

MAPLEDURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held in the Parish Hall, Trench Green on 4 July 2023, commencing at 8.05pm, and concluded at 8.55pm.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Lord Thurlow, P H Dragonetti (district councillor).

22 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 9 May 2023 were taken as read, confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the addition of the name of Mr R W Taylor to the list of those present, from Minute 5 onwards.

23 REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR

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

- the purchase of automatic number plate recognition cameras by his Council to assist the enforcement of the traffic management measures introduced in the City of Oxford;
- the public consultation on his Council's household waste recycling centre strategy for 2023 to 2043;
- expenditure by his Council on the implementation of 20mph speed limits where communities request the change;
- payment of over £350,000 by his Council in 2022/23, to settle personal injury claims;
- poor performance by his Council on road pothole repairs.

24 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

In presenting his apologies for absence, Mr P H Dragonetti, the district councillor for the Kidmore End and Whitchurch ward, had submitted a report which covered

- the process for "calling-in" planning applications so that they are considered by his Council's Planning Committee;
- his Council's satisfaction survey about waste and rubbish collection;
- grants to improve energy efficiency and low carbon heating for low income households.

25 COMMEMORATIVE TREE

It was noted that the wording for the plaque for the oak tree, planted to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen Elizabeth 2, was still under consideration. In the meantime, Members were pleased to note that the tree seemed to have survived the hot and dry weather earlier in the Summer.

26 HIGHWAYS' MATTERS

(i) Road to Nuney Green – possible passing bays

In response to the request for the provision of passing places on the road to Nuney Green from the Trench Green to Crays Pond road, a Technician-Highway Records of the County Council drew attention, by e-mail, to the highway map which could be viewed online. He commented that, in general terms, the publicly maintained highway extended from boundary to boundary. From his site visit. The recorded highway on the road to Nuney Green was wider than it apparently seemed, with considerable tree growth either side of the carriageway. He suggested further contact with a colleague in Highways and Operations' Team.

RESOLVED: That the request for passing places be pursued further.

(ii) Mapledurham Hill – passing bays

Members restated their concerns about debris in the passing places on Mapledurham Hill.

RESOLVED: That the County Council be requested to remove the accumulations of debris in the passing places on Mapledurham Hill.

27 JUNCTION OF ROKEBY DRIVE AND READING ROAD (A4074 ROAD), CHAZEY HEATH

It was noted that the County Council had been prepared to arrange a vehicle speed survey on Reading Road, Chazey Heath, near its junction with Rokeby Drive, for £120 + VAT. Kidmore End Parish Council had indicated that it would meet half of the cost of the survey. Accordingly, the Chairman had authorised, as a matter of urgency, the ordering of the survey.

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

28 DONATIONS MADE BY FILMING COMPANIES

The Clerk reported another donation, this time by “Mary George Prod” (according to the bank statement), of £500.

29 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

The Responsible Financial Officer regretted that he had not yet been able to produce the receipts’ and payments’ accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 or the draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the same period. Notwithstanding that, he advised that the Council’s transactions in the year had been receipts of £7,026 and payments of £7,408. As this was the below the threshold for submission of the AGAR, he suggested that the Council submit an exemption certificate.

RESOLVED: That. a certificate of exemption be completed and submitted in respect of the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023.

30 PLANNING MATTERS - DECISIONS

The Council noted that the application for change of use and alterations to provide a specialist SEN educational facility at The Maples, Dysons Wood, Tokers Green [Parish of Kidmore End] (P23/S0371/FUL) had been withdrawn.

31 ROKEBY RECREATION GROUND

In an e-mail to the Chairman, Mr I Beale of Tokers Green asked whether the cutting of the grass in the southern field at the Rokeby Recreation Ground, including the community orchard, could be reduced to once per annum, in, say, September, as residents had commented very favourably about the grass and flowers in the field. Members were supportive of the suggestion, and the Chairman undertook to advise the contractor of the proposed change in the mowing regime.

