

MAPLEDURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held in the Parish Hall, Trench Green on 10 January 2023, commencing at 8.00pm, and concluded at 9.50pm.

Present: Mrs J E Bowen (Chairman), Dr D W H Miles, Dr J S Rogerson, R W Taylor, Lord Thurlow.

Also present: P H Dragonetti (district councillor).

395 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 1 November 2022 were taken as read, confirmed and signed as a correct record.

396 REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Mr K Bulmer, the county councillor for the Goring division, had submitted reports which covered

- various traffic management schemes by his Council, particularly relating to the City of Oxford;
- a resolution by his Council to seek the introduction by Government of various subsidies and a cut to the rate of VAT;
- action by his Council and other agencies to reduce homelessness in the County;
- the compilation of his Council's budget for 2023/24;
- his Council's decision not to participate in the Government's investment zones initiative;
- his Council's efforts to retain bus services in the City of Oxford;
- the adoption, by his Council, of a 10-year plan to manage and rationalise its property estate;
- the outcome of academic research about the impact of reducing vehicle speed limits from 30mph to 20mph.

Members discussed whether there was any local opposition to the "segmentation" of traffic in the City of Oxford.

397 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Mr P H Dragonetti, the district councillor for the Kidmore End and Whitchurch ward, spoke to his previously circulated report, which covered

- his Council's revised Community Infrastructure Levy charging scheme and Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document;
- his Council's new housing delivery strategy and action plan;
- the effectiveness of the CCTV in the towns in the District.

Mr Dragonetti answered a question about the general operation of the Government's planning policy framework.

398 FORMER TELEPHONE KIOSK

The Chairman reported that the replacement glass had been fitted to the former telephone kiosk in Mapledurham village and a "defibrillator" sign installed.

399 CHILTERN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

It was reported that the decision of the Council, to withdraw from the group of parish councils working together on the preparation of a case for extending the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), had been considered by the Joint Parishes AONB Group. When that Group had met on 3 January 2023, it had been very keen to retain the Council's support, as the Group wanted to

present a united front across the parishes north of Reading. The Group had suggested that the Council should seek a grant from the District Councillor's fund, although the other parish councils were prepared to meet the Council's share of the cost of the exercise.

As the decision to withdraw from the exercise had been largely driven by concerns about the cost to the Council, Members indicated that they supported the concept of extending the AONB to cover most, if not all, of the Oxfordshire parishes between Reading and Henley-on-Thames. Accordingly, in light of the willingness of other councils to meet this Council's share of the cost of the exercise, Members agreed that the decision to withdraw should be rescinded.

RESOLVED: 1 That, on the understanding that no costs of participation would fall on the Council Tax payers of the Parish, the decision at the last meeting, to withdraw from the exercise to prepare a case for extending the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), be rescinded.

2 That the possibility of securing a grant from the District Councillor's Fund to meet the Council's share of the cost of the exercise be explored.

400 CODE OF CONDUCT

The Clerk was requested to circulate the presentation from the training sessions for parish councillors on the Code of Conduct and the web link to the declaration of interests' form to all Members.

401 DEEP CLEANSE

It was again noted that the cleaning of the footways requested of the District Council, as part of its Deep Cleanse, had still yet to take place.

402 PLANNING MATTERS

(i) Decisions

The Council noted that the applications for change of use of land for siting 5 glamping pods and associated facilities at Cross Lanes Fruit Farm, Mapledurham (P22/S1098/FUL) and construction of an enclosed timber store in conjunction established business of timber conservation and renovation at Mill Farm, Mill Lane, Mapledurham (P22/S3636/FUL) had been permitted conditionally.

(ii) Applications

It was reported that no objections had been submitted in respect of the application for the construction of an enclosed timber store in conjunction established business of timber conservation and renovation at Mill Farm, Mill Lane, Mapledurham for Dr D W H Miles (P22/S3636/FUL).

(Dr D W H Miles had declared a prejudicial interest in the above application, under the Code of Conduct, being the applicant, and had taken no part in the decision-making thereon.)

RESOLVED: That the following comments be submitted in respect of the application for a variation to the conditions of permission P20/S1619/FUL, for extension to existing clubhouse at Caversham Heath Golf Club, Chazey Heath for RGC Charlie Ltd (P22/S4161/S73) – “the Council has no objections to the revised proposals, provided that the wall mounted logo shown in drawing 1701 – east elevation - will be unobtrusive and not visible from the public realm”.

(iii) Planning Appeal

A letter from the Head of Planning of the District Council advised that an appeal had been lodged against the refusal of the District Council to grant planning permission for the sub-division of 3 Chazey Close, Chazey Heath to form 1 5-bed dwelling and 1 2-bed dwelling. The appeal was to be decided on the basis of written representations.

(iv) Reading Borough Council Local Plan

By e-mail, the Planning Policy Team at Reading Borough Council advised of consultation on that Council's Draft Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document, which would close on 13 February 2023.

