



**DRAFT Minutes of the  
Stratton Audley Parish Annual Open Meeting  
Wednesday 14 May 2013 at 8pm  
St Mary & St Edburga Church, Stratton Audley, Oxfordshire**

**Present:**

**Chairman:** Mr Nigel Ferguson

**Clerk:** Mrs Jane Olds

**Cherwell District Council:** Cllr Barry Wood

**Oxfordshire County Council:** Cllr Mrs Catherine Fulljames

**Bicester Heritage:** Mr Dominic White

**36 Stratton Audley Residents**

**Apologies:** WPC C Brown (Thames Valley Police)

**Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Cllr Catherine Fulljames, Cllr Barry Wood and Mr Dominic White.

**Report by County Councillor Mrs Catherine Fulljames**

Cllr Fulljames thanked all those who voted for her in the recent County Council elections; this is her 25<sup>th</sup> year as a County Councillor. The elections have resulted in: 31 Conservatives, 15 Labour members, 11 Liberal Democrats, two Green Party members and four independents, three of whom were working with the Conservatives to enable the Council to function.

There are 22 villages in the Ploughley Ward which Mrs Fulljames represents.

The County Council set the Council Tax for the County in February and decided to increase their part by 1.99% (or £23.12 per Band D property per year) as they didn't feel able to cut services any further.

Issues concerning Bicester and OCC include transferring the Library services from Old Place Yard into the new Civic building in town when it is completed and the management of Bicester Community College.

Regarding transport, the Councillor is involved in the improved train line between Bicester and Oxford and the HS2 project.

Cllr Fulljames understands that high speed broadband is a requirement in rural areas and welcomed the fact that the village has a Broadband Champion.

Cllr Fulljames also mentioned the Big Society Fund and encouraged the villagers to think about a small project which would improve the village for which an application can be made.

For the last four years Cllr Fulljames has been heavily involved in the objection to, and mitigation of the effects of, the incinerator at Ardley which is going to have wider implications on the area regarding the visual aspect and the transportation of rubbish on the roads around the district.

A wider discussion about the project took place. Cllr Fulljames was the only County Councillor to object to the project which needed to be built under Government legislation to reduce landfill. It will take the domestic, non-recyclable, burnable waste from the whole county and the remainder will be commercial waste. It is hoped that the energy generated will be piped into the Eco Town. The villagers had a number of questions regarding fundamental facts and figures which Cllr Fulljames was unable to answer. This was generally disappointing and under pressure from the villagers, Cllr Fulljames agreed to report back to the Parish Council with answers.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Fulljames for her report.

#### **Report by District Councillor Barry Wood**

Cllr Wood represents the Fringford Ward which covers most of the Shelswell Benefice.

A number of important strategic points are now coming to fruition which Cllr Wood has been working on over a number of years.

He had been working on the South West Bicester homes option for ten years as this would protect the villages to the north of Bicester to retain their village status. He worked hard to ensure that RAF Bicester retain its unique heritage and gave an absolute undertaking that no new houses would be built there. This has been a difficult project because of the MOD's Crown Exemption and their desire to build on the airfield. However, CDC and English Heritage have been involved and recognised the importance of the history of the buildings and they are now all protected.

The District Council is now working on the Local Plan for the whole district which will cover the next 20 years. It has been out to consultation twice and it is hoped that it will go to the Inspector and be agreed by the end of the year.

It is planned that Bicester and Banbury will have the most growth in the District with the majority of the houses being built in these areas. However, it is not possible to say 'no' to all development within villages, but to manage it wisely.

The Plan recognises that towns must be sustainable and most development should take place where there is the social infrastructure to support the housing (ie shops, schools etc).

The District Council is also the local housing authority. It relies on housing associations to house families in need, but there are still 4,000 families on the waiting list, most of whom have very little chance of being housed because of insufficient housing stock.

