

The Parish Council of St. Helen Without

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 6th January 2014 at the Community Centre, Dalton Barracks at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. G. Fitzgerald (in the chair), M Bailey, M. Gilbert, C. Parkin, C. Priestley, B. Rogers, M Russell-Taylor and V. Talbot

In attendance: Mr John Higgs, District Cllr Catherine Webber and George Edmonds-Brown (Clerk).

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr K. Houlden and from County Councillor Richard Webber.

2. Declarations of Personal or Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Cllr Talbot declared that she lived next to the north farmyard that would be the subject of discussion. Cllr Fitzgerald declared that he was a member of the WADS Youth Club Board.

3. Matters raised by –

a) Members of the public

Mr Adam French, Youth Worker at the WADS Youth Club and Community Link-Up Project Manager of the Oxfordshire Association for Young People (OAYP) attended the meeting. The WADS Youth Club is working well; it has an average attendance of 20 mainly in the 11 to 14 age group split equally between boys and girls. A few months ago the Club was having a problem recruiting volunteers but following a campaign has now rectified the problem. They have organised a range of activities and visits including midnight ice skating, Dragons Den, arts based activities and Oxford University Rugby Club. With the contributions from the two parish councils, the £1 per session from attendees and other funding the club is breaking even, but is fundraising to meet the cost of trips out. Cllr Talbot asked about the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Mr French said this could be done through the OAYP. Mr Higgs said that the Dalton Barracks Youth Club was currently suspended due to the need for a youth worker. Mr French said that the OAYP had been awarded Lottery funding and could help. There was also the Community Covenant Scheme. Mr Higgs and Mr French exchanged contact details and agreed to work together to see if the Club could be re-established. Cllr Talbot suggested that there would be merit in changing the name of the Club to "Dalton Barracks and Shippon Youth Club."

JH

b) Attending Councillors and MOD

District Cllr Webber said that planning issues were currently disrupted and moving to Crowmarsh Gifford, although central planning would stay in Abingdon. She had met the Camp Commander at Dalton Barracks and they would let us know who is leaving Dalton Barracks before they go. Abingdon had fared rather better on flooding. Her next surgery would be at Marcham Community Shop on Saturday 8th February between 9am and 11am.

County Cllr Webber had asked her to report that the village gates and weed clearance would be done in the spring. Very little of the Community Grants had been used up and bids for up to £500 could still be considered. He was ready to help on speed limits and improving the Cholswell Road/Faringdon road junction.

Mr Higgs said that the bus shelter near the Spar shop used by the school buses was being surveyed by Health and Safety. The Regimental turn-overs are continuing; eventually there would be two regiments at Dalton Barracks. There would be no reduction in usage of the airfield. He would be circulating details of an International day at Dalton Barracks at the end of March at which 24 different ethnic groups would present information on their country of origin including food stalls and exhibitions. Local schools will be involved and the local community will be invited. There would be a Royal signals Motor Bike display in February. Mr Higgs agreed to let the Friends of Shippon have information on events; it would also be useful to have flyers in the Prince of Wales. Mr Higgs said that he had been trying to ascertain ownership of the wall on Cholswell Road to get it repaired. He was also consulting on road signage off Cholswell Road.

JH

A meeting needed to be arranged with the Commander at Dalton Barracks.

JH/MR-T/CP

4. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 25th November 2013

The minutes of the meeting of 25th November were approved and signed by the Chairman.

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5. Matters arising from the Minutes

a) Marking the Diamond Jubilee – community orchard & benches

Cllr Russell-Taylor said that a site had been identified for the Jubilee bench near the vandalised bus shelter on Cholswell Road.

b) Bus shelters: Sandleigh Road / Cholswell Road

The repairs to the Cholswell Road bus shelter were expected to be completed on 10th January. Biffa has been asked to clear the glass. The £250 excess on the Cholswell Road shelter hit by a bus had been refunded. The Sandleigh Road bus shelter was hit just before Christmas and more seriously in the last week. 4 panes are damaged one of which is broken and there is a slight tilt in the structure. It was agreed that a quote would be obtained for its repair. The order has been placed for the new bus stop on Besselsleigh Road.