(v) West Berkshire Local Plan

The Council noted an e-mail from the West Berkshire Council advising that that Council would commence the Regulation 19 review of its Local Plan on 6 January 2023, the consultation to run until 17 February 2023.

403 ROKEBY RECREATION GROUND

The Chairman advised that she had nothing to report about the Rokeby Recreation Ground.

404 MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS

The Chairman reported that, at its meeting in November 2022, the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee had elected a new Chairman. She also advised that some new representatives had been appointed to represent various interested groups, eg the Warren & District Residents' Association.

The acoustics in the main room at the Pavilion had been improved, more storage area provided and CCTV cameras installed. The issue of vehicle parking associated with football matches remained a problem.

405 PARISH HALL

It was reported that WiFi had been installed in the Parish Hall, by Airband Community Internet Ltd: it was noted during the meeting that the service was only available when the coin electricity meter was in credit. New LED lighting had been installed and quotations were being sought for the refurbishment of the old toilet.

Lettings were currently limited to Dogs Be Dogs, but, nevertheless, the Hall Committee's bank balance stood at c£10,000.

The Chairman advised that a person or persons unknown had dumped c100 used vehicle tyres in the carpark, without consent. Fortunately, Mapledurham Estate had removed the tyres, free of charge.

406 COUNTRYSIDE COMMITTEE

It was reported that the Countryside Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Council.

The Chairman reported orally that she had, at short notice, attended a virtual meeting with County Council officers and their consultants about a project to reduce car journeys in the A4074 "corridor", with a focus on traffic between Benson and Oxford. She had not been impressed with the scenarios posed and theories behind them.

The Vice-Chairman reported that he had sourced a suitable oak tree for planting, as agreed with the Mapledurham Estate, on land near the junction of track to Bottom Farm and Mapledurham Hill, in celebration of the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, in 2022, from the Big Plant Nursery at Wargrave. The total cost, including delivery and planting would be £553.

RESOLVED: 1 That the oak tree identified by the Vice-Chairman be purchased from the Big Plant Nursery, to be planed to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen Elizabeth II, at the site agreed with Mapledurham Estate.

2 That the Vice-Chairman be authorised to arrange the acquisition and planting of the tree.

407 CLERK'S SALARY

The Clerk advised that, as a result of the concluded national negotiations, his salary had increased, in accordance with the salary scale adopted in January 2019, to £662 per annum with effect from 1 April 2022.

408 TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURES

With e-mails, officers of the County Council gave notice of the temporary closures of roads, under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as follows:

- Mill Lane, Mapledurham on 14 March 2023, for essential pole replacement works;
- Mapledurham Hill, Mapledurham, between the junctions with Mill Lane and the track to Bottom Farm, on 28 March 2023, for essential pole works.

Members discussed alternative routes which could be made available during the closure of Mapledurham Hill, on the concrete bridleways, with the consent of Mapledurham Estate.

Members also noted a temporary traffic order covering one-way operation of Mill Lane, Mapledurham during the Reading Festival, from 23 to 28 August 2023.

RESOLVED: That the County Council be asked to explore with the Mapledurham Estate the use of an alternative route on bridleways between the village and Lilley Farm on the day Mapledurham Hill is closed.

409 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The following accounts were passed for payment

Parish Council

Ian Kendrick Ltd – Mowing	£2616.00) Already
Shield Maintenance Ltd – Servicing dog hygiene bin	£10.39) paid
St Margaret's PCC – Contribution towards upkeep of Churchyard	£150.00
Reading Borough Council – Contribution towards upkeep of Mapledurham Playing Fields	£125.00
Shield Maintenance Ltd – Servicing dog hygiene bin	£10.39

Parish Hall Committee

D J Scott Electrical Services Ltd – Replacing lighting	£1376.40)
Sonning Common Green Gym – Hedge cutting	£30.00) Already
R W Butler – Grass cutting etc	£924.00) paid
Airband Community Internet Ltd – Fibre Wifi	£40.00)
SSE – Electricity	£289.74
Mrs J E Bowen – Cleaning and sundries	£175.56

410 ESTIMATES, 2023/24

The Council considered a report of the Clerk, being draft estimates for the financial year 2023/24.

Members noted that the Council held earmarked reserves of £3,650, for the extension of the footway on the southern side of Rokeby Drive, Chazey Heath, from the parish boundary to the entrance to the Rokeby Recreation Ground. Given the reduction of the speed limit in Rokeby Drive to 20mph, Members felt that there was now little demand for such a path. They suggested that the monies be used instead for the general maintenance of the Recreation Ground.

RESOLVED: 1 That the base estimates for 2023/24, as presented, be adopted.

2 That a precept be issued for the sum of £5,700 in 2023/24.

3 That funds of £3,650 be no longer earmarked for the provision of a footway in Rokeby Drive, but be used to maintain the Rokeby Recreation Ground and the play equipment therein.