

# Sibford Gower Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7pm** via Zoom video conferencing

Present: Cllr Pidgeon, Cllr Mallows, Cllr Allen, Cllr Berks, Cllr Pougatch.

In attendance: 6 members of the public, Clerk, County and District Cllr Reynolds, District Cllr Chapman.

## **Business**

- 1. Election of Chairman** – Cllr Pidgeon welcomed those present, and indicated that after 3 years as Chair of the Gower Council he thought it was time he stepped aside in favour of the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair rotating periodically and allowing for fresh perspectives; so this would now be his last meeting as Chair with just the one task to fulfil – to invite nominations for the role of Chair. It was proposed and agreed to elect Cllr Allen as the Chair. Cllr Allen completed his Declaration of Acceptance of office.
- 2. Election of Vice-Chairman** – Cllr Allen thanked Cllr Pidgeon for the dedication and hard work he had brought to the Council and invited nominations for the role of Vice-Chair. It was proposed and agreed to elect Cllr Mallows as the Vice-Chair of the Council.
- 3. Review of 2020-21** – Cllr Pidgeon advised that this would also be the last online meeting as the temporary legislation that had allowed Parish Councils to hold electronic meetings since the beginning of the pandemic was to expire at midnight that evening: a resource that the Government had determined would no longer be available to Parish Councils for their public meetings. Cllr Pidgeon commented on the impact the pandemic had had, particularly on the original aspirations the Council had had over the previous 3 years to foster increasing levels of participation from the community in the Council's deliberations, and to provide a forum for any issues or concerns people might wish to raise. This had proved very difficult to sustain with the restrictions involved, and the limitations of online conferencing. Cllr Pidgeon pointed out that in practice the greater part of the Council's work happens behind the scenes and would not always be obvious from the minutes. He cited the example of the work that is involved simply in developing and preparing the accounting statements and submitting these for year-end audit, for which Cllr Pidgeon expressed his thanks to Cllr Allen and the Clerk for their hard work to get all documents together and the audit completed with no issues raised. He also wanted to highlight the largely invisible but meticulous work Cllr Mallows regularly brought to investigating and reviewing planning applications received by Council and providing recommendations for responses. He highlighted as a further example, the response made recently by Cllr Berks to an emergency call from a parishioner who had pointed out the recent incursion of raw sewage from the drains on Pound Lane, and thanked Cllr Berks for the swiftness of his response. And he made mention of the quiet and largely unnoticed support provided many families in the exercise of the Council's responsibility for the Burial Ground. Cllr Pidgeon concluded his review by commenting on the wider network of District Council and County Council activity underpinning and extending the Parish councils ability to respond to the needs of the community. He expressed himself glad of the opportunity to express his particular appreciation on behalf of the Gower Council to the two Cherwell District Councillors present for their constancy and support, and to Tim Huckvale - also present in the meeting - for his support to the council through his management of the village website. Together with Tony Skowronski's editorship of the Sibford Scene, the Council was indebted to them both for the extended level of outreach they made possible.

- 4. Pre-view of 2021-22** – Cllr Allen advised that meetings will take place over the next few weeks with stakeholders in relation to the landscape management of the Millennium Field, and the Churchyard and Burial Ground. The management of Highway Verges and the Miriam Tebbs Land are also under review. In the coming weeks and months the PC will also be looking to establish ownership of the benches around the village, will complete more research in relation to their decision to apply for an ACV on the Blaze Inn Saddles, and will consider a response to a consultation regarding a nursery provision at the local school. Cllr Pidgeon is working with Cllr Wass of Sibford Ferris Parish Council (SFPC) to organise resuscitation and defibrillator training. It is hoped to hold a ‘village showcase’ meeting later in the year which will allow village groups to ‘showcase’ what is available in the parish. Cllr Allen expressed his thanks to the SSG for their help over the previous year during the pandemic and advised that lessons learned from this group will be used to inform an Emergency Plan for the parish. Cllr Allen suggested that the time might now be appropriate for the community to commence consideration of the implications of climate change in the parish, perhaps learning lessons from the Hook Norton Low Carbon group.

