

The Parish Council of St. Helen Without

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 30th October 2023 at 7.30 p.m.
At Shippon Church Hall**

Present: Cllrs. M. Page (in the Chair), M. Littleboy, R. Bahu, D. Churchouse, N. Benchiba-Savenius

In attendance: Cllr R. Clegg, Anna Clarke (Clerk)

1. Apologies

Cllrs C. Parkin, R. Webber, Mr David O'Hara

2. Declarations of Personal or Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

3. Matters raised by members of the public

Noise from Airfield Motor Cross Events

Update from the Chair

Cllr Page has had discussions with the Army. It appears, although not yet in writing, that the programme the Army will be putting out for next year, will contain a maximum of 14 days of noisy motorsport events. There will be a further 14 days of non-motorsport events including fireworks and lower noise level events, such as model aircraft. The Army hasn't yet completed the programme, due to dealing with multiple FOI requests and frequent communications with Environmental Health and Planning. Cllr Page will circulate it to those people that provided email addresses, when it is completed. MP

Alongside, the programme of events, Cllr Page has also made it clear that, from the PC's point of view, the egress from Honeybottom Lane, one of which is located on a blind bend, should no longer be used for events. All events should be signposted to the main entrance off Barrow Road. The PC would urge that this is written into the Events contracts when licensed.

As far as this year is concerned, there is still 1 fireworks event and 2 motor sport events scheduled. The focus now will be on the future programme, particularly concentrating on noisy events, as it seems that is the main concern of the majority of residents. Cllr Page was not witness to anything in the programme about commercial motor cycle events.

A resident relayed how an accident had taken place on 29th October where a remote control aircraft, seemingly from the model aircraft event on the Airfield, had crashed into his neighbour's house causing extensive damage. Cllr Page advised that this was not the forum to progress this issue of what was, hopefully, an isolated, unfortunate incident. The proper redress would be between the Mod, the individual involved and the insurers. If they were not flying with the appropriate licence, it can be taken up with the Civil Aviation Authority. Cllr Page will however, mention it when speaking to David O'Hara and Lt Col Gartside. MP

A resident asked if there had been any headway on fireworks and Rift Airsoft? Cllr Page will check with Lt Col Gartside re Rift Airsoft, as it was not mentioned on the Programme. The Army have said that the Fireworks will continue, however, it will be limited to 2 events a year, 1 noisy and 1 lower noise.

A deal was struck in 2000 between the Army & the Vale, which cites the 14 days of motor sport and 14 of non-motor sport events. Cllr Page would like to see a local agreement, which not only cites the number of days but also the Ingress / Egress locations for events and the length of events. If it is limited to 14 days, then it can justifiably be expected that they keep to that number. The programme once out, may be subject to revision, however, this is generally for Army events.

Concerns raised about the Army keeping to the Programme

The Army have already advertised for 5 track days for February / March 2024.

An FOI request has revealed that the Army has just renewed licences for motor sport events for another 12 months. Dr Mori Neshat to email these details to Cllr Page to take up with David O'Hara.

There is a need to push to get all this in writing.

4. Attending Councillors and MOD

Cllr Robert Clegg

Airfield Noise

30 residents have emailed the Head of Housing Environment complaining about the noise levels and lack of action from the Vale. They have agreed that they haven't done enough and have said that there

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are several open investigations. They have had a number of meetings with David O'Hara. The Vale have written to the Army requesting noise reduction and shortening of events and will serve them with an Abatement Order if satisfactory action is not taken.

Royal Logistic Corp – have been doing some green work litter picking along Long Tow and weeding at the Marcham War Memorial.

Brown Bin – there will be one extra collection between 30th October & 14th November on the usual bin day, where up to 4 extra sacks of natural garden waste will be collected.

Planning – the Secretary of State wrote to the Vale about Processing of Planning Apps at the Vale being too slow, which would result in special measures if not resolved. The Vale responded that this was as a result of Covid and have now been cleared.

Dalton Barracks SPD – The PC was offered enhanced status in the preparation of the SPD, however, have not heard much about it in the last 12 months. It would be extremely concerning for the PC if work has been taking place on the SPD, which they haven't been involved in and would strongly object to being handed it as a fait accompli. Cllr Clegg to follow up where the SPD is up to. RC

A number of potential development sites have been logged, including the Army Playing Field. It may be pertinent to make an approach to the Princes Playing Field Trust.

Local Plan – Vale officers that were busy coming up with the new Local Plan, were sidetracked by the HIF 1 issue, however, will now be returning to working on the LP. The draft should be out by 20th November.

5. Airfield Noise

Discussed under item 3.

6. Minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2023

The Minutes were reviewed and adopted.

7. Matters arising from the Minutes

Action Sheet has been circulated and noted.

Neighbourhood Plan - has been reviewed. Small changes have been made such as bus routes. It is not possible to make substantial changes without going to Public consultation. Heritage routes still haven't been done but will be taken forward now.

