

Sibford Gower Parish Council
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held in Sibford Gower Endowed Primary School on Wednesday, 4th July 2012

Present

Parish Cllrs Mrs Gilian Soden, Peter Abbott, Oswyn Murray (Chairman), and Alan Parkin.
County and District Councillor George Reynolds, Mrs Maureen Hicks (Sibford Ferris PC), Three Local Electors and the Clerk.

Cherwell Local Plan

District Cllr George Reynolds reported on the Cherwell Local Plan and a final version is still not available but is anticipated that it will be published in the Autumn. Included in it will be the number of new houses to be built and where they will go. He said that some will certainly be allocated to the Sibfords. The Chairman proposed two points in response to the Plan: that the allocation of housing between villages should be proportionate to their existing size, and that the Sibfords should be regarded as a village cluster to include surrounding villages, as in the case of Cropredy. These were accepted for passing to Cherwell District Council.

Minutes

Proposed by Cllr Alan Parkin and seconded by Cllr Peter Abbott, the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1st May 2012 were approved and then signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising which were not discussed later in the meeting relating to agenda items.

Parish Council Vacancy

With regard to the vacancy following Roger Alder's move from the Parish, notification had been received from Cherwell District Council that no requests had been received for an election to fill the vacancy. Consequently, the Parish Councillors will now consider the matter of co-opting a new member.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman had nothing to report at this stage of the Meeting apart from the matter of the Swalcliffe Exchange Broadband Users Group and this is given at Appx A.

Sibfords Community Plan

Mrs Sue Mattinson gave the following report with regard to the final stages of the development of the Community Plan:-

The outline programme for the development of the Final Community Plan Report has slipped as there have been delays in finalising some of the Working Group reports. It is anticipated that the First Draft of the Community Plan will now be available in mid to late July after which it will be made available for review and consultation by the Parish Councils and also ORCC, CDC and OCC. The report will also be posted on the Sibfords website to enable the Sibford's community to have the opportunity to review and comment on the document. Alternatively, on request, it can be sent to people's e-mail address but will be in PDF format. A limited number of hard copies will be made available for those unable to access the document online. This information and how to access the document will be included in the next Newsletter and also in the Sibford Scene.

Following a review of the comments received, and subsequent revisions to the draft document to take account of the feedback on the report, a Final Report will be produced for presentation and approval at a public meeting and adoption by the Parish Councils.

It is anticipated that the document will be published in September 2012. The Community Plan will include a range of 'Next Steps', actions and potential initiatives linked to the principal topics that the Working Groups have been examining. These will comprise items and initiatives for implementation by the Parish Councils, and a separate but complementary range of initiatives for implementation by volunteers and interest groups within the community.

Clerk's Report

The Clerk learned at the recent Parish Liaison Meeting at Bodicote House that every Parish Council should have a set of standing orders. Consequently, advised by the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, a list appropriate to a small Parish Council had been compiled, and proposed by Cllr Oswyn Murray and seconded by Cllr Gilian Soden, it was resolved that Standing Orders for the Parish Council (as set out in Appx B) should be adopted.

The Clerk reported that Mrs Maureen Hicks (Ferris PC Member and on behalf of the Roads, Traffic, Footpaths and Bridleways Group of the Sibfords Community Plan) had provided some of the comments from the Community Plan questionnaires highlighting a number of issues relating to Highways and Footpaths for the Ferris and Gower Parish Councils to consider. Those relating to the Gower will have the attention of the Gower Parish Council.

New Code of Conduct

Proposed by Cllr Peter Abbott and seconded by Cllr Gilian Soden the following resolution was passed:-

1. the code of conduct adopted by the Cherwell District Council be adopted as the code for members and co-opted members of the Sibford Gower Parish Council with effect from 4 July 2012 to replace the current code of conduct; and
2. the Clerk be requested to notify the Monitoring Officer of the Cherwell District Council of the passing of the above resolution.

The Code of Conduct is given at Appx C

Financial Matters

External Auditors BDO completed the external audit for the year ended 31st March 2012, and there were no matters that came to their attention that required the issuing of a separate additional issues arising report apart from the fact that there was a £1 rounding up difference. The Annual Return was presented to the Council and proposed by Cllr Peter Abbott and seconded by Cllr Alan Parkin it was approved and accepted. The notice of the conclusion of the Audit has been displayed on the Parish Council notice board and will remain there for the requisite period of fourteen days.