*Cllr Chapman left the meeting @ 7:30pm.*

*Item 11 was discussed at this point due to Cllr Reynolds needing to leave the meeting.*

*Cllr Reynolds left the meeting at 7:42pm.*

- 5. Apologies for absence** – None.
- 6. Members declarations of interest for items on the agenda** – None.
- 7. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council (PC) meetings held on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021** – The minutes were proposed and agreed.
- 8. Outstanding matters/actions from previous meetings** - None
- 9. Correspondence**
- i) Correspondence from parishioner asking if consideration should be made for the Wykham Arms to be registered as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) – Cllr Mallows read out the following statement – ‘The Wykham Arms has enjoyed a stable operating model, thereby providing a significant benefit to the community through its uninterrupted trading as a public house for many years. It continues to fully engage with the local community and operate successfully. There is no evidence that the acknowledged benefit to the community is currently threatened.’ The councillors support this statement and agreed that they do not feel it would be necessary to apply for an ACV on the Wykham Arms at this point in time.
- ii) Request from parishioner to look into the possibility of reducing the speed limit on Hawkes Lane between Sibford Gower and Sibford Ferris – Cllr Mallows read out the following statement – ‘Following the recent query by a resident regarding the existing speed limit on Hawkes Lane between Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower through the Sib Valley, our ever-resourceful Clerk has recently contacted OCC Highways to seek further advice and guidance in this matter. Relevant information has now been received which will inform due consideration.’

The essential elements would appear to be:

- the statutory nature of the existing 60 mph speed limit separating the two villages
- the high costs involved, running into thousands of pounds, in seeking to change any existing statutory speed limit
- the affordability of meeting such costs through PC funds.

Another councillor noted that the Highways department stated that they did not feel a change to the speed limit in that area would have any impact on speeds. It was agreed that, taking account of the guidance offered by Highways it would not be worthwhile taking forward any speed reduction scheme on Hawkes Lane. Other areas such as Colony Road may be worth consideration should data become available showing that there is a speeding

problem in that area that could be improved with any of the measures that are available and affordable to a PC.

**10. Policy Updates** – Many councils review their policies at their May meeting but as SGPC have only just received the outcome of their audit and only recently implemented new policies it has been agreed that it would be more appropriate to review all policies in September. Some minor amendments to the Publication Scheme and Financial Regs were proposed and agreed with immediate effect. **Clerk to publish updated policies on website.**

**11. Feedback from District/County Councillors** – Cllr Reynolds advised that he only became aware of the significant concerns raised about the S106 allocations for the Hook Norton Road Development, particularly in relation to funding for Sibford School, at the SFPC meeting last night. Cllr Reynolds has spoken to the CEO of the Warriner Trust and she has advised that they could not get any allocation of funding because the school had spaces available therefore they were already able to provide places for children moving in to the new development without extra funding. Cllr Reynolds also advised that he believes there may be some funding becoming available later in the year to support parishes who wish to implement an advisory 20mph speed limit.

### **Assets and services**

**12. Landscape Management Proposals - Overview of progress** – As already stated in item 4 meetings will take place with stakeholders over the next few weeks.

*1 member of the public left the meeting at 7:45pm*

### **Finance**

#### **16. AGAR 20/21**

- i) To receive the internal auditor's report for 20/21 and agree any actions required - It was confirmed that the internal auditor's report has been received with no issues raised.
- ii) To complete and approve the annual governance statement for the 20/21 audit - It was proposed and agreed to tick the 'yes' box for all statements except statement 9 which is 'not applicable' and for the document to be signed.
- iii) To approve the accounting statements for the 20/21 audit - The accounting statements were approved and signed by the Chairman.
- iv) To review the analysis of variances and bank reconciliation for 20/21 – Approved.
- v) To approve completion of the Certificate of Exemption for 20/21 – The Certificate of Exemption was approved and signed by the Chairman.
- vi) To agree dates for the notice of public rights 20/21 – 3<sup>rd</sup> June to 14<sup>th</sup> July.

**13. To appoint an internal auditor for 2021/22** – It was proposed and agreed to appoint David Watson as the internal auditor for 21/22.

**14. To consider insurance arrangements for Jun 21 to May 22 – quotes received are:**

- BHIB (current provider) 1 year agreement - £277.60
- BHIB 3 year agreement – £236.77
- Zurich 1 year agreement - £331.35
- Zurich 3 year agreement - £324.82

Proposed and agreed to go with BHIB 3 year agreement. **Clerk to instruct.**

**15. Bank reconciliation as at 28.04.21: Cllr Allen confirmed the balance stated is correct.**

Bank balance: £19,118.05

Outstanding payments: £0

Outstanding income: £0

Cashbook balance: £19,118.05

**16. To note and approve the following payments and receipts since the last meeting:**

**Payments:** Proposed and agreed.

24.03.21	Kirsty Buttle	Salary & 22 hours overtime	£455.06
24.03.21	HMRC	Tax for March pay	£24.80
24.03.21	Kirsty Buttle	March expenses - Mileage	£9.27
30.03.21	Briarwood Landscape Architecture Ltd	Stage 2a of Landscape Management	£700.00
30.03.21	Opus Property Services	Maintenance work to jitty footpath	£187.20
31.03.21	OALC	Annual subscription	£146.16
31.03.21	Community First Oxfordshire	Annual membership	£55.00

Receipts: Noted.

