



**Minutes of the  
Stratton Audley Parish Annual Parish Meeting  
Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2018 at 7.30pm  
St Mary & St Edburga Church, Stratton Audley, Oxfordshire**

**Present:**

**Chairman:** Mr John Honsinger

**Clerk:** Mrs Anne Davies

**Parish Councillors :** Mr A Flack, Mr S Hopkins, Mr G Nicholson and Mr M Hedgecox

**Parish Councillor elect:** Mr J Edwards

**63 Stratton Audley Residents**

**Invited Guests: Mr Daniel Geoghegan (Bicester Heritage) Mr Charles Hurst (East/West Rail Stakeholder Manager) Cllr Ian Corkin (OCC and CDC) Cllr Barry Wood (CDC)**

**1. Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the meeting was the Annual Open meeting of the Parish, which was facilitated by the Chairman of the Parish Council as a duty to the community.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from 12 residents .

**3. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting**

The minutes of the previous year's Annual Parish Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017, 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 Cllr Ian Corkin (OCC) and Mr Daniel Geoghegan about Elm farm Quarry/Bicester heritage**

Ian Corkin (OCC Councillor) explained that OCC had been alerted by the Parish Council to the fact that the County needed to take action with regard to the former quarry before December 2018 otherwise it would not be able to enforce any restoration provisions. Having visited the site with The Chairman of the Parish Council and an ecologist who had produced an a detailed report, there were interesting ecological developments that would need to be preserved, while restoring the site enough to make it safe and useable. Further ecological studies were planned and he confirmed that OCC expected to be in a position to serve an Enforcement Notice on the owners by the autumn of 2018. If no response was forthcoming the intention being to bring the land back into use in order to make it available for recreational use both by Stratton Audley and Bicester residents. He then introduced Daniel Geoghegan, Managing Director of Bicester Heritage, because he explained, Bicester Heritage had become the new owners.

Before doing so a member of the community registered his strong displeasure with OCC as he said that for over 25 years he had complained to them about the Quarry site and in particular the lakes which were

polluted and that it had been a dumping ground for all sorts of waste. The county had always ignored him. Cllr Corkin explained that he did not know all the history but would definitely look back into the records. The Chairman pointed out that Cllr Corkin was relatively new as a County Councillor and the condemnation did not appear to be shared by others.

My Geoghegan announced that they had just completed the purchase of the quarry site and would explain more. But he began by outlining developments at the Bicester Heritage site since their purchase of the property 5 years ago, and explained that the company's aspiration to create a centre for historic motor cars and their craftsmen was being realised: all of the former RAF buildings are now occupied and there are over 100 apprentices employed on the site. Five years on from opening in 2013, the site has welcomed 25000 visitors, and had been the set for a number of critically acclaimed films.

Bicester Heritage have been studying the historic RAF plans, having noticed the current site is smaller than the war time airfield, and one area formerly part of the site was the quarry – which was an airfield dispersal area, therefore the purchase was completed to mark the 5 years anniversary from opening, and the RAF's centenary. They are aiming to bring the area to life again and provide leisure opportunities in line with the planning obligations on the quarry.

Currently Bicester Heritage are liaising with Cherwell DC to develop an ongoing masterplan, which, as the site is situated in an area designated for tourist development is likely to include a hotel (built in aircraft hangar shape) and a conference centre. There may also be other development opportunities on the periphery of the site.

Q. A resident pointed out that site security was in need of improvement, and there were problems with land and severe water contamination on the quarry site.

A. Bicester Heritage will be working with OCC to develop the site appropriately.

Q. How high, and in what style will the hotel be?

A. The hotel will probably be in the shape of a hangar, and no higher than the existing hangars. It will certainly be conservation led, and the first phase is likely to accommodate 200 beds.

Q. Won't the hotel be in the direct flight path?

A. No all the studies have been done and it will present no flight path issue

Q Will access be taken from the top of the Bicester Road?

A. The RAF had a zoned site with 9 or 10 entrances. Currently Bicester Heritage are exploring what these zones looked like. However they had noticed that the original plans for the site included 2 more hangars, which were constructed symmetrically to enable the hangar area to resemble butterfly wings. It is possible that further development will incorporate these original ideas.

Q. Do Bicester heritage intend to widen the periphery track?

A. If this is a reference to increased racing there is a perfectly good racing track at Silverstone and they have no intentions of competing with that. Any activity to use the track would be dependent on ensuring that the noise was limited, as it is aware of its effect on neighbouring communities.

Finally the meeting was assured that Bicester Heritage had purchased the quarry site with the view to reinstating the land into the overall airfield design and with some (maybe limited) recreational use. Progress may be slow, but progress was still being made.

