



**Minutes of the
Stratton Audley Annual Parish Meeting
Tuesday 9th April 2019 at 7.00pm
St Mary & St Edburga Church, Stratton Audley, Oxfordshire**

1. Present:

- a. **Chairman:** Mr John Honsinger
- b. **Clerk:** Mrs Anne Davies
- c. **Parish Councillors :** Mr A Flack, Mr J Edwards, Mrs K Walker
- d. **59 Stratton Audley Residents**

- e. **Invited Guests:** Ms Emma Harrison (Conservation Officer CDC) Jenny Ballinger (Senior Conservation Officer CDC) Mr Jonty Ashworth (Bicester Motion) Cllr Ian Corkin (OCC and CDC) Cllr Barry Wood (CDC)

2. 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. He introduced the guests to the meeting.

3. Apologies

Apologies had been received from 6 residents and Cllrs G Nicholson and M Hedgecox.

4. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the previous year's Annual Parish Meeting held on 2nd May 2018, copies of which had been circulated, were agreed as a true record of proceedings.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. CDC Proposed revision of the Stratton Audley Conservation Area

Emma Harrison from CDC explained that the District Council had a duty to review their conservation areas as they had a major influence on planning policy, and therefore a review of the Stratton Audley Conservation area had been undertaken. The last one was published in 1996.

The review includes some changes to the Conservation Area boundary to avoid bisecting properties or grounds and it was also an opportunity for residents to designate important village assets that should be noted.

The proposal is that the Conservation area will be enforced by an Article 4 direction, which will limit options for permitted development, thus ensuring that development is sympathetic to the area.

The consultation period on the proposals will be between 9th April and 17th May, when all the responses will be considered, changes to the proposals may be made, and the document will be submitted to the Cabinet member for planning to be signed off. Changes are expected to following the presentation the chairman opened the discussion to the floor.

Q What happens next?

A. As far as possible the document will be revised to reflect comments – but there is no further consultation or formal appeal process against the Council's decision.

Q. What is a designated asset?

A. It is any asset in the Village that is considered to make a contribution to the character of the Village, other than a listed building already designated.

Q. Why have you included all of Elm farm – would you like to come back and have a look around the farm to see what is there?

A. Yes and the same applied to any other affected property

Q If a property is outside the Conservation area, is it still subject to the same Conservation area constraints?

A. The important point about properties adjacent to or just outside the Conservation area will be the impact of any proposed development on the Conservation area. Properties within the boundary have additional restrictions.

Q. Why isn't the whole village a Conservation area? (A view supported by a number of people)

A. The decision as to what to include in the Conservation area is one of balance between restriction and development. The Council has a statutory duty to consider the impact of its proposals on the wider area.

Q. Does being added to this list affect the 'permitted rights' for the property as a whole or just those parts that can be seen from the street?

A. It mainly concerns how any change affects the appearance of the surround area although further clarification will be given on this point.

Q. Is there such a thing as a village boundary and if so, where is it and what are the effects of it on the conservation area and planning issues?

A. This would be double checked as it is not something immediately apparent.

Finally all residents were urged to make their views known during the Consultation period by responding via the web site, or writing into Cherwell DC.

7. Bicester Heritage (Bicester Motion)

Mr Jonty Ashworth (Property development Manager Bicester Motion) explained the current position with regard to the Bicester Heritage site.

The Company are in the early stages of preparing a Master Plan for the site and outline planning application during which they expect to engage with local communities.

He explained that meetings had taken place with the Parish Council, County Council and Ian Corkin from OCC who were supportive of the development and the company was aware of local views.

Bicester Motion will now become the overarching name for the site with Bicester Heritage retained as a key component under the Bicester Motion umbrella.

An overview was provided of Bicester Heritage's success to date and advised that they now have 280,000 sq. ft. of operational business premises. Introducing over 40 new businesses to Bicester, 31 of which are new to Oxfordshire, Bicester Heritage has created over 100 new jobs and have 100 apprenticeships positions. Last year there were 44,000 visitors over 6 event days.

Mr Ashworth advised that having been given resolution to grant planning permission to extend their Technical Site In December 2018. The development will create around 77,000 sq. ft. of new business space. It is their intention to commence works in late summer 2019.

