

## East Hagbourne Parish Council

### Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting duly convened and held on Thursday 26th April 2018 at East Hagbourne Pavilion

Present were Cllrs David Rickeard (Chairman), Iain Duff, Cordelia Gover and Jean Elliott; Allison Leigh (Clerk to the Council); County Councillor Simon Clark, District Councillor Jane Murphy and members of the public.

Apologies were received from Cllr Derek Button.

#### **1) Welcome and Introductions.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone and indicated that this is not a Parish Council meeting, but rather a meeting for the public. D. Rickeard introduced S. Clark and re-introduced A. Leigh. It was reported that the 2017 minutes had been approved and are on the website.

**2) Neighbourhood Plan Update:** C. Topping, Chairman of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group presented a report on the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### *NP Consultation headlines*

\*We received a total of 82 responses. Thank you to all who commented and have contributed.

\*Of these 3 were from local bodies such as shop committee/village hall committee

\*12 were from local landowners/their advisers commenting on local green spaces

\*9 were from landowners/developers on other land e.g. Catesby, Persimmon, Grainger, Taylor Wimpey. Many of these were very helpful remarks.

\*6 were from National /regional bodies such as Sport England, Natural England and Didcot Garden Town. Comments from SODC and Didcot Town Council have not yet been received.

\*42 from private individuals e.g. our residents

All comments have been collated and reviewed. They have been identified by number and have been responded to by the Steering Group.

#### *What Happens Next*

\*The steering Group are drafting a report on the consultation and making amendments to policies with advice from SODC/CFO/AECOM. There are some large changes in some policies. The main policy points to be addressed are:

- policies must be positive
- policies must not place a cap on development
- policies must be flexible (so they are not out of date if Local Plan is updated)
- policies must relate to planning applications outside as well as within the village envelope.

- Revised policies for Green Spaces, Green Gaps, views.

\*The amended plan will then be resubmitted to SODC.

\*Once SODC have approved it, it will go out for re-consultation for a further 6 weeks. SODC will lead and manage this process.

\*During this period SODC will appoint a planning inspector to review the plan as reamended following the second consultation.

\*The inspector will examine the whole Plan in detail and propose amendments to SODC. This may involve one or more public sessions.

\*Once the Inspector has delivered his/her report, SODC has to approve the changes made in consultation with the Steering Group.

\*Following this, hopefully as early as possible in Autumn, we will all get to vote in a referendum.

### **3) SODC and OCC activities:**

**OCC:** S. Clark of OCC introduced himself. He talked about large strategic issues with regards to planning. He indicated that OCC can only object if there are proper, legally valid planning objections.

He indicated that he is lobbying the traffic department at OCC to object to the Orchestra planning application.

He reported that he is the Deputy Leader of Didcot Town Council and indicated that Didcot does not wish to 'gobble up other villages'.

He touched on the Oxfordshire-Cambridge expressway and indicated there would be more information in June.

He reported that OCC spends 80% of council tax on adult and children social care. 2% of people use 50% of the budget. There are 700 children in care in the county – the number of children in care has doubled over the last 2 years.

He indicated that the pothole situation is not good and is looking into getting some more money for this.

The issue of flooding by Hagbourne Mill was discussed and it was reported that this is a low-lying area, but the specific reasons for the problems are unclear.

**SODC:** D. Rickeard wished J. Murphy success in her new position as Leader of the Council.

J. Murphy touched on the Oxfordshire Growth Board and indicated it is a joint spatial plan.

She indicated that SODC should have its comment on the NP by tomorrow.

She indicated she wants the best for South Oxfordshire and welcomes anyone to visit her in her office anytime. She indicated that the SODC offices may move to Crowmarsh in 2 years.

There was discussion of the Didcot Spine Road that OCC have asked Local Plans to endorse. This covers land to the south of Didcot, if developed, and lies to the west of Park Road - the current proposal does not come through East Hagbourne.

She indicated she does not believe Orchestra will get through on appeal due to an expected report from highways.

She talked about her grant scheme and noted that the following monies had been dispensed:  
East Hagbourne – defibrillator  
Cholsey – fence  
Brightwell – play equipment  
Pig Roast – South Moreton

### **2) Parish Council Activities**

#### ***Chairman's Report: David Rickeard, Chairman***

Welcome to the 2018 Annual Parish Meeting. Although this meeting is convened by East Hagbourne Parish Council it is not a Parish Council meeting, but a meeting of East Hagbourne parish residents. This meeting is to inform you what your council has been doing over the past year, to highlight plans for the future and to listen to your comments.

We have held ten regular Parish Council meetings this year. We started the year with seven councillors, but as a result of two resignations we now number only five, with three vacancies.

We welcome our new County Councillor Simon Clarke, who was elected in May 2017 and District Councillor Jane Murphy. Both of these have been very active supporting our needs in their own organisations. I thank all these councillors and our Clerk, Allison Leigh, for their support over the past year.

The past year has been notable, though, for the large number of people who have contributed to the ongoing planning battles that we face. Mind the Green Gap have continued to be active through the Grainger Judicial Review hearing and have given support to other resident groups fighting unplanned development at St Hugh's Rise, land by Hagbourne Village Hall, land behind Blewbury Road and two applications on Park Road. Thanks are due to all those local residents who have raised their voices and taken part in the campaigns.

