

Begbroke Parish Council

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Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING (AGM) of Begbroke Parish Council Tuesday 24th May 2022 at 7.00pm.

1 Present:

1.1 Cllr Malcolm Ryder (Chair); Cllr David Wintersgill (Vice Chair); Cllr Beverly Appleton; Cllr Leslie Allen; Cllr Lindsay Gregory; Jeffrey Wright – Clerk; Susan Blackshaw (non-resident)

2 Apologies

2.1 Cllr Ian Middleton

3 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary Interests, gifts, or hospitality.

3.1 None declared

4 Minutes

4.1 The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (AGM) held on 4th May 2021 were read and confirmed.

5 Matters arising

5.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes of last Annual Parish Meeting 4th May 2021

6 Chairman's report

6.1 The chairman reported on that following a meeting with PR8 representatives, the work to provide a cycle track along FP 7 had not commenced.

6.2 Following a walk with the Environment Agency, he said that fields by Rowel Brook would be turned into balancing ponds for proposed new developments.

6.3 Vehicles have been using Begbroke lane.

6.4 Begbroke lane requires some refurbishment especially in the Kidlington section due to mud and leaves causing a poor surface.

6.5 The committee continue to push for a pedestrian crossing. This is especially galling considering that others are easily provided such as Woodstock and Ardley.

6.6 The chairman thanked the clerk and other councillors for their work.

7 Clerks Financial Report

7.1 The clerk gave his financial Report: He said that the annual governance and accountability return had been completed, internally audited, and sent to the external auditor. The accounts reconciled satisfactorily. The notice of public rights and publication of the same had been set for Monday 6th June 2022 until Friday 15th July 2022. He said that £13,083 had been carried forward from last year, the precept was set at £29,997.00. He also said that the asset value had been increased to £93,605. He also highlighted some of the main expenses incurred during the year.

Income and Spending
Between 01/04/2021 and 31/03/2022

Category	Total
Income Categories	
BANK INTEREST NATWEST	£0.20
GRANT COMF	£1,268.00
PRECEPT	£29,026.00
Total Income Categories	£30,294.20
Expense Categories	
ANNUAL SUB TO ORGANISATION (vat)	£162.10
ANNUAL SUB TO ORGANISATION (non-VAT)	£125.00
AUDIT - EXTERNAL	£240.00
AUDIT - INTERNAL	£200.00
BUS SHELTER MAINTENANCE	£1,595.00
DOG WASTE BIN EMPTYING	£420.91
GRANTS SECT 137 LGA	£350.00
GRANTS SECT142 LGA	£1,000.00
GRASS CUTTING PLAY AREA & FOOTBALL PITCH	£2,688.00
GRASS CUTTING VILLAGE VAT	£990.00
HALL HIRE	£75.00
HEDGE CUTTING VILLAGE HALL VAT	£210.00
INSURANCE - COUNCIL	£1,307.28
PLAY AREA MAINTENANCE	£349.00
PLAY AREA REPAIRS non vat	£140.00
PLAY AREA REPAIRS VAT	£446.40
PRINTER CONSUMABLES	£709.70
REFUNDABLE EXPENSES	£143.81
SAFETY INSPECTION	£94.80
SOFTWARE LICENCE	£79.99
STAFF COSTS	£8,271.99
STAFF COSTS VAT	£372.00
TRAINING	£228.00
VILLAGE NEW WORK VAT	£1,472.40
VILLAGE ASSET INSPECTION NON-VAT	£220.00
VILLAGE GARDENING NON-VAT	£72.50
VILLAGE WORK NON-VAT	£298.00
WEBSITE CHARGE vat	£288.00
Total Expense Categories	£22,549.88
 Grand Total	 £7,744.32

8 Reports from County & District Councillors:

8.1

Ian Middleton - County Councillor report 2021/22

As most people will know now, Oxfordshire County Council is now controlled by a rainbow alliance of three parties. This is the first time since the 1970s that it has not had majority rule by the Conservatives.

The Alliance consists of Lib Dem, Labour, and green councillors, who between them now hold 40 out of the 63 seats on Oxfordshire County Council. The Greens and the Liberal Democrats forms the largest grouping on the council, and I helped to agree the terms of our alliance.

The priorities for our four-year term are as follows:

1. Tackling the Climate Emergency through rapid decarbonisation, proper accounting of carbon emissions and ambitious targets, as well as supporting climate resilience.
2. Tackling inequalities and providing opportunities for everyone in Oxfordshire to achieve their full potential.
3. Prioritisation of wellbeing – improved outcomes for residents and improved air quality and access to libraries, cultural facilities, and the arts.
4. Review and reform of the social care system to prioritise end-users and carers with a focus on co-operative and community provision of social care, helping those who want to stay in their own homes.
5. Increased investment in an inclusive, integrated, county-wide active, and sustainable travel network fit for the 21st Century to improve choice and reduce car journeys across the County.
6. Improved access to nature and green spaces for all communities, and landscape-scale nature recovery across the county.
7. Supporting all our children and young people to achieve improved health, wellbeing, and educational outcomes; improved provision for children with additional needs; all decision-making to have regard to impact on young people and future generations.
8. The creation of a resilient local democracy where decisions are devolved to the lowest possible level and residents are meaningfully involved in the decisions that affect their lives.
9. Support for local employment and businesses, working with partners to make Oxfordshire a centre for green and sustainable technologies through a local 'Green New Deal;' we will use our purchasing power and contracts to maximise benefit to local employment and businesses.

Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council end formal partnership

At the start of 2022, Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council brought their formal partnership arrangements to an end. The arrangement between the two councils, which took the form of joint services under a single chief executive, had been in place since September 2018. The ending of the partnership meant that the former joint chief executive has returned to her post as CEO for Cherwell District Council.

Stephen Chandler has stepped up as Interim CEO while a long-term solution is considered.

Proposal to move Oxford United FC to Stratfield Brake (Kidlington)

Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet conducted a public engagement exercise on the proposal from Oxford United Football Club to develop a new 18,000 capacity football stadium with linked leisure and commercial facilities at Stratfield Brake in Kidlington (on land owned by the County Council), and discussions will continue into the new year. I am concerned to ensure that local opinion is listened to on this matter and that the wishes of the majority are adhered to by the council regardless of what those may be.

Oxfordshire County Council Budget 2022-2023

OCC passed the first budget of the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance in February. We want to build on our strengths while confronting the challenges we face addressing climate change, tackling inequality, strengthening the resilience of individuals and communities, fostering more social cohesion and common purpose.

We called on national government to respond to the challenges facing local government in a meaningful way through the autumn spending review. Unfortunately, they did not. Instead, in adult social care for example, they directed those local authorities should use council tax to meet rising costs. This represents a double-whammy for households at a time of real pressure on living costs.

We found that the sums provisioned for capital projects by the previous administration were inadequate. This is true of Kennington Bridge, where the £50million estimate accepted by the previous administration is now projected to be £87million. We had no choice but to provide £27million of the additional funding to allow this project to proceed.

The largest examples are the two Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) schemes. When the previous administration committed to government that it would deliver these schemes, it accepted the full financial liability for any additional costs arising. We now face disruptions to the supply chain, significant inflation, and labour shortages in the construction sector, through a combination of COVID and the policies related to the UK leaving the EU, which will inevitably affect the cost of these projects. We have asked officers to redouble their scrutiny of future capital projects.

Our budget proposal in December had more than double the number of responses received last year. Additional proposals because of the consultation included:

1. £500,000 to support the review into home-to-school transport to assist in transitioning to any new arrangements, with a particular focus on supporting more active travel and more sustainable transport opportunities.

2. We are offering tenants of the Council in community assets a one-year rent holiday to take account of financial pressures many community and voluntary organisations have faced during the pandemic
3. a strategic rail feasibility study to establish what it would take for new rail links to Cowley, Grove/ Wantage, North Cotswolds and West Oxfordshire.
4. Accelerating our work on active travel in the county: planning for new schemes and advising on opportunities to integrate active travel more fully in future proposals.
5. Replenishing the budget priorities reserve to allow for further investment in 2022-23 to (a) generate future savings for the Council budget; (b) make early interventions to improve the lives of children and young people; (c) accelerate our climate response.

We look forward to making substantial further progress in 2022-23 on our 9 priorities, while we also be directing substantial efforts and resources to support refugees from Ukraine and their hosts in the county, making sure the right support and safeguarding is in place.

Local Roads and Transport Issues

Within a few months of being elected I managed to get the Yarnton Road properly patched after decades of neglect and had some remedial work done on Sandy Lane (the first time this has been done since I moved her 30 years ago). Some of this work was done using the Dragon Patcher and I will admit that this has not been very long lasting. I am assured that this will soon be remedied.

I also met with local roads officers to get remedial works agreed on the path at Aysgarth Road and have had the old bus stop/layby on the A44 near the Budgens service station temporarily closed to prevent abuse by HGVs who were overnighing there and damaging the verges. A more permanent fix will be arranged soon.

I have been pressing the cabinet members for transport and road infrastructure to commit to the idea of a crossing on the A44 at Begbroke as has been requested for some years now. I am sensing that the idea is now accepted in principle subject to the availability of funding. I am looking to at least ensure that any developer's contributions that result from the new housing in the area will be used to enable this project.

There are proposals to change the speed limit on the A44 to 40MPH and to introduce a bus lane as part of the much vaunted 'rapid transit system' that was promised as part of the Local Plan Partial Review. This will see a bus gate introduced at the canal bridge between the Cassington Road Roundabout and the Loop Farm Roundabout as well as some additional controlled crossings across the A44 and at the Pear Tree Interchange to enable better access for cyclists and pedestrians. My concerns over this have been to ensure that there has been proper consultation with all stakeholders and residents. So far, I have not been impressed this has been handled and I am pressing cabinet members to take these concerns on board.