An introduction was made of the Bicester Motion concept explaining that the RAF, previous occupiers of the site, were innovators in engineering and technology and their vision is to restore RAF Bicester to its former glory as a place of cutting-edge technology, architecture and design, true of its past. Thus creating a leisure site that is a centre of excellence for vehicles past, present and future.

An overview of the scheme was presented explaining that they hope to introduce over 30 more new businesses to Bicester, creating over 770,000 sq. ft. of operational businesses and leisure space that will create over £100m GVA from visitor spend to the local economy whilst creating over 2000 new skilled jobs and several hundred new apprenticeship opportunities.

A masterplan sketch was explained on the various developments proposed. The company has recently been granted permission for a 344 bed hotel which will be developed as a 3/4* Landmark Hotel starting in late 2021 and taking some 2-3 years to build. The other developments that are being proposed as part of the masterplan include an experience centre which will feature the restoration of the peri-track for vehicle demonstration and safety training, the construction of a new automotive technology centre, the restoration of the hangars as exhibition facilities and the creation of motor garaging on the far side of the airfield.

Bicester Motion are working with CDC's planning team and local people to create a "new place for Bicester" with increased visitor numbers, stronger transport links with Bicester, broader skills introduced into the area and additional leisure and recreational facilities in the area.

Bicester Motion update on the quarry site which was acquired in Spring 2018 by Hungerhill Leisure Ltd which is a subsidiary of Bicester Motion, advised that they have great ambitions for the site which will include the creation of leisure employment opportunities which are currently on hold until they have agreed a way to resolve the issues on the site created by the previous owner failure to undertake the restoration plans. Once ideas are further developed, they will be brought forward to local residents through the planning process.

Some questions followed:

Q. Within the old quarry site – the existing public footpath has been lost. Residents will want access to the quarry – either by footpath, bridleway or cycleways. What do you intend to do about this?

A. We have been made aware of this concern. The public footpath currently crosses between some land within our ownership and some outside our ownership (OCC land) which we know is waterlogged and unsafe for most of the year. We are unable to comment on the issues on the OCC land but can advise that we are exploring options to restore the existing public footpath into a safe condition.

Q. There is currently no connection between the Bicester Rd from Stratton Audley to cycle paths on Buckingham Road, would it be possible to use some of the Bicester Heritage land to introduce this?

A. This has been raised previously by Stratton Audley Parish Council and is being explored by Bicester Motion. A cycleway near the highway is proving difficult in view of ownership maintenance and liability issues.

Q. There is a piece of land with a lake next to the Bicester road owned by the County Council, will that be part of your plans?

A. Yes, there is an intention to lease it

Q. Will there be a cycle track to get into Bicester?

A. Bicester Heritage are aware of the local desire for a cycle route into Bicester. It is the intention that the Bicester Motion site will have sustainable connectivity to Bicester.

Q. You say the development will be low density – how do you propose to access this?

A. We are undertaking a highways assessment for the site and reviewing the key access points. This will be developed as part of the formal planning application process.

Q. What are you doing to clear the ragwort that blows into adjacent fields from the lakes?

A. I was not aware of this and we would welcome you to come in to meet with us to discuss your concerns.

Q. With regard to the proposed development adjacent to the existing distribution warehouses, can you please explain how will they access that area?

A. We are currently undertaking traffic studies across the site in order to develop our traffic management plan for the site which will include the access strategy. We will develop these proposals under the assessment of Oxfordshire County Council transport department.

Q. What is Bicester Motion doing with the Bicester Road emergency access?

A. The intention is to use both and the entrance that currently has concrete blocks across the road.

Q. What effect will the new building have on the existing gliding operation?

A. We have developed our proposals under consultation with aviation specialists and in consultation with the gliding club. We have an aviation specialist assessing the proposals as we do wish to maintain aviation on the site.

Q. Over what period of time will the development take place?

A. Current planning is for the next 5 years

During the Q&A exchange the Chairman made clear to the meeting that the Parish Council supported by Cllr. Corkin understands that there will need to be a managed development programme for the future success of the quarry area which may involve some commercial enterprises. This also has to be considered in the light of the recent flora and fauna reports showing the importance of the site. However, whatever is determined must take into account a desire on behalf of the local community to have open public access to at least some the site and the benefit of a safe cycle path into Bicester. Mr Ashworth said the company understood but in order to deliver this, the whole development needs to show a return.

