



**Minutes of the
Stratton Audley Parish Annual Parish Meeting
Tuesday 3 June 2014 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

6 Stratton Audley Residents

Apologies:

WPC C Brown (Thames Valley Police), Dominic White (Bicester Heritage)

1. Chairman's Welcome

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

The Chairman informed the village that the Parish Councillors were recently formally elected in an uncontested election in May. He reminded the meeting that all the Councillors are volunteers and do not claim expenses, they do what they are able to in the time available.

The Parish Council has achieved a number of things this year including setting up of a Community Led Plan group, appointing a new contractor for mowing the village verges and playground, and investigating the refurbishment of the playground equipment with wide consultation - the next step for this is to apply for funding.

The Chairman reminded the residents that all villagers have chosen to live in the village; the village and its housing were not designed for cars and that all villagers need to be aware of parking courteously and within the highway code (where appropriate) but to be tolerant of others when they have visitors who may need to park; they also needed to remember that building work will always be completed eventually, but it will happen.

2. Apologies

No further apologies had been received.

3. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the previous year's Annual Parish Meeting held on 14 May 2013, copies of which had been circulated, were agreed as a true record of proceedings.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Report by the Clerk about the year 2013 – 14

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council met 11 times between April last year and March 2014 with a wide variety of discussion taking place, as can be seen from the Minutes which are always displayed on the noticeboard and on the Parish Website.

Actions from the minutes include making a large saving on the Parish Council insurance last year following a review of the insurance company; formalising the verge cutting contracts; the purchase of a new dog bin off Launton Road by the stile on the footpath near Pound House and arranging with the Manor to store a tonne of salt should there be a need for it over the winter months.

Other issues which the Parish has been involved in include keeping an eye on the Boundary Commission review of Cherwell District Council and the implications it might have on the Parish and keeping a watchful eye on the progress of rural broadband to the telephone exchange in Stratton.

The Clerk reported that she is often asked to help with getting potholes fixed. Whilst she is more than happy to do this and does report them when she sees them, this can be done by anyone in the village. Oxfordshire County Council has a website – fixmystreetoxfordshire.gov.uk – where anyone can report a highway problem, including adding photographs. This is also where flooding can be reported. The flooding on Mill Road last winter could have been solved much more quickly if it had been reported and suggested that it was better not to assume that someone else will do it, but to report it a number of times than not at all.

One other project which is of interest to villagers is Cherwell's register of Heritage Assets. It is hoped that this will record objects and buildings which are what make the village special, but which are not of significant national importance to warrant English Heritage listing. There are a number of objects around the village which could be included, such as the animal water trough at the corner of Bicester Road or the War Memorial. The Parish Council hopes to be able to work with the Historical Society and any other interested villagers in getting Stratton on the map.

Planning: the Council has received 17 Planning Applications this year, nine for buildings, and eight for tree work. The Parish Council has recently adopted a formal procedure for dealing with planning applications in the village, but in short, the applicants are invited to the Parish Council meeting to present their plans and neighbours are also invited to comment. 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 and on general administration. However, because Parish Councils are unable to borrow money unless they go to the *Public Works and Loans Board*, the Parish needs to set aside money for various projects including the playground, the possibility of having to pay for an election and the bus shelters; so this year, the Councillors have agreed a Reserves Policy.

The books have been presented for internal audit and the forms for the external audit have been despatched. The Clerk informed the meeting that Accounts were available for inspection and produced a Summary of Accounts.

The Clerk reiterated that all villagers are entitled to come to Parish Council meetings and speak at the beginning of the meeting or observe the whole meeting. The meetings generally take place in the Hunt Room of the Red Lion on the second Tuesday of the month at 7pm. Anyone wishing to receive the agenda and minutes by email, should let the Clerk know.

6. Report by the Community Led Plan Group

Julia Manley reported that the group was formed following a successful launch meeting in April 2013; villagers were asked to write down what they liked, the things they didn't like and the things which they would like improved under a number of different headings and these were then taken away and considered. The steering group was formed under the Chairmanship of Amanda Reynolds.

The Group has had a successful year and has organised a number of events to bring the village together and to find out more about what villagers would like. The events have included the village picnic, a Halloween party in October, an Easter Bonnet parade and Easter Egg hunt, and a visit to an assault course for teenagers. The Group has also been instrumental in getting a non-denominational toddler group formed which takes place on Wednesday mornings in Church.

Future events planned include a vintage tea party in Church, a boules evening and another village picnic.

One of the facilities which has been lacking in the village is a village hall. In order to help with organising functions, the group applied to ORCC (Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council) for a grant to help with the purchasing of a marquee which could be used for all sorts of events. The marquee has been purchased and its first use will be the village picnic in June.

The group holds monthly meetings and is gathering information ready to start producing a questionnaire which will go to all villagers. Once the questionnaire data is received a plan to take the ideas forward will be written.

7. Councillor Barry Wood

Cllr Wood offered his personal thanks to all those who serve on Parish Councils; it can be a thankless task, but it is vital to maintain this important level of government. He welcomed the Community Led Plan project as a method of building community cohesion.

Planning consent had been given on the site next door to Wyevale for a supermarket and business park, but it is not clear at present whether Tesco, who have recently changed their strategic business case from large supermarkets to 'metro-style' shops would be the final developers of the site. Work has been suspended for twelve months.

The Bicester Town station and railway development are under construction. It has been agreed that the car parks will be used by commuters on week days and at weekends and bank holidays they will be used by Bicester Village, who are also going to put a further multi-storey car park at the end of the site nearest the station.

The District Council has been under examination by the Boundary Commission. The initial conclusions are that the District should be divided into larger, three-Councillor wards. However,

Cllr Wood would like to keep the Shelswell Benefice as one Ward and is working on this at present.

Following a question about the number of houses proposed for Bicester, Cllr Wood informed the meeting that the Local Plan (which had been submitted to the Inspector in December) had taken nine years to put together and currently proposes 670 houses a year for the next 20 years for the whole district most of which will be built in the urban areas in Bicester, Banbury and to some extent, Kidlington.

8. Councillor Mrs Catherine Fulljames

Cllr Fulljames reported that the boundary changes which took place last year have given her responsibility for 22 parishes in the Ploughley Ward which is a very large rural area from the Northampton and Buckinghamshire borders to south of Bicester and this increase has had a large impact on her as her time is now so thinly spread. She has recently celebrated 25 years as a County Councillor.

Cllr Fulljames regretted that the County Council had decided to increase the Council Tax to 1.99% (an increase of 46p per week for a Band D property), but explained that it had been necessary to maintain the services at their current levels.

The Councillor is keeping a close watch on the Rural Broadband rollout and has reminded the team that it is these rural areas and particularly the farming communities which need the greatest improvement.

Cllr Fulljames has been involved in the roads and infrastructure side of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in her capacity on the Planning and Regulation Committee, working closely with CDC and the councils in Bicester.

With regard to a question from last year's meeting she reported that the County will not receive any 'hard income' from the Incinerator at Ardley.

Cllr Fulljames also raised the quarry and informed the meeting that she keeps an eye on it. Nothing is happening at present. She assured the meeting that the County Council owns the small quarry which was used for landfill and is now leased by an angling club, but there are no plans to sell it.

9. Mr Dominic White, Bicester Heritage

Sadly, Mr White was unable to attend the meeting.

10. Any other business

No further items were raised.

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

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

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