WaDS – meeting with Wootton PC has been put on the backburner for the time being as there has been a change of Chair at Wootton and the issue is being resolved internally.

8. Dalton Barracks

Discussed under Item 4.

9. Matters raised by members of the Council

Under AOB

10. The Clerk will be leaving at the beginning of November. OALC have suggested a range of options with regards to a replacement:

- Employ a Clerk like for like, Administration only / RFO & RF
- Employ a Clerk as above and in addition to represent the Council in all meetings/comms
- Engage the services of a Clerk from another PC – there are 'super Clerks' who work for a number of different councils simultaneously.
- Employ someone to do meetings and someone else (e.g. book keeping co), to do the financial aspect of the job.

It was agreed to go like for like, a Clerk to carry out the administrative aspects of the Council and to be the RFO and RO. In the meantime, the PC will look at a staged approach, looking at what needs to be done on a monthly basis. Cllr Littleboy will do the Agenda and Minutes for the December meeting. Cllr Page to see if anyone from the original Neighbourhood Plan group can help out.

The Employment subcommittee will put together a JD. OALC will carry out a job evaluation for £100 on request.

The PC will look at setting up a PO Box Address.

11. Internal Audit Engagement Letter

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The Parish Council considered and accepted the letter of engagement and its terms and agreed the fee of £140. The letter was signed by the Chair and Clerk and will be forwarded to the internal auditor, Deborah O'Brien.

12. Finance and Administrative Matters

a) Accounts for payment

| Payee | Purpose | Total | VAT |
|------------------------|--|----------------|------|
| Parish Clerk | Salary September, October & Early Nov | £1422.90 | |
| Clerk Expenses | Expenses September & October, Stamps & Envelopes | £104 £11.89 | |
| Microsoft | *Annual Subs | £59.99 | |
| ICO | *Data Protection Fee | £40 | |
| HMRC | *Fee | £100 | |
| Wordpress | *Domain renewal | £288 | |
| Royal British Legion | *Wreaths & donation | £74.98 | |
| Parish Clerk | Ink cartridge | £64.84 | |
| Norton | *Annual Subs | £64.99 | |
| MRH Services | Playground inspection, playground repairs & SID relocation | £548.36 | |
| BGG | Grass cutting recreation ground / verges | £1140 | £190 |
| ST Grounds Maintenance | Bin Emptying September | £20 | |
| Mike Page | Paper | £23.98 | |
| Alan Pullinger | *Woodchip Rec Ground Entrance Path | £200 | |

*Paid by Clerk

b.) Grants

None

13. Correspondence

Oxfordshire County Council

Town and Parish Council Charter Summit on 26th October at 6:30pm – 8:30pm, County Hall, OX1 1LT. This event is the first stage of our three-part engagement and consultation plan for the development of an Oxfordshire Local Councils Charter, organised by the Charter Working Group (a collaborative group made up of representatives from the county council, district councils, Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC) and parishes and towns). The Charter aims to set out a mutual commitment for Oxfordshire's councils to work together and strengthen partnership working to improve services and outcomes for our residents, with emphasis on working with our 300+ Town and Parish Councils.

Temporary Road Closure at Wantage, A417 Reading Road (jct with Elder Way)

A request has been received from Imperial Traffic Management for a temporary road closure to apply to a length of A417, whilst essential resurfacing works are carried out from 23 October 2023 up to and including 27 October 2023. This will operate between 21:00 and 06:00.

Oxfordshire County Council are asking residents to comment on the new draft health and wellbeing strategy which is open for comment until 12 November.

Oxfordshire County Council are now asking whether it makes sense for you in your community? Get involved and have your say <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/health-wellbeing>

OALC

September Update

Vale Communications

A new Oxfordshire air quality website has launched today – providing up air quality guidance and resources for across the county. The [website \(www.oxonair.uk\)](http://www.oxonair.uk) which has been created in partnership between Oxford City, Cherwell, West Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, and Oxfordshire County Council - aims to integrate all relevant air quality-related information from all district councils in Oxfordshire under one single platform. The platform replaces <https://oxfordshire.air-quality.info/>, and includes several new features, including:

- Air pollution forecasts up to five days in advance
- Air pollution alerts for Oxfordshire
- Air quality footprint calculator

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- Air quality pledges for individuals
- Information on individual council air quality projects across the county

Voter Registration

This month, all households should have received a letter requiring you to check the voter registration details of everyone over the age of 16 living there. When you receive it, please read the letter carefully and, if you are required to either confirm or update your details, please do so as quickly as possible – this will help to ensure we won't need to contact you again to confirm the information. To find out more, visit <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/local-democracy-and-elections/elections-and-voting/the-electoral-register-and-annual-canvass/check-your-voter-registration-details/>

Could you become a tree guardian?