The Neighbourhood plan Steering Group has been supported for the site allocation discussion by a Community Group of 14 additional people who undertook this important task in a very responsible way, resulting in a decision to allocate the land next to Hagbourne Village Hall as the most suitable for development. Thanks are due to them and to all the people who responded to the consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan process is not an easy road and we know that the allocation decision was not welcomed by everyone, nor are several of the land owners happy with the proposals to protect Green Spaces around the parish. As our Steering Group Chairman, Crispin Topping, has explained, the Plan is being updated and improved and will hopefully emerge stronger before it is formally submitted to SODC, who together with CFO and AECOM have provided considerable support and guidance over the past year.

I have to report, though, that the picture of community involvement is not all rosy. As reported above, the Parish Council currently has three vacancies and we really do need more active councillors to share the load. The management of the Pavilion and Recreation Ground again falls on very few shoulders and we have not been able to find new volunteers to serve on the committee. As a result, both organisations are actively looking into employing people to carry out some of the essential tasks, although we do still need volunteer help.

On a more positive note, you will have seen the new village web site which presents a new modern look and should overcome the reliability problems we experienced with the old platform. Thanks to Cllr Cordelia Gover, our web master Chris Alberry and Andy Barmer for bringing this to fruition together with our web designer and developer Pete Borlace and Dave Woods. Now it is up to all of us to provide the information that will keep our site alive and vibrant.

Through all the high profile events of the year, we should not forget the ongoing efforts of all the other activities in the Parish - the Village Hall, Shop, Allotments, Neighbourhood Watch, Hagbourne Environment Group and all the other activities where volunteers make our community so special.

As usual, I will conclude by mentioning upcoming events:

- Please support the annual litter blitz this coming Saturday 28th April, led this year by Sara James - 10am at the Village Car Park
- And the Fun Run and walk on Monday 7th May

Finally, I remind you that all Parish Council meetings are open to the public, and you are always welcome to attend and contribute - you can find the agendas on notice boards or the web site where you will also find minutes of previous meetings.

***Financial Statement: Allison Leigh, Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer***

The financial activity for the year 2017-18 showed an anticipated return to near normality as expected.

The rebuilding of the Car Park at the Recreation Ground was completed during the year meaning that Capital expenditure has decreased.

The end of the Grainger Planning proposal and subsequent Appeal also brought a decrease in the level of expenditure on items of an exceptional nature, although this was somewhat tempered by expenditure related to the Greenlight planning proposal of some £1,034.

The Parish Council sought a moderate 0.72% increase in Precept in 2017/8 and has sought no increase in the current year.

Other Lease and Allotment income came in as per Budget expectations.

Normal running expenditure came out nearly on budget at some £19,000. There were only two main exceptions one of which was that the financial provision made for the development of the new Village Website of some £3,800 was not incurred as the Invoices did not come in until after the year end. Of course the money previously allocated for this project will be carried forward to the current year. The other exception was that the expected provision of £750 for financial support of the Pavilion was not required, nor will be required in the foreseeable future. This has come about as a result of the Pavilion being given Business Rate relief by SODC meaning that at present levels of bookings the finances of the Pavilion have moved into surplus on a year-by-year basis.

The Parish Council starts the new year with some £13,500 in allocated Reserves being carried forward together with some £20,400 in the General Reserve.

### **3) Pavilion Report**

The Committee are pleased to record that the finances of the EHS&RC are in an extremely healthy state. The reasons are twofold, the first being the continued increase in use of the Community room facility with turnover now in excess of £5,000 per annum. Currently the room is booked on a termly basis by the Village Choir, two Pilates sessions, two Yoga sessions, the Village Art group, the Mothers & Toddlers Group and two separate Table Tennis Groups. In between times spring and summer see many children's birthday parties, christening lunches and WI meetings. HUFC have also gone back to fielding two teams instead of only one in the previous year.

The other major factor is the granting of Business Rate Relief by SODC meaning that the overheads for running the Pavilion have been nearly halved. In addition, the Relief was made retrospective back to the date that the Pavilion opened so all previous rates payments were refunded. Accordingly, the balance in the bank at the end of March 2017 that was £2,872 now exceeds £10,000.

This means that the Managing Committee can hold the current rental rates and also seriously consider a programme of decoration and equipment review.

Furthermore, the possibility of employing a Bookings/Safety Officer has become financially viable.

### **4) Open Discussion – priorities for the coming year**

C. Topping suggested that perhaps the village focus on small improvements each year. One suggestion was a map of the village by the bus stop similar to that in West Hagbourne. A local artist could create this. Another suggestion was picnic benches on Butts Piece. Another suggestion was having a basketball hoop and football goals on Butts Piece. The council agreed to review the concept at its next meeting.

A member of the public raised the issue of the gutters leaking in the Pavilion.

The issue of people using drugs and alcohol outside of the Pavilion was raised along with anti-social behaviour. J. Murphy is going to look into helping with this.

The meeting concluded at 8:35pm

Signed.....Dated.....