

MAPLEDURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held in the Parish Hall, Trench Green on 7 March 2023, commencing at 8.00pm, and concluded at 9.10pm.

Present: Mrs J E Bowen (Chairman), T M Whitaker (Vice-Chairman), Dr D W H Miles, Dr J S Rogerson, Lord Thurlow.

Also present: P H Dragonetti (district councillor).

Apologies for absence were received from R W Taylor.

411 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 10 January 2023 were taken as read, confirmed and signed as a correct record.

412 REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR

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

- traffic management schemes relating to the City of Oxford;
- an overspending £14.5m (about 10%) in his Council's Children's Services' budget for the current year;
- the appointment of a chief executive by his Council;
- the intention of his Council to improve services for children with special needs;
- the rise in Council Tax attributable to his Council's budget for 2023/24;
- cancellation of the home to school transport spare seats' scheme;
- a legal challenge to the Oxford traffic filters' proposals;
- the impact of 20mph speed limits on bus journeys;
- sorting waste before taking it to the household waste recycling centres;
- support for Ukraine by the principal authorities in the County.

413 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 successful bid for funding from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme;
- the need for electors to produce ID if seeking to vote in person in the District and Parish Council elections in May 2023;
- his Council's 2023-24 budget;
- decisions by inspectors on recent planning appeals in the District.

414 OPEN SESSION

During the Open Session,

- Dr C D Aldridge, the Chairman of Kidmore End Parish Council, enquired whether the Council would agree to the circulation of the quarterly Kidmore End Parish Newsletter, which was delivered to every house in that Parish, to residents of the Parish, and, if so, whether the Council would meet the cost of the copies delivered in the Parish, estimated at £40 per annum. Members were supportive of the proposal and suggested that the Newsletter was delivered to homes in Chazey Heath east of the A4074 road;
- Mr J Donahue, the Chairman of Whitchurch Parish Council, who was considering candidature at the District Council elections in May 2023, introduced himself.

415 CHILTERN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

The Chairman advised that there had been no developments, to her knowledge, in the group of parish councils working together on the preparation of a case for extending the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Clerk reported 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 had not been pursued.

416 COMMEMORATIVE TREE

It was reported that an oak tree, to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen Elizabeth 2, had been acquired by the Vice-Chairman, and had been planted at the site agreed with the Mapledurham Estate, near the junction of the road to Mapledurham with bridleway 24.

The Vice-Chairman and Lord Thurlow undertook to arrange for a guard for the tree and the wording for a plaque.

417 A4074 "CORRIDOR" TRAFFIC STUDY

Members noted the presentation slides, circulated by the County Council, arising from the workshops on that Council's A4074 corridor strategy, and recalled that the Chairman had reported orally on one of the workshops, at the last meeting.

418 TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURES

With an e-mail, officers of the County Council had given notice of a temporary closure of the A4074 road, between Woodcote and Ipsden, under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, overnight, between 20 to 25 February 2023.

419 PLANNING MATTERS

(i) Decisions

The Council noted that the application for variation to a condition of permission P20/S1619/FUL for extension to the existing clubhouse at Caversham Heath Golf Club, Chazey Heath (P22/S4161/S73) had been permitted conditionally.

(ii) Applications

It was reported that no objections had been submitted in respect of the applications for repairs to partially collapsed stable roof, together with works to convert the first floor to provide new office accommodation etc at Mapledurham Mill Tea Rooms, Mapledurham House, Mapledurham, for Mapledurham Estate (P23/S0054/FUL, P23/S0055/LB).

(iii) Proposed development at the Maples, Dysons Wood, Tokers Green

Although the Council had been not consulted formally thereon by the District Council, Members discussed the planning application for change of use and associated alterations to the former residential care home, existing buildings and landscape to a SEN educational facility for people aged 3 to 18 years at The Maples, Dyson Wood, Tokers Green [in the Parish of Kidmore End] for Archway Building Consultancy Ltd (P23/S0371/FUL).

RESOLVED: That the following comments be submitted to the District Council in respect of the above application – "The proposed development of this site will undoubtedly lead to greater levels of traffic negotiating the junction of Rokeby Drive with Reading Road (the notoriously accident-ridden A4074), in Chazey Heath, in this Parish. In light of this, the Council OBJECTS to the application, unless steps are taken to improve the safety of the junction, for example by reducing the speed limit or the provision of ghost island protection, as with the access to the Club at Mapledurham".

(iv) Possible unauthorised development

Reference was made to the following, which it was suggested, could each constitute unauthorised development:

- stationing of a number of refrigerator trailers on land at Thatch Cott, Chazey Heath;
- stationing c200 portable toilet kiosks at the former wood yard, Trench Green;
- a barge moored in the Mapledurham Country Park;
- the use of seemingly non-degradable pellets at the paint balling concession on the Estate.

The Clerk advised that he had already referred the first point above to the District Council. It was suggested that reference should be made to the relevant planning permissions before pursuing the third point, while the fourth point was best addressed with Mr W Sleeman, on behalf of the Mapledurham Estate.