GE-B

c) Community website and newsletter

The Community Newsletter copies for Shippon had been reduced to 50 copies. The website required work to develop it and introduce a system of updating. Cllr Rogers volunteered to represent St Helen Without Parish Council on a working group.

BR

d) Speeding and speed limits

Mr Kirkwood had reported the placing the advertisement had been delayed as his Manager, Mr David Tole, wished to visit the site before the consultation began. It was resolved that OCC should be asked to proceed as soon as possible as a matter of priority. It was suggested that a chicane near the white gates on Barrow Road might be a good road calming option.

GE-B

e) Community Governance Review

i. Dry Sandford

Following the joint meeting with Wootton Parish Council, Cllr Talbot proposed that the existing boundary between Wootton Parish and St Helen Without Parish should remain unchanged. This was seconded by Cllr Parkin, put to a vote and approved by 7 votes to 1. Cllr Fitzgerald voted against the motion as he considered that a third option of transferring the whole of Dry Sandford Ward to Wootton was preferable to transferring part of the Ward.

It was resolved that a letter should be sent to Mr David Buckle, Head of the VWHDC Governance Review Team along the following lines

“Thank you for your letter of 18 December setting out the Review Team’s Proposal for changing the boundary between the parishes of St Helen Without and Wootton in Dry Sandford.

St Helen Without Parish Council has looked closely at the proposal for transferring 187 properties and 388 electors from St Helen Without Parish to Wootton Parish, and has done so in the context of the factors, set out in the Review Team’s Terms of Reference, that the VWHDC will take into account in reaching its decision together with the DCLG Guidance of March 2010.

The Parish Council has also held a joint meeting with Wootton Parish Council to consider the proposal. Wootton Parish Council will be responding separately but the meeting did reveal a high level of agreement on the key issues.

St Helen Without Parish Council considers that the proposal would impact adversely on the identity and cohesion of the community in Dry Sandford and would lead to weaker governance without bringing any benefits to the residents of either parish. The Parish Council would be grateful, therefore, if the Review Team would recommend that there should be no changes in the present boundaries. This response was approved by a vote of 8 to 1 at its meeting on 6th January (the vote against was not in favour of the Review Team’s proposal).

The Council has the following detailed comments on the impact of the proposal –

Identity

Dry Sandford has a longstanding and distinct identity. It was first recorded in the Doomsday Book as Sanford in 1086 and became known as the village of Dry Sandford in the 18th Century. St Helens Church, the Dry Sandford Primary School and the Recreation Ground (which was gifted to the Parish of St Helen Without in 1948) are key elements in the Ward. There is a strong identification with the Parish of St Helen Without which extends throughout the whole Dry Sandford Ward. In the County Council Boundary Review residents of Cothill in the Parish strongly argued that they identified with Dry Sandford and resisted a proposal to move them into Marcham. The current proposal to split Dry Sandford by moving the school, recreation ground and 187 houses into Wootton leaving behind the Church and 65 properties would destroy Dry Sandford as a single entity. Its identity would be lost as it would be absorbed into the much larger village of Wootton.

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Community Cohesion

The Church and the school provide the glue which holds the community together. It is true that residents of Dry Sandford make use of the facilities in Wootton, particularly the shops and the Community Centre, but these facilities are used by residents of several parishes in the area as being the most developed between Oxford and Abingdon. St Helens Church and Dry Sandford Primary School, which would be separated by the proposal, have close links and the school also has links with Cothill School. St Helen Without Parish Council has worked closely with Wootton to support the Wootton & Dry Sandford Community Centre and the Youth Club and more recently the allotments. If most of Dry Sandford were moved into Wootton this support would diminish or disappear. Efforts have also been made to engage residents in the rest of St Helen Without with the facilities in Wootton via the link with Dry Sandford.

Governance

Dry Sandford Ward of St Helen Without Parish Council currently has 5 councillors, three of whom live in the part of Dry Sandford that would be transferred under the proposal. The remaining part of Dry Sandford Ward would have great difficulty in recruiting councillors. An imbalance between Shippon and Dry Sandford Wards would be created damaging the current creative and cooperative relationship between the two wards. Residents in the part of Dry Sandford transferred would lose all or part of their representation as they would become a relatively small part of the new Wootton parish. Suffice to say that the proposal would seriously undermine governance at parish level.