Proposed by Cllr Oswyn Murray and seconded by Cllr Gilian Soden it was resolved that the following payments were approved:-

Cheque No. 153 £400.00 dated 17.05.12. made payable to Sibford Village Hall in respect of grant monies received from Cherwell District Council and passed on towards the expenditure involved in entertainments for the enjoyment of local residents to mark The Queen's Diamond Jubilee.
(Retrospectively)

Cheque No. 154 £625.00 dated 23.05.12 made payable to Holy Trinity Church being a grant towards the costs of maintaining the Churchyard. (Retrospectively)

Cheque No. 155 £100.00 dated 23.05.12 made payable to Thames Valley and Chilterns Air Ambulance Trust by way of a donation. (Retrospectively)

Cheque No. 156 £156.00 dated 21.06.12 made payable to SLCC Enterprises Ltd being the cost of a course re Allotments to be attended by the Clerk (Retrospectively)

Cheque No. 157 £162.00 dated 30.06.12 made payable to BDO being the cost of the annual External Audit (Retrospectively)

Planning Matters

The undermentioned planning applications had been received for consideration. Objections were raised to the first and approval given in respect of the other two:-

No. 12/00678/F Bishops End, Burdrop Mr & Mrs Noquet
Change of use of a vacant public house to C3 residential

No. 12/00637/F Five Corners, Shutford Road, Sibford Gower Mrs S Tompkins
Part change of use of agricultural barn to stables

No. 12/00145/TCA Temple Close, Temple Mill Road, Sibford Gower Mrs V Pougatch
1 x American Walnut – lift by 5m, 10% thin and deadwood.
2 x Spruce – fell.
3 x Group of Prunus, Tilia and Fagus – lift by 3m

Highway Matters

The potholes in Hawkes Lane had been filled but action is still awaited in respect of the condition of the Surgery road. The Clerk is in contact with Oxfordshire Highways in this regard.

Following heavy rain, water is escaping from the land of a property in Surgery Road onto Hawkes Lane causing damage to the road surface. The Clerk was instructed to liaise with the property owners and Oxfordshire Highways in an attempt to resolve matters.

Footpath Matters

No matters were raised.

Public Participation

No matters were raised.

Any other Matters

No matters were raised.

Date of Next Meeting

The next Meeting will be on Monday, 1st October 2012 starting at 8pm in the Staff Room of Sibford Gower Endowed Primary School.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked all present for attending and closed the Meeting at 9.29pm.

Osgood Murray

1st Oct 2012

Appx A Swalcliffe Exchange Broadband Users Group

Report on telephone conversation 19.4.2012 with Lisa Michelson, in charge of Oxon broadband strategy, tel 01865-815673.

Our last previous contact was 23rd Jan 2012, when she promised to get back in touch with me, but failed to do so, because the information remains much as it was then. This is the situation:

Commercial companies are expected to roll out next generation access at 24mbps to 72% of the county, leaving a gap of 38%. The Oxon CC has funding of £14m to help close this gap, and expects to raise coverage to 90%.

This will be done by competitive tender to telecom companies, and it is not possible to say which exchanges or areas will be left out in the end, because that will depend on the exact nature of the contract entered into. However the OCC is unlikely to accept tenders that leave out whole areas of the county: more likely is specific scattered exchanges that for one reason or another are especially expensive to upgrade. Therefore we cannot know if the Swalcliffe area will be included until the final agreement of tenders.

One important factor for the county is the number of public entities in an area, especially primary schools, because the Oxon community network they rely on at present will be abandoned. Therefore it is important for our group especially to contact all primary head teachers on the Swalcliffe exchange (and any other OCC public bodies), and list them in our returns in a separate public authority category.

Even beyond these initiatives the aim of the OCC is one way or another to provide a minimum 2mbps.

Other sources of funding

The Deddington initiative with BT announced last week is completely separate from all this: they won a national competition as a trial area. Lucky them.

Cotswolds Broadband has put together a bid for DEFRA funding, centred on Chipping Norton. This is based on fibre optic cable. The DEFRA process (which aims to cover the areas where neither private initiative nor local authority funding helps) is fiendishly complex, but Lisa is sending me info on this which I will share. She is also about to discuss their bid with the Chipping Norton group: apparently they are interested in expanding their service. If we want to pursue DEFRA funding we should talk first with this group.