RESOLVED: 1 That the action of the Clerk be approved and confirmed.

2 That the District Council be alerted to the stationing of the portable toilet kiosks at the former wood yard, Trench Green.

3 That the issue of the pellets used at the paint balling concession be taken up with Mr W Sleeman, at the next meeting with him.

(v) Planning appeal

A copy letter from the Planning Inspectorate indicated that the inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, had allowed the appeal 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.

(vi) Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan

The County Council's Minerals and Waste Policy Team, by e-mail, advised that that Council had decided to progress with a new Minerals and Waste Plan, in conformity with National Planning Policy Framework. Ahead of consultation on issues and options, there would be a call for sites running from 1 March to 12 April 2023.

(vii) Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan

Reading Borough Council's Planning Policy Manager, notified, in an e-mail, that his Council had adopted the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan, developed jointly by his Council with Bracknell Forest Council, the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and Wokingham Borough Council, on 31 January 2023.

420 ROKEBY RECREATION GROUND

The Chairman reported that the customary Tokers Green/Chazey Heath Big Lunch was to be held on 7 May 2023, during the weekend of the coronation of King Charles III. The Sonning Common Green Gym would be tackling some vegetation work on 25 March 2023. Arrangements had been made for Fieldwork Rest and Play Ltd to attend the Recreation Ground to undertake repairs to some of the items of equipment, estimated to be half a day's work. The Chairman also reported on proposed further tree planting at the community orchard.

RESOLVED: That consent be given for the Tokers Green and Chazey Heath Big Lunch to be held at the Rokeby Recreation Ground on 7 May 2023.

421 MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS

The Chairman reported that the next meeting of the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee would be held on 15 March 2023.

422 PARISH HALL

Dr D W H Miles reported that the Parish Hall Committee held balances of c£11,000 at the bank, despite only one regular hirer of the Hall. The Committee had agreed to the siting of a bench in the “overflow” carpark and had arranged for the post and rail fence to be repaired around that carpark.

423 COUNTRYSIDE COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting of the Countryside Committee held on 24 January 2023 were received. (A copy of the minutes is attached to the Minutes to be signed.)

Members referred to the Spring Clean, the recutting of highways’ drainage grips, the resurfacing of Pond Lane at Lilley Farm, and the list of scheduled events on the Mapledurham Estate, which included a significant number of weddings at Mapledurham House.

424 HIGHWAY TREE PLANTING

By e-mail, the Senior Officer – Arboriculture (Trees) of the County Council had announced that his Council had secured enough new trees and budget to plant one tree per parish in the County by the end of March 2023. The trees would be planted on highway land.

As part of the programme, a Scots pine would be planted on the west side of the junction of Chazey Close and Rokeby Drive, Chazey Heath. The Chairman had suggested that this was an inappropriate location for a tree with such growth potential, and suggested that the west side of the junction of the A4074 road at the road to Trench Green would be better site. This latter site had been rejected by the officer, as being too close to a high-speed road, making access for maintenance less than ideal. The Chairman then suggested land at the top of Mapledurham hill, at the junction with Mill Lane.

Subsequently, the County Council’s Tree Officer – South proposed a site on the grass verge in Chazey Close, outside number 2. Members observed that that site was no better than the first proposal.

RESOLVED: That the action of the Chairman be approved and confirmed.

425 PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The District Council’s Returning Officer gave advance notice, in a letter, about the election of parish councillors scheduled to be held on 4 May 2023. Notice of election would be published no later than 20 March 2023, and nominations had to be delivered (by hand, not post) to the Council Offices in Abingdon by 4pm on 4 April 2023. The counts, for contested elections, would take place in Abingdon on 5 May.

The District Council did not intend to circulate nomination papers to clerks of parish councils for distribution to candidates, but had given a link to the Electoral Commission’s website from which a comprehensive parish nomination pack could be downloaded.

The Clerk advised that he would deliver nomination papers to the Returning Officer for candidates who wished to avail themselves of such a service.

426 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

RESOLVED: That the Annual Parish Meeting be held on 9 May 2023 at 7.30pm.

427 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The following accounts were passed for payment

Parish Council

Mr T M Whitaker – Purchase of commemorative tree	£553.59) Already
Shield Maintenance Ltd – Servicing dog hygiene bin	£10.39) paid
Mr T M Whitaker – Replacement cheque	£553.59)
Chiltern Society – Subscription	£30.00
Shield Maintenance Ltd – Servicing dog hygiene bin	£10.39
R F Penfold – Clerk’s salary (and arrears) net of PAYE	£217.52
H M Revenue & Customs – Income Tax deducted	£145.01

The Clerk reported that Barclays Bank plc had declined to honour the cheque drawn in favour of Mr Whitaker, as it “had not been signed in accordance with the mandate”. The Clerk had challenged this decision. A replacement cheque had been drawn, and this had been honoured by the bank.

Parish Hall Committee

DJ Scott Electrical Services Ltd – Fixing fault on heater	£81.48) Already
Airband Community Internet Ltd – Fibre Wifi	£20.00) paid
Mrs J E Bowen – Cleaning and sundries	£156.42