The Chairman reported that some repairs had been made to the play equipment in the Recreation Ground: the “professional” inspection of the equipment was imminent.

RESOLVED: That the mowing contract be varied by reducing the cuts for the southern field at the Rokeby Recreation Ground to once annually, in September.

32 MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS

The Chairman reported that the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee would next meet on 19 July 2023, when it would elect a new Chairman. Significant local issues were acts of vandalism and vehicle parking associated with football, the latter being the subject of a number of complaints.

33 PARISH HALL

Dr D W H Miles advised that Dogs Be Dogs remained as the only regular hirer of the Parish Hall, although there had been, and would be, some lucrative occasional lettings. The fencing at the Hall had been repaired, but works were required to the facilities in the ladies' toilet.

34 COUNTRYSIDE COMMITTEE

The Council considered an e-mail from Lord Thurlow in which he passed on a complaint from a resident who had been frightened by the speed of the large tractors and their attachments, driving "too fast" on the public roads in the neighbourhood. The tractors were associated with harvesting work on farms on the Mapledurham Estate.

Dr D W H Miles reported that criminal activity had been discovered in the vicinity of Mill Farm, Mapledurham.

The Vice-Chairman indicated that he would be attending the pre-event inspection of the Reading Festival arranged by Reading Borough Council.

RESOLVED: That the complaint about the speed of tractors driven on the public roads in the Parish be raised with Mr W Sleeman, at the next meeting with the Mapledurham Estate.

35 COUNTY COUNCIL DAY

The Council noted a report by Dr D W H Miles on the County Council day conference, organised by the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, held on 27 June 2023 in Oxford.

36 HOUSE NUMBERING

By e-mail, the GIS Team Leader & Street Naming and Numbering Officer of the District Council advised that 3 Chazey Close, Chazey Heath had been converted into 2 dwellings, to be numbered 3 and 3A Chazey Close.

37 CAMPAIGN TO EXTEND THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CHILTERN'S AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

The Council was reminded of the campaign involving other parishes in southern South Oxfordshire to seek the inclusion of the whole of those parishes in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Members were further reminded that 2 areas of the Parish were not presently included in the AONB, viz

- the River Thames flood meadows west of bridleway 13, and
- the land east of the A4074 road, south of Rokeby Drive, Chazey Heath.

Members recalled the Council's previous support for the campaign, and its previous decision not to spend any sum from the precept in support of it.

The Chairman reported on recent discussions by the Joint Parishes Action Group (JPAG) which was driving the campaign. The consultants undertaking landscape identification investigations in support of the campaign had yet to commence the exercise in the Parish, but the work was understood likely to cost c£1800. The Chairman suggested that the Council seek a grant, from an external source, to meet the cost of the landscape survey of the 2 areas identified above, but, if that application was unsuccessful, to make a contribution of £500 to the campaign from the monies donated by film-makers (see Minute 28 above).

RESOLVED: 1 that an application be made to the district councillor's fund for a grant of £1800 towards the cost of the landscape study of the 2 areas in Parish not presently included in the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

2 That if the application is unsuccessful, a contribution of £500 me made to the Joint Parishes Action Group, to be paid from the donations made by film companies.

38 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The following accounts were passed for payment

Parish Council

Mr D Thornton – Tree guards for community orchard	£130.50) Already
Shield Maintenance Ltd – Servicing dog hygiene bin	£10.39) paid
South Oxfordshire District – Costs of election	£200.00)
Mr R W Taylor – Website management fee (reimbursement)	£84.84
Gallagher – Insurance premium	£1904.26
Shield Maintenance Ltd – Servicing dog hygiene bin	£10.39

Parish Hall Committee

R W Butler – Hedge cutting and fence repairs	£1620.00) Already
Airband Community Internet Ltd – Fibre Wifi	£20.00) paid
SSE – Electricity	£625.72