The DEFRA next round occurs officially in May, but they are in chaos, and we cannot anyway be ready for that deadline I guess – nor given the possibility of still being included in the OCC scheme does it seem very sensible for us to proceed far in this direction.

Lisa said that our activity in collecting user info, and dividing it between three categories of public, business and private will be very helpful for the OCC tender process, and my guess is if we can present it properly might be used as a model and so push us up the attention ladder. So we need to continue to gather info and make it as complete as possible. Lisa will let us know when to send it in.

This is all the info I have at present, but we should clearly push ahead as fast as possible in gathering info. If there are any obvious gaps on which I can help, please let me know.

Oswyn Murray, Chairman of Sibford Gower PC

**Standing Orders adopted by
Sibford Gower Parish Council**

(Resolution passed at Parish Council Meeting held on 4th July 2012)

- a Meetings shall not take place in premises, which at the time of the meeting, are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.

- b When calculating the 3 clear days for notice of a meeting to councillors and the public, the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning shall not count.

- c Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.

- d Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is not permitted without the Council's prior (written) consent.

- e In accordance with standing order 1(c) above, the press shall be provided reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.

- f Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman (if any).

- g The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.

- h All questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors present and voting thereon.**
- i The Chairman may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.**
- j Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on any question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a Councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.**
- k The minutes of a meeting shall record the names of councillors present and absent.**
- l The code of conduct adopted by the Council shall apply to councillors in respect of the entire meeting.**
- m An interest arising from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, the existence and nature of which is required to be disclosed by a Councillor at a meeting shall be recorded in the minutes.**
- n No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than 3.**

- o **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be adjourned. Any outstanding business of a meeting so adjourned shall be transacted at a following meeting.**

The Council's Clerk shall do the following.

- i. **Sign and serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council at least 3 clear days before the meeting.**
- ii. **Give public notice of the time, date, venue agenda at least 3 clear days before a meeting of the Council (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**
- iii. **Convene a meeting of full Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office. Make available for inspection the minutes of meetings.**
- iv. **Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.**
- v. **Receive and retain declarations of acceptance of office from councillors.**

Financial

**Cheques to be issued shall be signed by three of any of the following:-
Members of the Parish Council
The Clerk**

Appx C

Sibford Gower Parish Council

Code of Members' Conduct

1. This code of conduct is adopted pursuant to the council's duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members¹ of the council.
2. This code applies to you as a member or co-opted member of this council when you act in that role and it is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this code.

Selflessness

3. You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself.

Objectivity

4. In carrying out public business you must make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

Accountability

5. You are accountable for your decisions and actions to the public and must submit yourself to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office.

Openness

6. You must be as open as possible about your actions and those of your council, and must be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

Honesty and integrity

7. You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned, must not behave improperly and must on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

Leadership

8. You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterised by the above requirements, by leadership and example in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.

General Obligations

9. You must treat others with respect and ensure that you are aware of and comply with all legal obligations that apply to you as a member or co-opted member of the council and act within the law;

10. You must not bully any person.

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¹ A "co-opted member" for the purpose of this code is, as defined in the Localism Act section 27 (4) "a person who is not a member of the council but who
a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the council, or
b) is a member of, and represents the council on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the council;
and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub committee".

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11. You must not do anything that compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of the council.

12. You must not disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you of which you are aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature except where:
 - (i) you have the consent of a person authorised to give it;
 - (ii) you are required by law to do so;
 - (iii) the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person, or
 - (iv) the disclosure is:
 - a) reasonable and in the public interest;
 - b) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the council.

13. You must not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of your role as a member for your own personal advantage.

14. When making decisions on behalf of or as part of the council you must have regard to any professional advice provided to you by the council's officers.

15. When using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the council:
 - (i) you must act in accordance with the council's reasonable requirements;
 - (ii) you must make sure that you do not use resources improperly for political purposes and do not use them at all for party political purposes.

REGISTERING AND DECLARING INTERESTS

16. You must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify the council's monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State, where the pecuniary interest is yours, your spouse's or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom you are living with as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners.

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17. You must disclose the interest at any meeting of the council at which you are present, where you have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a ‘sensitive interest’².
18. Following any disclosure of an interest not on the council’s register or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the monitoring officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.
19. Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State. You must withdraw from the room or chamber when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter.

² A “sensitive interest” is described in the Localism Act 2011 as a member or co-opted member of a council having an interest, and the nature of the interest being such that the member or co-opted member, and the council’s monitoring officer, consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to the member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.