District Council

The proposal would not affect representation at District Council level.

County Council

The County Council border would need to be re-drawn leaving residents of Dry Sandford split between two county councillors.

Boundaries

The original boundary was a stream and although it is true that development has blurred boundaries this is an on-going process and has little impact on the identity felt by residents.

Practical matters

The proposal would bring no practical benefits to residents in St Helen Without, in fact those transferred would see an increase of 33.01% in the parish element of their council tax. Those remaining in St Helen Without PC would see an increase of 22.96%. Wootton residents would see a small drop of 11.39% although this could be offset by outsourcing some services currently performed voluntarily by St Helen Without councillors (e.g. playground inspections). St Helen Without PC has made significant investment in the Sandleigh Road Recreation Ground and has had preliminary discussions on further investment; it is less likely that this investment would take place with a change of ownership. The joint efforts of the two parish councils in areas such as bus services and the Community Centre would diminish significantly as would their access to grants at county council level.”

GE-B

ii. Cothill

Cllr Parkin proposed the following motion. It was seconded by Cllr Gilbert and approved unanimously.

“St Helen Without Parish Council fully supports the proposal by the VWHDC Review Team to move the whole of Cothill into the parish, subject to the views of residents in the consultation process.”

GE-B

f) Shippon Plan developments

Mr Green had indicated that he was about to re-submit the planning application after taking third party advice. If the Vale reconsiders they will be pursuing their farmyard applications in due course

g) Representation on the WADS Community Centre Board

Cllr Rogers agreed to represent the Council as an observer on the WADS Community Centre Board. **BR/GE-B**

6. Matters raised by members of the Council

Cllr Talbot asked about the possibility of financing planting inside the MOD wall.

JH

Cllr Gilbert said that the southern part of Church Lane needed attention.

GE-B

Cllr Talbot said that there was a need for a “No Through Road” sign on Faringdon Road

GE-B

7. Finance

a) Recommendations of the Finance Sub Committee

The following recommendations of the Finance Committee were considered.

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- i. The Finance Committee noted the projected 2013/14 outturn having satisfied itself that the expenditure on damaged and vandalised bus shelters was accurately offset by insurance claims, refunds and VAT.
- ii. The Finance Committee recommended that the proposed 2014/15 be accepted (subject to adjustments being made following the decisions of the Parish Council). The provision for grass cutting should remain at 9 cuts but the contractor should be told that 8 cuts were approved, the 9th cut being retained in case of need due to variations in the growing season.
- iii. The Finance Committee recommended that the proposed reserves be accepted subject to the rider that funds can be vired between sub-heads. In this context Cllr Houlden had received a quote for £9,500 for 8 pieces of adult playground equipment. If this were accepted and subject to the Community Governance Review the required funding from the reserves would depend on the level of grants available.
- iv. The Finance Committee recommended that the Precept bid for 2014/15 should be set at £16,900 to represent the losses due to vandalism and dog bin increases. It further recommended that the SHW newsletter directly links the increase to these factors. The Finance Committee recommended that the grant of £125 should be accepted without reducing the Precept bid.
- v. The Finance Committee recommended that the Risk Assessment Register be approved.
- vi. The Finance Committee recommended that the Assets Register be approved.
- vii. The Finance Committee accepted that an increment due to be paid on 1.10.2012 had been missed in error and recommended that the Clerk's increments should be adjusted accordingly. This would result in the Clerk's salary being increased from £402.90 per month to £416.07 per month with effect from 1.1.2014 and back pay of £177 being paid.
- viii. The Finance Committee accepted that the Clerk's contract required expenses to be reviewed annually. On considering the options the Finance Committee recommended that the non-mileage element (currently £273 per annum) should in future be increased by the rate of inflation. Inflation from 1.10.2010 to 1.10.2013 was 10.1%. The Finance Committee recommended that with effect from 1.10.2013 expenses should increase to £300.57 per annum plus the mileage element which would continue to be paid at the OALC rate.