8. Pound Area Development Presentation

The Chairman explained to the meeting that, once the Parish Council had obtained the grant to proceed with the Pocket Park project at the Pound, John O'Neill had agreed to sell a 2 meter strip of land adjacent to the back wall to increase the available area to the Parish Council for £1.00. He presented Mr O' Neill with a mint £1 coin as a commemoration of the agreement and thanked him for his generosity to the village.

9. Ian Corkin OCC

Cllr Corkin explained that the variety of matters covered by the County Council makes for interesting times, but his priority is representing residents and that their priorities are his priorities. He also believes that it is important to play a full part in the communities he represents, both by attending local groups, PC's, events, meeting electors, and communicating via Facebook and his web site.

So far as Stratton Audley is concerned, there is a lot going on in the area: HS2, E/W Rail and the Quarry development. While he admires Bicester Heritage's ambitions, he pointed out to the meeting that he is determined that the community will benefit from the original planning obligation to allow public access to the old quarry area. He reported that the ecology of the site is very interesting, with some nationally important flora and fauna. That means that the original obligation to restore to a country park is probably no longer appropriate, with something more akin to a nature reserve more likely (and desirable). He also mentioned that it is likely that a truly sustainable scheme will require a creative plan from BH. He is also keen to seek opportunities, through emerging planning applications in Bicester, to complete the cycleway between Stratton Audley and Bicester as a potential gain for the residents.

He reported that the traffic situation with regard to E/W Rail and HS2 HGVs is far from settled, with HS2 now suggesting that more movements will be via jnc10 of the M40 rather than jnc9. This has the potential to reduce the number of HGV's on the A4421. A cumulative impact study to assess the implications of both developments on the transport network is now underway.

The EW Rail work on the Park road to Poundon continues with discussions about the citing of passing ways along the road. The junction of the A4421 is also under review with revised plans in the pipeline from EWR at the request of OCC planning department. Cllr. Corkin confirmed he was taking a close interest in this matter and had recently called a meeting of OCC officers and affected PC's to ensure local communities can feed their concerns into the legal agreements that OCC will soon be drawing up with HS2 and EW Rail. Assuming the Secretary of State approves the plan it is likely that works will begin in the early part of 2020 on the Park road.

Cllr Corkin pointed out that he has a Councillor Priority Fund which can be spent on projects to support the communities in his patch. In Stratton Audley this has so far supported the Little Lambs playgroup with buffers around the church pillars and toys. It has also helped fund a number of other projects around the district.

Questions were as follows:

Q The junction at the cross roads on Mill road is dangerous, with many accidents – it needs a stop sign rather than a give way sign.

A This is noted and why local input is important in these matters.

Q. You referred to a new road crossing by Bicester Heritage, where is it?

A. By the bus stop crossing over to Caversfield.

Q. Could the chicane into Bicester be removed?

A. Many people ask this and it is a question for Bicester Town Council, as it is not my area.

Q. Do you think HS2 will go ahead?

A. All the sign are that it will.

10. 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 last year he had highlighted a recent inspection of CDC which said that:

The Council was in a strong financial position

It had good quality elected members and officers with a motivated and engaged workforce.

The developments at Graven Hill and Heyford were examples of good practice

There was good support community support and engagement

The Council made good investment decisions (e.g. the decision to buy and develop Castle Quays phases 1 and 2 to ensure the continuing vitality of Banbury's shopping centre).

While he felt a and b still applied, there was currently a lot of "churn" with CDC staff, and currently the Council was particularly in need of planners and accountants.

So far as Heyford Park is concerned, 90% of the properties there are sold to residents living within a 10 mile radius of the site, and he thought that was probably because there was a free school on the site that was proving attractive to parents.

He felt that community support and engagement was a pre requisite of local government, and then outlined the effect the reorganisation of Northamptonshire would have on the savings that had been achieved by CDC. CDC are now partnering with OCC, and are currently transitioning out of one relationship into another, but it will probably not achieve the same amount of saving in back office services.

As a result of all this CDC had put up its share of Council tax, and it was unlikely that the amount would be reduced in the near future.

There was only one question:

Q. What number of new properties have been built and occupied over the last year?

A. Traditionally CDC builds about 1200 houses a year, mainly in Bicester, Banbury and Heyford, although he was sorry to note that some properties were being bought to be let out and many of the tenants are supported by housing benefit.