**6. The Chairman then introduced Mr Charles Hurst – Stakeholder Manager for East West Rail.**

Mr Hurst explained to the meeting that East/West Rail (phase 1) had been the development of the rail line between Oxford and Bicester. Phase 2, which is currently in development, is the line from Bicester to Bedford, running trains along the existing track bed. The Company expect to put in an application under the Transport and Works Act for approval in the summer of 2018, and expect to have permission to start by the end of 2019, with construction work beginning in 2020. Current works are recreating ecological habitats to facilitate the movement of species as soon as construction work commences.

He explained that after initial desk research proposals showed a route for HGV vehicles through the village, they had revised their proposal in January. In early March he was invited to attend the Parish Council meeting and prior to this was given a tour of the village by the Chairman as concern had been registered by the PC over the revised proposals to route LGV traffic through the village. As a result of these discussions East/West Rail has decided (subject to planning approval) to route its heavier LGV's along the same route as the HGV traffic, with only light vehicles passing through Stratton Audley.

One resident registered his strong objection to any increased traffic in Church Street as congestion in the early hours would be extreme. He said it was totally unacceptable for more traffic of any type and complained that EWR never listen.

Mr Hurst continued and explained that the East/West Rail web site will be showing developments during the project, including land acquisition. However, as the work is to a non operational railway, working hours will be normal – starting at about 7.00am and finishing at about 6.00pm, with no night time or Sunday working.

Initially the company will be running 2 trains per hour Bicester to Milton Keynes, and 1 train per hour (semi fast) from Oxford to Bedford. The track has a maximum designated speed of 100 mph, and a new station will be constructed at Winslow. East West Rail are currently in discussion about Phase 3 of the project, including route planning to Cambridge as the old railway line no longer exists.

The Chairman confirmed that the PC had received written confirmation from Mr Hurst regarding the re-routing of LGV vehicles away from the village and accepted that it was probably impossible to prevent employees driving to work in their own cars from coming via the village. However of greater concern to residents was the use of the top Park Road for HGV vehicles and the turning with the A4431.

Q. What are your proposals for the road off the A4421 by the Park?

A. This road will be taking HGV's to the compound in Poundon. There are likely to be up to 1200 vehicles movements a day over a 12 week construction period. East/West Rail will carry out road improvements on the A4421, possibly including widening the road to make a right turn safer, and are currently in discussion with OCC highways about proposals to put in up to 20 temporary passing places along the Park Road, (these will not be parking places or laybys) It is currently planned that they will be removed on completion of the works. East/West Rail will also need to carry out road improvements, and are in discussion with OCC about the timing of these.

Q. How will East/West Rail enforce routes and good driving behaviour?

A. HGVs will have tracking devices and be monitored. There were problems with Phase 1 as the company inherited it from Chiltern Rail. East/West rail subjects their drivers to a rigorous training programme, and any drivers in breach of their procedures will be dealt with most severely.

Q. Extra traffic will be a rat run through the village?

A. East/West Rail has listened to consultation responses and has changed its proposals accordingly. Under current proposals car traffic will peak in the early morning and at about 6.00pm.

Q. The Bicester level crossing will cause chaos as traffic backs up when it is closed?

A. East/West Rail are working with CDC to look at possible solutions, although this is a big problem.

Q. There is a rail track between Steeple Claydon and Bicester – could goods be brought up by rail?

A. This is not a feasible solution: the company had originally proposed haul roads along the railway tracks, but the department of Transport removed them as a cost cutting exercise.

Q. The “top park road” is greatly used by horse riders so this will be a major problem?

A. The safety of horses is a big problems throughout the development, in view of the rural areas the track will pass through. East/West Rail will discuss directly with horse riders.

Q. Why did the company not survey the roads before its initial proposals?

A. the initial proposals were based on a desk top exercise, but since then numerous engineers and surveyors have been out looking at the road network.

He explained that all their analysis and proposals will be contained in their Environmental Statement, which will be available on line. He repeated the offer to set up a Parish Liaison group so that problems could be discussed at an early stage, and considered that work is likely to start early 2020.

The parish Council pointed out that there will be a further opportunity to object to the proposals when they are ready for submission to the Secretary of State.

## 7. **OCC Report.**

CLlr Corkin started his report by explaining that the Parish District and County Councils work together as a team to achieve the best for the village, and he sees his role as a catalyst, understanding village issues and bringing the right people together to make things happen.

Current OCC issues are

a. East/West rail

He will arrange for the OCC Lead Officer to visit the area and walk the proposed vehicle routes.

b. HS2

This will have a major impact on traffic in the area, particularly junctions 9 and 10 of the M40.

There is also a need to understand the cumulative impact of the various developments in the area on the highway structure. However, HS2 has funds available to support communities that are affected, including a safety fund (which could possibly assist towards to provision of a cycle track along the A4421).

c. OX/CAM Expressway

This will be the biggest single civil engineering project since the construction of the M25.