GE-B

Cllr Fitzgerald proposed that the recommendations of the Finance Committee be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Talbot and approved unanimously.

b) Accounts for payment

Payee	Purpose	Total	VAT
George Edmonds-Brown	Salary January 2014	£241.74	
George Edmonds-Brown	Expenses January 2014	£42.25	
Post Office Ltd	HM R & C PAYE Oct-Dec	£483.48	
Queensbury Shelters Ltd.	Sandleigh Road shelter repairs	£242.95	£40.49
South & Vale CAB	2013/14 grant	£120.00	
Oxford Assn for the Blind	2013/14 grant	£50.00	
Wootton Parish Council	Allotments contrib. – 2 nd tranche	£500.00	

It was resolved that the above payments should be made.

c) Applications for grants

None

8. Planning

a) Decision Notices

Ref:	P13/V2197/HH
Date	25.10.2013
Description:	Conversion of existing bungalow to a two storey dwelling (chalet bungalow) including two storey rear extension, re-roofing and internal alterations
Address	25 Sandleigh Road, Wootton, Abingdon OX13 6DP
St Helen Without PC's comments	Object; overdevelopment of site
Decision	Withdrawn 9.12.2013

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Ref:	P13/V2334/HH
Date	8.11.2013
Description:	Propose 2 no. new houses, car parking and amenity spaces. New works to widen road way and provide new pedestrian footpath connection
Address	Land adjacent to Elm Tree Walk, Barrow Road, Shippon
St Helen Without PC's comments	No objection
Decision	Withdrawn 19.12.2013

Ref:	P13/V2361/HH
Date	19.11.2013
Description:	Proposed loft extension to existing loft conversion
Address	85 Lashford Lane, Dry Sandford, Oxford OX13 6EB
St Helen Without PC's comments	No objection
Decision	Permit 19.12.2013

It was resolved to note the Planning Authority's decisions

b) Applications dealt with between meetings

Ref:	P13/V2238/HH
Date	21.10.2013
Description:	Erection of extension and granny flat
Address	75 Besselsleigh Road, Abingdon OX13 6DX
St Helen Without PC's comments	Object; overdevelopment of site

It was resolved to confirm the Planning Committee's action

9. Sandleigh Road Recreation Ground

a) Inspection report – January 2014

Cllr Gilbert carried out the January inspection. He noted that the dog bin was full and a bigger bin was required. 3, possibly 4, trees in the community orchard were dead and needed replacing in the spring or autumn.

b) Sandleigh Road Playing Field Inspection Roster

January 2014	Cllr Martin Gilbert
February	Cllr Carole Priestley
March	Cllr Vicki Talbot
April	Cllr Ken Houlden
May	Cllr Madeleine Russell-Taylor
June	Cllr Geoff Fitzgerald
July	Cllr Caroline Parkin
August	Cllr Brenda Rogers
September	Cllr Mac Bailey
October	Cllr Martin Gilbert
November	Cllr Carole Priestley
December	Cllr Vicki Talbot
January 2015	Cllr Ken Houlden
February	Cllr Madeleine Russell-Taylor
March	Cllr Geoff Fitzgerald

It was resolved to accept the above roster

10. Correspondence

Cllr Fitzgerald went through the correspondence and it was resolved to note it and his comments.

NALC Members update November/December

There was a Roles and Responsibilities course for Clerks and Councillors on 5th March at Didcot

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NALC DCLG Local Government Financial statement
NALC Chairman's Briefing – Council Tax Benefit Support Grant
LCR Winter 2013

It was resolved to set up a working group on how better to communicate with residents

GF

Thames Valley Police – Public Meeting 13.1.2014

Letter from Adam French OAYP

ORCC – Community-led Neighbourhood Planning Conference – 25 January

ORCC News Bulletin - December

11. Cllrs reports and items for future agendas

None.

12. Date of next meeting

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Monday 24th February 2014 at the Dry Sandford Primary School.

It was resolved that the Council would meet on the following dates –

31 March	Dalton Barracks
12 May (APM & AGM)	Dry Sandford Primary School
23 June	Dalton Barracks
4 August	Dry Sandford Primary School
15 September	Dalton Barracks
27 October	Dry Sandford Primary School
8 December	Dalton Barracks
19 January 2015	Dry Sandford Primary School
2 March	Dalton Barracks
13 April	Dry Sandford Primary School

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.40 pm

Signed.....Date.....