Oxfordshire County Council is planning to plant thousands of trees on public land across Oxfordshire with hundreds having already been planted. Now they need help to take care of the young trees, which need daily watering and regular weeding in spring and summer to help them establish and thrive. To find out about becoming a tree guardian for a community tree near you see the [Climate Action website](#). If you'd like to find your nearest community tree, get some advice, or just let the Tree Service know that a tree is being cared for then get in touch with them at tree.planting@oxfordshire.gov.uk

New Cabinet Members confirmed at Vale of White Horse District Council

The new cabinet has been confirmed as <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/local-democracy-and-elections/councillors-committees-and-meetings/council-cabinet-and-committees/the-cabinet/>

Important Information on ShopAppy

Over the past three years, we've partnered with ShopAppy to provide an online marketplace for independent High Street businesses located in South and Vale. Unfortunately, ShopAppy has notified us as of today (Friday 6 October) they have had no option but to cease to trade. We have contacted all relevant suppliers as a matter of urgency to ensure all advertising is removed as quickly as possible, some of which have already been actioned. However, some of these are still live and until our suppliers take these down, there is a chance that our residents will see these advertisements. The adverts encourage the viewer to click through to the site (which will shortly be taken down). We will also update both South and Vale websites today. If you receive any queries from your residents or local businesses, please direct them to the Economic Development team via business.support@southandvale.gov.uk

The Vale steps up to help families who supported the UK's military operations in Afghanistan

An innovative new arrangement will support the welfare of families from Afghanistan who have contributed to the UK's military operations in their country. Families who had put themselves at risk by working and fighting for the UK, were forced to flee their home country when the Taliban regained control. Since then, many of them have spent more time than is suitable in hotel accommodation provided by the Home Office. Once finalised, the new arrangement - which is part of a UK-wide scheme - will mean that currently unused Ministry of Defence housing can be used as temporary accommodation. The Vale of White Horse District Council will lease and manage the properties and be responsible for maintenance and repairs - effectively acting as landlords for our Afghan guests. This will provide a suitable and stable home for around 18 months to 36 months, with the council using that time to help the families find and move into privately rented homes. During this time, the council will be working with county-wide partners to provide all the support the families need to live independently and settle into life in the Vale, including help with language, education and employment - although many are already working. Government grants are funding the accommodation and our support for families from Afghanistan. The first families will be moving into unoccupied Ministry of Defence houses in Watchfield and Shrevenham soon.

Community First Oxfordshire – Annual General Meeting 2023

Wednesday 8 November, Online via Zoom, 13:00-14:30

Plans for reservoir continue despite local objections

Plans for an expanded controversial reservoir near Abingdon have again been criticised by local communities, with Vale of White Horse District Council urging water providers to consider alternative solutions. The council has reaffirmed its [objections to the reservoir in a formal letter to Thames Water](#) following submission of their revised Draft Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) to government. An alliance of the six water companies in the South East, known as Water Resources South East or WRSE, also submitted its revised draft Water Resources South East regional plan to government at the same time. The draft WRMP not only progresses plans for the reservoir, known as the South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO), but proposed to increase the capacity by 50% from

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100Mm³ to 150Mm³. Meanwhile, the proposed Severn to Thames Water transfer has been downgraded as an option. A reservoir would also come at the expense of significant carbon emissions which the council argues would impact the district's ability to become carbon neutral by 2045.

Residents urged to 'Check it before you chuck it'

We are urging residents to 'Check it before you chuck it' as part of a drive to increase the amount and quality of recycling in the district. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have launched a new campaign asking people to check before they chuck items in their recycling bins. An estimated 3,340 tonnes* – the equivalent of just over 200 double decker buses – of items that residents put in their recycling bins during 2022/23 were not actually recyclable – that's 11 per cent of all the contents of our green bins for the whole year!

Online forum on supporting home energy efficiency upgrades

The council's Climate and Biodiversity team is hosting a free online forum to help town and parish councils and community groups support residents to reduce their energy use and costs. This takes place on Tuesday 14 November at 6-7.15pm. The speakers will talk about the support that is available and some inspiring examples of local projects to help residents. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions.

climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk

14. Cllrs reports and items for future agendas

None

15. AOB

Emails

It was agreed that each Cllr will set up a council business only gmail account, which the council email will bounce to. Cllr Bahu to advise. ALL

Cllr Bahu to set up a new gmail account for the Clerk's St Helen Without email to bounce to. RB

Trees – Cllr Churchouse is following up about getting 3 trees planted on the recreation ground to commemorate the King's coronation. DC

Defibrillator – SCAS are providing defibrillator training in 2 sessions to Shippon residents. It was agreed to give them a £100 donation.

Clerk – the Council would like to express sincere thanks to Anna for her loyalty, commitment and diligent service to the Council over the last 8 years and would particularly like to commend her willingness to work whatever hours it took, rather than stick to her contracted hours.

16. Date of next meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting will be held at 7.30p.m. on Monday 11th December 2023 at Shippon Church Hall.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.00 p.m.

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

Minutes & Agendas can be found on our website at: <https://sthelenwithout-pc.co.uk>