Highways England are scheduled announce the proposed in summer 2018.

d. Potholes

These are of a major concern. While OCC has increased its road maintenance budget by £3.8M the cost of repairing all the roads in the County is likely to be in the region of £150M. As OCC raises £3M for every 1% increase in Council tax, this figure is not achievable.

OCC has the option of fixing the pothole by cutting out and filling ( least successful) , bringing in its Dragon Patcher to resurface a piece of road, or carrying out structural repairs. A second dragon patcher had been bought by the County. He urged residents to report pot hole problems on Fix My Street.

e. Public transport

Cllr Corkin is working to re establish some transport options in villages. Currently it is possible that there will be 2 new routes utilising the COMET bus service one running on Tuesdays and one on Wednesdays.

f. Councillor Locality Fund

In 2017/18 his Locality Fund paid for buffers around the Church pillars for thee Little Lambs play group, and part funded the Parish Council's Vehicle Activated Speed sign. This year he has a larger fund and awaits applications.

Q. Why does Oxfordshire need an Expressway to Cambridge when we have just heard proposals for a new rail service which is a much green way to travel?

A. the Government see the area as having development potential, with an additional 1M houses.

Q Could the chicanes on the Buckingham road into Bicester be removed?

A. Cllr Corkin will send a written reply after looking it to it more

Q. If the East/West route is implemented will this include provision for cyclists?

A. We expect so but there are no plans on this yet

Q. What is OCC's criteria for fixing potholes, and what significance are the colours?

A. The criteria are no longer published as OCC is looking at new ways of working. The colours indicate the level of urgency for fixing a pot.

He suggested, in the light of the questions he had received, the Parish Council consider inviting Victoria Prentis MP to the next Annual Parish Meeting.

## 8. CDC report.

Cllr Barry Wood reported that by attending meetings such as the Stratton Audley Annual Parish Meeting, Councillors were able to understand the community's priorities, and such opportunities were highly valuable.

He reported that a recent inspection of CDC had observed that:

- a. The Council was in a strong financial position
- b. It had good quality elected members and officers with a motivated and engaged workforce.
- c. The developments at Graven Hill and Heyford were examples of good practice
- d. There was good support community support and engagement
- e. The Council made good investment decisions (eg the decision to buy and develop Castle Quays phases 1 and 2 to ensure the continuing vitality of Banbury's shopping centre).

As a result of which CDC once again did not need to put up its share of Council tax.

## 9. Church

Becky Adams, on behalf of the Church explained that the Church held traditional services, but also wanted to place itself at the heart of the village community. There were weekly groups – Singing for Fun and Little Lambs, and the Church would play its part in the forthcoming street festival, and had other events planned.

To enhance its facilities it had recently installed a mezzanine floor to increase storage in the Bell Tower, and put several noticeboards in the porch for groups using the Church. It now planned to improve its kitchen facilities. It was looking at providing welcome hampers for new residents and implementing a book swap in a corner of the Church.

The Church is a Grade 1 listed building, and one proposal is that the building is floodlit to enhance its presence in the village.

**10. Any other business**

The Chairman asked if there were any matters that residents wished to discuss or ideas that they might wish to float.

He went on to mention that the Parish Council were at the very early stage of looking at the feasibility of installing a mobile phone mast on the Church tower to improve mobile reception in the surrounding area and provide a small regular income. This was a slow burn opportunity and no residents present objected.

Q. The Parish Council was thanked for the speed sign which had been long awaited but how many more will the Parish Council provide and how long will this provision take?

A. The Sign is a mobile unit and can be moved around the village so that the Council can understand the impact of the camera. The next location will probably be Stoke Lyne Road. More cameras may be provided by East/ West rail unless there are significant funds raised by the Festival – which would support the purchase of another one.

Q. Will the sign monitor speed out of the village?

A. Yes, the sign can be turned round.

Q. Will the Parish Council look at options to control the parking by the pub so that only one side of the road is available since this has been a problem for many years with no proper investigation as to options

A. The Parish Council will look at options

Q. Why is a white van parked prominently at the junction of the Bicester Road and Church Street all the time?

A. The Chairman explained he had talked to the owner who said he had nowhere else to leave it and he was perfectly legally entitled to park there. The chairman said that the owner had asked for suggestions of alternative parking places for the van and went on to say that he was regularly being contacted by residents who found it objectionable for another resident to leave a commercial vehicle with advertising all over the van, always in the same space as if he owned that stretch of the highway. He further explained that the Parish Council had consulted a number of organisations, and was still pursuing some other lines of enquiry.

The meeting closed at 10.30pm.

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