The Bicester Town development of Sainsbury's and the cinema is due to open in July. The footings for the new hospital are due to commence in early June and, although it will initially be a single storey building, it will be possible to add a further storey in due course as the town grows. Kingsmere continues to be built with the addition of the hotel and other infrastructure, including the 'sports village'. Tesco hopes to start building their new store, between the A41 and Wyevale Garden Centre, shortly and the land where Tesco currently is will be used by Bicester Village - the outlet shopping village is a phenomenal success and is the largest attraction for Chinese visitors in Europe. It is hoped that the Park and Ride at the new roundabout on the A41 towards Wendlebury will be developed shortly: it will service Oxford during the week and Bicester Village at weekends and Bank Holidays.

The rail link to Oxford from Bicester is going to be improved to dual lines and the Bicester Town station will be re-built. The line will divide and one part will go to Marylebone so that it is possible to travel from Oxford to Marylebone and the other will be electrified and go from Oxford via Bicester towards Milton Keynes and Bedford. The funding for the project has already been secured.

Regarding the roads network, particularly the M40, Junction 9 is scheduled for further works and Junction 10 will need to be addressed.

Cllr Wood was asked about the Quarry as it is full of wildlife and the villagers would like to keep it natural. There was a concern that it was marked as for 'Leisure Use' in the Local Plan, but Mr Wood assured the village that this was so that any house building could be resisted. However, it is under private ownership and is not accessible or available at present.

Concern was raised by the villagers about parking in Bicester once the new development opened. Cllr Wood informed the meeting that the new car parking would belong to, and be run by, Sainsbury's, who are experienced at this and the full details would be agreed very shortly. However, it is hoped that free parking would be able to be arranged for some of the time.

Provision of secondary and primary education was raised. There will be a new secondary school on the Kingsmere estate and Cherwell insists that every large development has a primary school as one of the first buildings opened.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Wood for his report.

#### **Community Police Officer**

WPC Caroline Brown sent her apologies.

## **Minutes**

The minutes of the previous year's Open Meeting held on 9 May 2012, copies of which had been circulated, were signed by the Chair as a true record of proceedings.

## **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes, except that there was a far better attendance than last year and the cycle path would be discussed further in the Chairman's report.

## **Clerk Report**

The clerk gave a brief report on the Parish Council's activities over the year.

The Parish Council met 11 times between April 2012 and March 2013 with a wide variety of discussion taking place. The Minutes are displayed on the noticeboard and on the Parish Website.

A number of housekeeping policies and regulations were adopted including Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, a Communication Policy, a Complaints Procedure and a Freedom of Information Policy as recommended by the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks.

Actions from the minutes include adopting the Playground as a Village Green; arranging for new grit bins to be installed at the junction of Mill Road/Launton Road and by the Stoke Lyne Road bus stop and sourcing a location for some additional salt in order to keep the bins topped up next winter; refurbishing the Bicester Road bus shelter; and the addition of the new oak noticeboard paid for from the 100 Club funds donated to the Parish Council which have been accumulating for a few years.

Planning. The Council has received 23 Planning Applications this year, nine for buildings, which included time extensions and amendments to existing plans, and 14 for tree work. There have been a significant number of tree applications received from residents in Cavendish Place this year mainly because the trees were all planted at the same time and so they have all come to maturity together. All significant tree work within the Conservation Area needs to be referred to Cherwell.

Finance. The majority of the expenditure this year has been spent on keeping the village clean and tidy. The books have been presented for internal audit and the forms for the external audit will be sent off within the next few weeks. The Accounts are available for inspection. A Summary of Accounts is published.

The Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils offers courses to the Council. This year Councillors have attended the *Roles and Responsibilities* Course and the *Effective Responses to Planning* course. It is also hoped that further Councillors will attend the 'Effective Responses to Planning Applications' Course later in the summer.

The Clerk reiterated that all villagers are entitled to come to Parish Council meetings and either speak at the beginning of the meeting or observe the whole meeting. The Parish

Council generally meets in the Red Room of the Red Lion on the second Tuesday of the month at 7pm and asked that if villagers wished to receive the agenda and minutes by email to let her know.

