointed trustee to take her place. Cllr Pidgeon reported that he had spoken with two others of the SGPC appointed trustees on the Board whose current term had come to an end and confirmed their wish to continue as trustees for another term another 4-year period. The Council put forward their re-nomination for approval, and voted unanimously in favour of all three of these nominations.

As an aspect of the Council's nominations to the Town Estate Board of trustees, Cllr Pidgeon reported that the Council had introduced a condition in their acceptance of the Council's nomination that they participate twice a year in a meeting of a newly created liaison group between themselves and the Gower Councillors which the Councillors hope will further enhance the working relationship between the Trust and the Council.

Future Meetings

Next Open Meeting – Tuesday 10th March 2020 and 14th January 2020 for planning committee

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.23pm

Signed.....

Dated.....

APPENDICES

Appendix A to Minutes of SGPC Meeting – 10th December 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
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	
25/06/2019	23/07/2019	19/01101/LB	Stickleys House, Main Street, Sibford Gower, Banbury, OX15 5RT	Mr S. Gommersall	Relocation of staircase, minor internal alterations associated with staircase and alterations to a single window and external door	No Comment	Withdrawn
09/08/2019	30/08/2019	19/01387/F	Muddle Farm Barn, Colony Road, Sibford Gower, OX15 5RY	Mr & Mrs Besterman	Variation of Condition 2 (plans) of 16/01563/F - alterations to the design of the replacement dwelling; the construction of a replacement outbuilding; provision of a new 2m high wall; demolition of two bays of a stable built	No Comment	Grants subject to conditions

Date	To be in by	App. ref	Site	Owner	Application	Comments	Council Decision
02/09/2019	ASAP	19/01792/TCA	Nicholas Corner Street Through Burdrop Burdrop OX15 5RQ	Mrs Imogen Woolhouse	T1 x 13m Ash - To be pollarded to previous pruning points, approximately 4m off.	No Comment	No further comments or objections
16/09/2019	ASAP	19/01850/TCA	Holy Trinity Church Acre Ditch Sibford Gower	Rev. R. Hawkes	T1 x Holly - Fell	No Comment	No further comments or objections
13/10/2019	04/11/2019	19/02129/F	Methodist Chapel Temple Mill Road Sibford Gower OX15 5RX	Mr. N. Alcraft	Variation of condition 2 (application form) 3 (windows doors & rooflights) 4 (timber storage shed) 7 (remedial stonework) of 18/02159/F - Condition 2. Make minor amendments to scheme outlined in attached drawings. Condition 3. Details of proposed new windows and rooflights	No Comment	
15/10/2019	05/11/2019	19/02255/TCA	Temple Close, Temple Mill Road	Mrs Victoria Pougatch	T1 x Box tree - Remove as causing wall to bulge by up to 8" on a shared driveway.	No Comment	

Date	To be in by	App. ref	Site	Owner	Application	Comments	Council Decision
01/11/2019	25/11/2019	19/02432/TCA	Meadow Cottage, 6 The Colony, Colony Road, Sibford Gower, OX15 5RT	Mr Irons	Removal of 8 x trees	No Comment	No further comments or objections
N/A	N/A	19/01956/TCA	Brent, Main Street, Sibford Gower, OX15 5RT	Mr K Pratt	Removal and reduction of trees and shrubs	N/A	No further comments or objections
06/11/2019	21/11/2019	19/02394/CLUE	Nicholas Corner Burdrop OX15 5RQ	Mr Thomas Woolhouse	Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use for a C3 residential dwellinghouse to confirm the extents of land within the residential curtilage of the property	Given that this information has already been determined through Planning Application 16/01576/CLUE, dated 19th October 2016, we are both surprised and curious that further clarification is being sought through the current application.	

Date	To be in by	App. ref	Site	Owner	Application	Comments	Council Decision
25/11/2019	27/12/2019	19/02556/F	The Piggery, 5 The Colony, Colony Road, Sibford Gower, OX15 5RY	Ms Caroline Tucker	Proposed new double garage with ancillary accommodation above	In seeking to avoid any suggestion of the new building being identified as an independent new property, we would ask for an appropriate condition linking it to The Piggery. Subject to the above condition, we recommend approval.	

Appendix B to Minutes of SGPC Meeting – 05th September 2019

Cheques issued/Bank Transfers made

No.	Date	Cheque No.	Amount	Payee	Details
73	09/09/2019	Bacs	£673.83	Vanessa Mulley	Wages
74		Bacs	£24.96	Vanessa Mulley	Expenses
75	11/09/2019	Bacs	£253.20	Thomas Fox	Mow churchyard, 30/07, 14/08
76	13/09/2019	Bacs	£156.50	Sibford Ferris PC	50% burial Fee
77	26/09/2019	Bacs	£72.00	W.C. & E.F. Lovesey & Sons	Mow paths 8/8, 26/8
78	03/10/2019	Bacs	£253.20	Thomas Fox	Mow churchyard 28/08, 11/09
79	14/10/2019	Bacs	£60.06	CDC	Dog bin emptying 26 weeks
80		Bacs	£36.00	W.C. & E.F. Lovesey & Sons	Mow paths 19/9
81	06/11/2019	Bacs	£379.80	Thomas Fox	Mow churchyard 25/09, 09/10, 23/10
82	18/11/2019	Bacs	£288.00	W.C. & E.F. Lovesey & Sons	Mill field 23/10
83	02/12/2019	Bacs	£689.76	Thomas Fox	wild area 6/11, annual shrub cut back 20/11
84	16/12/2019	Bacs	£840.00	W.C. & E.F. Lovesey & Sons	Hedge Trimming 20/11