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**Minutes of the Stratton Audley Annual Parish Meeting**

**Wednesday 19th April 2023 at 7.30pm**

**St Mary & St Edburga Church, Stratton Audley, Oxfordshire**

1. **Present:**
   1. **Chairman:** Mr John Honsinger
   2. **Clerk:** Mrs Anne Davies
   3. **Parish Councillors:** Mr A Flack, Mr J Edwards, Mr M Gore and Mr M Arroyo
   4. **CDC representatives :**- Cllr B Wood and conservative candidate Nigel Simpson.
   5. **15 Stratton Audley Residents**
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.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Cllr k Walker, Cllr I Corkin (CDC and OCC) and Mr and Mrs J Woodward.

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

The minutes of the previous year’s Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 6th April 2022, copies of which had been circulated, were agreed as a true record of proceedings.

1. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

1. **Report by the Clerk about the year 2021/22**

The clerk reminded the meeting that the Parish Council usually meets on the first Wednesday of every other month in the Red Lion Public House. Discussion in those meetings is condensed in the Minutes which are always displayed on the noticeboard and on the Parish Website.

She took the opportunity to remind the meeting that the PC maintains its verges on behalf of OCC – with great help from Mike Gore who continues to cut the grass. After stalwart work Richard Howson has now decided to stop spraying the verges, so many thanks to Richard for his support over the years.

Current Councillors are John Honsinger (Chairman) Anthony Flack (Vice Chairman) Kathryn Walker, Martin Arroyo, John Edwards and Mike Gore. There is 1 vacancy. Anyone interested in being co-opted was asked to let the Clerk or the Chairman know.

She reminded everyone that anyone wanting to comment on a planning application is encouraged to attend the next available Parish Council meeting to explain any concerns or matters of special interest to the Parish Council or if unable to do so, to email or write a letter to the Parish Council outlining their issues, as well as raising them directly with Cherwell District Council via their Planning portal.

During the year the Parish Council has taken a close interest in the developments at Bicester Motion – and is still keeping a close watch on plans, partly to try to ensure that a new cycleway along the A4421 is included. CDC and Bicester motion are currently in negotiation about the conditions to be imposed on a new planning permission, and the parish council is keeping a close watch.

Another planning application that has exercised the combined minds of the Parish Councillors has been the application for a Solar Farm at Padbury brook. Despite supporting means of producing alternative energy, The Parish Council were unanimous in the decision to oppose the application as they felt it was the wrong development in the wrong place, and are watching carefully to see how this develops.

A major initiative this year has been the speed reduction to 20mph through the Village, as part of a change in policy by OCC. While there is some lingering concern at the quantity and location of the speed repeater signs, this has been generally well received, particularly as it has come with another VAS to monitor speeds through the village.

She noted that one of the things this parish excels at seemed to her to be parties, and the last year was no exception – There was a very successful Jubilee party, although sadly only a few months we were mourning the passing of the Queen – and now we are all looking forward to the Coronation weekend – and the Village party based round the Red lion. She remarked that she had been hugely amazed and impressed by the wide variety of residents who have rallied round to help organise what should be a fun time for all.

During the year the Council received 14 Planning Applications . It also received 4 applications for tree work. She therefore took this opportunity to remind everyone that works to trees located within the Conservation area all need consent from Cherwell District Council - this includes lopping and removal altogether of any tree with a base diameter of more than 3 inches. It has been reported that several trees may have been cut down without the necessary consent and I have been asked to point out that failure to do this means that the person carrying out the work can be prosecuted by the local authority.

The Parish Council ended the year with a total balance of £33385.10 in its bank accounts, and the full accounts for the year ending 31st March 2023 will very shortly be displayed on the website. She asked residents to let her know if, having read them on the web site there were any questions on them. Her contact details are on the web site. Again this year the majority of the expenditure has been spent on keeping the village clean and tidy and on general administration.

Finally she reminded the meeting that all residents are entitled to come to Parish Council meetings and speak at the beginning of the meeting or observe the whole meeting. The meetings are advertised on the website and the noticeboard. The minutes are put there as soon as possible after the meeting.

She finished by thanking Cllr Corkin for all his help behind the scenes in matters that are important to the village.

1. **Councillor’s Report**

A report from Cllr Corkin was read to the meeting, and Cllr Wood addressed the meeting. He started by noting the attendance, and commented that it was one of the best attended Parish Meetings he attended, and it seemed to him that Stratton Audley was a good place to live.

He updated residents on the progress of the CDC Local Plan – which will be available for public consultation later in the year.

He was aware of the planning application for a Solar Farm near the Parish and would be interested in hearing the views of the meeting about the application. He confirmed he would speak on behalf of the village, assuming the matter went before a full CDC planning committee meeting.

1. **Church Matters**

There was no formal update from a representative of the church, but the meeting expressed concern that increased maintenance and running costs were leading to the future of the Church being under consideration. Various ideas were touched on as ways to support the church and utilise the building more for commercial event and activities.

1. **Any other business**

**Solar Farm**

It was reported that the Applicant has asked for more time to submit additional information, and it is likely that the planning application will not be considered by CDC before June 2023. The Parish Council was particularly concerned about discrepancies in the Agricultural Land report, as the report indicates it is grade 3(b) quality, whereas the Council believes it to be productive agricultural land of at least grade 3(a) quality. It was suggested at the meeting that CDC should ask developers (particularly of warehouse type buildings to install solar panels on all the rooves, which would feed a substantial amount of electricity into the National grip without sterilising agricultural land. Cllr Wood explained that owners of warehouse were open to suggestions but that it is the infrastructure feed-in to the grid that is the problem. Cllr Wood also asked if he could have a clear steer on the view of the meeting, which resulted in the vast number of those present indicating opposition.

**Bicester motion**

The meeting was advised that current planning applications at Bicester motion are likely to have an effect on Stratton Audley, particularly in increased noise generated by the proposed developments on more days of the year. It is retrospective and not concerned to be the actions of a good neighbour.

The Parish Council continues to push for a cycle path through or adjacent to the site, that is available for use 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

**Red Lion**

The property has been registered as an Asset of Community Value by the Parish Council. However, once probate has been obtained, the lease is being handed back to the free holder, in which event the Parish Council will monitor developments carefully.

**E/W Rail**

Works on the railway line to Milton Keynes have almost finished, and some re instatement of the top road has been completed, although more major surfacing works and attention to rebuilding the verges will be carried out in the Autumn.

The Parish Council has been given some wild life hotels by the consortium.

**Village Improvement Fund**

The Chairman has received a list of projects that could enhance the village. After discussion it was agreed that some of the laudable, but larger projects such as the creation of a village shop and the part purchase of the red Lion (if available) would need to wait until the village received additional funds. Other smaller projects such as the repair of the path and stiles by the Goss’es farm and the path by Stratton park could be considered although these would normal fall under the jurisdiction of the OCC highway path team.

The Clerk was asked to ask OCC to change the salt in the salt bins, as the current salt is too hard to use, and arrange for a new bin to be placed in Mill Road.

There was a suggestion that the village would benefit from items supporting the teenage population of the Village, and the Parish Council agreed to consider the formation of a consultative group to discuss ideas.

All ideas touched on will be written up and published.

Finally the Chairman outlined plans for the Village to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III on 7th May.

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

1. The meeting closed at 10.00pm.
2. Signed……………………………………….….. Date………………………………….