### **Chairman's Report**

The Council has had a stable year this year, with just one resignation of Maggie Woodward. The Councillors are all very grateful for Maggie's dedication and guidance over more than ten years and wish her well in her new endeavours. Jonathan Ormerod and John Honsinger were co-opted onto the Council.

The Chairman explained about the Planning Process. The Parish Council receives the application from Cherwell District Council (who controls the process) and then has 21 days to respond. The discussion either takes place at a regular Parish Council meeting or at a special Planning Meeting depending on the timescale. The Clerk will write to the applicant and their neighbours letting them know when the application will be discussed and inviting them to the meeting.

It is hoped that the playground surface will be refurbished over the next few months. Quotations have been obtained for a rubber mulch surface which will improve the overall appearance of the playground and be good for the children to play on. The next action is to obtain grant funding to pay for it.

The Chairman asked that any villagers whose children use the playground let the Parish Council know their thoughts as the Councillors would welcome wider input.

The Snow Plan has been implemented a couple of times during the Winter. The Parish has collaborated with local villages and a snow plough runs through the village clearing a route out to the main A4421; whilst not everyone will get their road cleared, the point is to get the village moving and connected.

The Council has arranged for speed checks over a period of time at the main entry and exit points to the village. The data has been received and the analysis and discussion will take place at the next meeting in June. This is an issue which is likely to form part of the Community Led Plan.

A cycle path from the village into Bicester is outlined on the proposed Bicester Masterplan which went out for consultation last November. It is a 'green route' into Bicester that loops around the airfield on the Quarry boundary to the back of the Airfield.

The Chairman reiterated that he wanted to work with the Church more closely and this has happened. It is hoped to be able to work together to organise a social event here in the Church in the Autumn, possibly a Jazz night.

The Community led Plan Launch meeting on 30 April was very well attended. A summary of the things that made people sad in the village and also the things that make people happy was displayed.

Things villagers were sad about included broadband speed; litter; the playground; a cycle path/ safe walk to Bicester; parking; activity for kids and dog poo. Things which villagers liked included the community spirit; that people care; no street lights / the stars at night; peace and tranquillity and village events.

The next steps are to engage the Village in the community plan, get the steering group set up and sort the things that people have suggested.

When the issues are broken down, there is nothing major and most of the issues can be sorted.

### **Bicester Heritage**

Mr Dominic White, Property Director of Bicester Heritage spoke about the plans for the 'RAF Bicester' airfield which Bicester Heritage had recently bought from the MOD. The team comprises, Managing Director, Daniel Geoghegan; Finance Director, Alfred Southwell; Facilities Manager, Charlie Morgan and Property Director, Dominic White.

Bicester Heritage was set up to acquire the airfield and is financially backed by enthusiasts and those experienced in heritage-type restorations. The team had been actively looking to purchase a suitable property for some time. They aim to focus on vintage aviation and motoring and to encourage the skills needed for the maintenance and restoration of the vintage cars and aircraft.

They plan to use the site as an active working, commercial, site using the buildings for the purpose for which they were created but are not planning to house a museum.

Having inspected the buildings, it is believed that they are not in as bad a condition as was first thought, but there is a five-year plan on restoration and they will be meeting with English Heritage shortly to discuss the project.

Whilst the discussions with Bomber Command Heritage had fallen through regarding a museum on the site, Bicester Heritage were in favour of creating a memorial or monument to Bomber Command and were also considering a café or tea shop.

Following a question regarding a rumour about a hotel being developed on the site, Mr White stated that they had no plans or funding for this.

They are in discussions with the Gliding Club over the continuance of the lease and are keen for them to stay. Mr White recognised that there might be an increase in motorised flight, but it would all be of the heritage variety; they might look at using the perimeter track for motoring in due course. There may also be open days which would result in additional noise and traffic impact and this would have to be managed sympathetically.

The Chairman thanked Mr White for his informative presentation.

**Any other business**

The Chairman asked the meeting to note the date of the village tidy-up day as 1 June and hoped that a number of villagers would be able to help.

The Parishioners thanked the Parish Council for all their work.

The minutes were taken by Jane Olds, Clerk to the Parish Council.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

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