I also had the sad job of helping to deal with the aftermath of the fatal incident involving a cyclist outside the Parkway railway station. We have since introduced temporary measures to hopefully prevent anything like this happening again in the future pending a more permanent fix both at this location and at others throughout the county.

The Kidlington Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan has also been adopted by the County Council including plans for a new segregated cycle path on the Bicester Road going past the Edward Feild school. Kidlington also saw the launch of the Zoo Trails local walking routes aimed at improving the health of residents as they explore their village.

The 'Twenty is Plenty' scheme will now be rolled out across the county with the costs being covered by an £8m grant from the county council over 4 years. This will have a hugely positive impact on reducing fatalities on our local roads, especially in terms of child deaths and injuries. Signage will be going up in our area in the next year with all local roads reduced to 20MPH. Enforcement will be light touch, but the hope is that most responsible motorists will 'buy-in' to the scheme.

Airport

I have attended several meetings of the revived Airport Consultative Committee. The management of the facility have made some progress in providing the opportunity to report problems with low flying aircraft however they do not seem to have produced a solution as to how to deal with these. The airport also continues to push additional development on the site using permitted rights whereby they do not need to obtain planning permission. I have tried to encourage the management to engage more with residents on these plans but so far that has not been keen. I have also tried to arrange a public meeting with the airport authorities and residents, but despite initial enthusiasm for this they withdrew their support when the proposal looked like becoming a reality. I will continue to try to engage with them.

Housing developments

These are ongoing after the failure of the judicial review to stop them. I am monitoring the situation closely and engaging with developers and planners to ensure that all the local villages get the best out of the proposals, especially about local infrastructure, public and active transport facilities, schools, health centres and other essential facilities.

I have been particularly concerned about the flooding risks associated with the development on Spring Hill and met on site with the developer's civil engineering consultants to show them the problems. Discussions are still ongoing over this important matter.

I am also involved with monitoring progress and commenting on developments near the cemetery in the Bicester Road and on the site near Stratfield Brake as these seem to be the most imminent.

More Recently

The County Council has just passed the first staged of agreeing a county-wide food strategy which will support the needs of our communities both in terms of food production and access to healthy and affordable food. This includes financial support for individual districts including Cherwell towards local food initiatives.

Proposals have also just been passed on enhanced support for local libraries and improving outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities. These are due to be expanded on in the coming months.

For my part it has been an interesting year as a county council member as part of the controlling group. It has also been an interesting year in terms of local politics in Oxfordshire with most local councils undergoing a change in leadership. Cherwell District Council is now the only remaining council in Oxfordshire under Conservative control with a very slim majority of two. On a personal note, I have just become the leader of the green group on the county council which makes me Deputy Leader of the Green/LibDem Alliance, and I am also now the Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition on Cherwell District Council.

I hope to be able to do much more in the coming year to improve the lives of residents and will try to keep everyone updated along the way. If you need anything in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I am sure there will be other matters and issues that I have forgotten to include above, so if there is anything else that anyone has a question on, please let me know and I will do my best to answer.

Ian Middleton

8.2 District Councillor report to Begbroke Parish Council Tuesday May 2022

New Councillor for Kidlington West and changes to membership make-up of the Council:

Kidlington West, which includes Yarnton, now has a new LibDem Councillor – Jean Conway, who won her seat with a very good majority. CDC's political balance has altered following the election. Conservatives – 25 seats; The Progressive Group (7 LibDems, 2 Greens, 2 Independents) -11 seats; Labour - 3 seats. The Progressive Group is now the official opposition, replacing the Labour group.

1. The Council itself is in the final stages of separation from Oxford County Council. Some functions and roles will still be shared, and the final structure is still being finalised.
2. Sandy Lane

Layla Moran's office is still attempting to arrange a meeting between local Councillors, OCC, and Network Rail to discuss their as yet unpublished survey on traffic usage on Sandy Lane and its implications.

3. New Airport Hangar Proposal – Oxford Airport

Following the level of objections to this development that have been received, the Council has this morning clarified the position. This clarification supports the stance of the Airport management: i.e., that this application is not for normal planning permission. Under the principle of Permitted Development, which can be invoked by airport operators, the OA can simply request a Certificate of Lawful Development, under which the normal criteria for a planning permission application do not apply. The Council further explains that the Airport management was not even obliged to ask for this Certificate, the application was simply made to give them the reassurance that the development could not be questioned or challenged in the future.

4. Cherwell Parish Liaison Meeting at Bodicote House on 8 June 2022

Parish Councillors have been emailed about this meeting, at which there will be an overview by the Council's Chairman and Leader on current district issues (the revised code of conduct for Councillors, update on planning policy, Ukraine refugees etc.) Immediately before the meeting there will be a drop-in surgery hosted by a number of Council Officers ready to respond to queries from parish councillors on a variety of topics (planning applications, election procedures, the green spaces policy etc.).

Dorothy Walker
Member of Cherwell District Council for Kidlington West

9 General question time.

9.1 There were no questions

10 Proposed date of next Annual parish meeting

10.1 TBA.

Signed

Chairman 16th May 2023