11. Report by the Clerk for 2018/2019

The Clerk delivered a report on activities for the year which is available & can be view separately on the website.

12. Church Matters

Jeremy Adams had retired as Church Warden after 20 years of dedicated service and his position had been filled by Jackie Fox and Dorothy Howarth with support from Roger Cross for all maintenance and repair works.

13. Pocket Park

The Chairman explained the current proposals for the development of a "Pocket Park" at The Pound. Groundwork would start on 27th April and during the following week the stone mason would start to rebuild/build walls. Despite attempts to source old stone for the new wall this had not been possible, but the existing stone will be used where it will be most visible. The work is expected to be complete by the end of July, and residents were asked to express their preference for various features within the Pound grounds, by ticking and returning a form. The plans include creating a flat surface by the road, with a large gate to allow access by prams, pushchairs and mobility scooters, and there will also be a wider kissing gate for entry into the field. The Parish Council is also planning a permanent display presentation panel to explain the heritage of the area, the ancient monument and the start of the Cross Bucks Way. He asked for volunteers to be available for short periods of time to assist with the ground clearance on 27/28th.

14. Any other business

Dormant fund and Village Improvement Fund

The first matter was that of a dormant fundraising account administered by three residents which contained £675 and which had been originally collected to go towards community events/facilities. Ideas had been requested for spending this money and these were as follows:

- Create a mobility friendly footpath around the pond
- Purchase another vehicle activated speed sign for Stoke Lyne Road
- Hold a street party
- Put daffodils on the Green
- Improve the wooden bus stop on the Bicester Road

Benches around the village
Christmas lighting in the Chestnut tree

The meeting was reminded that there was a village improvement fund of £5000 and the only expenditure to date had been on new waste bins around the village – some £1300. A further £1500 was earmarked as a contribution towards the Pound development, so there remained just over £2000. Other ideas being considered were the purchase of new benches including one to go around the chestnut tree, stone flower troughs to be positioned at the entrances to the village and improvements to some of the grass verges. Following a show of hands for each of the above the overwhelming winner was the installation of another VAS on the Stoke Lyne Road. The original fund raising committee then agreed to accept the vote on the understanding that once other monies could be secured (the full cost of a VAS being some £2000) the money in the dormant fund would be transferred to the PC for that specific purpose. Out of the other ideas mentioned renewing the path around the pond was liked but felt to be too expensive, so perhaps a partial restoration could be considered out of the Improvement fund. Planting more daffodils on the green, improving the bus shelter and lights in the chestnut tree were also liked. New benches could be funded out of the Improvement fund as suggested but the idea of stone troughs at the village entrances was not supported by a significant number of people. Several commented that the village was a rural working village and should not be made to look too twee. Another resident felt troughs would not be maintained properly and this was echoed by others. Someone else commented that the next thing to be suggested would be street lighting to which there was general laughter and disapproval.

The Parish Council/ Volunteers/other notices

- The Chairman reminded residents to fill in the volunteer forms they each had on their seat, since works and improvements around the village was usually carried out by a small number of the same people and it was in the interest of everyone to help
- He also reminded attendees that there was currently a vacancy on the Parish Council
- Furthermore, that at the forthcoming May 1 Annual Parish Council meeting, he would be standing again as Chairman unless someone else came forward, but that it would be the last year as he believed it was good practice for the chairmanship to change
- The village sweep will take place on 11th April
- He also invited any residents interested in collecting litter whilst out on walks to take a litter picker, bags and gloves from those available at the back of the Church
- He drew everyone's attention to the concert (being organised by Anthony Flack and the CLP committee) by the Lynton-Smythe Trio that will take place in the church on 17th May and that tickets were available now and should be purchased at the special lower price of £10
- He also announced that a Ferret Racing event was being planned for 5th July, the venue to be at the Hunt Kennels
- At the request of the Manor – he reminded residents that the Manor grounds was private property
- The Parish Council is looking for a new Footpath warden – someone who walks the footpaths and raises awareness of any problems
- Finally he made attendees aware that the Parish Council had received advanced warning of the closure of the Bicester road by the Water Board for 3 -4 days from 13th May

No other matters were raised by residents and everyone was thanked for attending.

15. The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

16. Signed..... Date.....