19.04.21	CDC	Precept	£4,675.00
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## Planning

### 17. Planning applications received

**21/01052/TCA – Leasowe House, Bonds End Lane, Sibford Gower.** T1 x Yew - Crown reduction of 2.5m and raise 3.0m over footpath as shading neighbouring small garden. T2 x Beech, T3 x Lime - Raise lowest descending branching from Yew to give clearance to Yew and aid shading issue with neighbours. **No comment.** (Response made using delegated powers).

**21/01108/F – Robin Hill, Burdrop.** Conversion of existing outbuilding to living accommodation with pitched roof; single storey extension to connect to existing property; conversion of existing carport to garage with pitched roof; change existing flat roof at front of property to a pitched roof to link in with new conversion and garage (amendments to existing approval reference 18/01650/F). **No comment.**

**21/01081/F – Land East of Epwell Road, Sibford Gower.** Erection of a 15m x 25m (375 sqm) agricultural storage barn with a ridge height of 7.2m. **Sibford Gower Parish Council objects to this application.** The applicant is seeking to operate a bio-sensitive operation on this rural site, aiming to achieve organic certification. While recognising this agricultural initiative, there are a number of concerns, namely;

The scale of the proposed agricultural building in relation to the adjacent property

The size of the proposed agricultural building proportionate to the existing lavender planting and requirements for the proposed oil extraction process

The supporting information states that the building would partly be used to distil lavender oil, requiring the installation of a still, thereby indicating a partial use of the building for a purpose additional to agricultural storage.

Following a site meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> April, and subsequent attendance at our Parish Council meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> May, more detailed information has been provided by the applicant to support the application. However, a number of concerns remain, namely:

- the provision or otherwise of essential services – electricity, water – to the site
- the generation of steam power, through either bottled gas or biomass, for the lavender oil process still
- identifying the inevitable waste material/effluent generated through the extraction process, together with its subsequent removal/disposal
- identifying potential pollution issues – air, light, sound - generated through the extraction process, together with associated mitigating actions
- the proposed level of employment and acceptable working hours
- vehicle movements and parking associated with the proposed business activity

It would be helpful for the Planning Officer to be made aware of additional information to further inform these significant details.

*A member of the public left the meeting at 8:42pm.*

**21/01320/TCA – Cubbs Cottage, Street through Burdrop, Burdrop.** T1 x Picea Abies - one tree to ground level due to proximity of property (2.8m) and height (approx 10.0m). Has previously had top removed. Proposal to plant a hedge in its place along boundary wall - hedge type Aucuba Japonica and prunus Laurocerasus. **No comment.**

#### **18. Planning decisions received**

**21/00199/TCA – Bank House, Street through Burdrop.** T1 x Yew-Crown reduction by 1.5m reduce crowns to reduce spread over buildings and seating areas. T2 x Yew-Crown reduction by 1.5m reduce crowns to reduce spread over buildings and seating areas. **Approved.**

**21/00251/LB – Burdrop House, Burdrop.** Repairs to main slate roof which is leaking. Will require lifting slates and relaying, replacing felt and battens. Materials will match existing and no changes other than like for like replacement. **Approved.**

**21/00365/F - Meadow Brook House, Colony Road, Sibford Gower.** Single storey rear extension. **Approved.**

**21/00471/F - Tambun House Pound Lane Sibford Gower.** Single storey rear extension. **Approved.**

**21/00477/F - The Pheasant Pluckers Inn, Burdrop.** Erection of an agricultural barn store (re-submission of 20/03347/F). **Refused.**

**21/00472/F - Brock Cottage, Acre Ditch, Sibford Gower.** Single storey rear extension. **Approved.**

**21/00786/TCA – Stonewalls, Bonds End Lane, Sibford Gower.** T1 x Cherry-Crown reduction up to 20% ,up to 2m meters from height and crown thin. Remove all deadwood on going management. T2x Juniper- Fell to ground level. T3 x Norway Spruce- Fell to ground level. fell to allow more light in the garden and will re-place with something more suited. **Approved.**

**21/01021/DEM – Mawles Farm, Main Street, Sibford Gower.** Demolition of a small, stand-alone outbuilding, of a volume less than 115m<sup>3</sup>; such demolition being classified as permitted development under Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B. **No comment. (Response made using delegated powers). Prior Approval not required.**

**20/03601/F - West farm Cottage, Main Street, Sibford Gower.** Proposed single and two storey extensions and internal alterations. **Approved.**

- 19. Other planning issues** – The information provided by Gade Homes to SFPC has been published on the website and the councillors on both PCs have raised some concerns about the allocation of S106 funding, particularly in relation to the school. SFPC are taking forward the queries and will report back to SGPC when they have more information.

**Provisional date of next ordinary meeting – 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**Meeting closed @ 8:50pm**

Signed..... Date.....