

EAST HAGBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DULY CONVENED AND HELD ON THURSDAY 9TH NOVEMBER 2023

1. ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST:

Present were Chairman I. Duff, Vice Chairman P. Dixon, Councillors C. Gover, N. Milner, D. Rickeard and C. Shaikh and District Councillor A-M Simpson.

Apologies were received from Councillor R. Jaboor and District Councillor B. Manning.

In attendance were L. Lloyd (Clerk) and 3 members of the public.

I. Duff indicated there is 1 vacancy for a parish councillor.

2. PUBLIC FORUM AND QUESTIONS: I. Duff noted that this meeting's agenda has items that may not be able to be approved, which were added after the usual deadline for submission without full consultation.

MOP1 thanked the parish council for publishing the survey results online, noting that the survey shows encouraging results and hopes that the parish can move forward with the process.

C. Topping handed out a HUGS article that was included in the most recent Parish Magazine, which highlights the dangers associated with using Roundup (glyphosate) for weed control and suggested an alternative called Foamstream, a herbicide-free solution which is already used by some parish councils and town councils. He also noted that the upright slabs along the raised pathway by Lower Cross are currently susceptible to weeds partly due to gaps between the uprights and the carriageway where earth has accumulated. An option to potentially solve this issue would be to fill these gaps and prevent regrowth. MOP1 noted that Roundup is also toxic to aquatic species, so it is recommended not to use on paved areas. I. Duff thanked both speakers for their input.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12TH OCTOBER 2023:

The minutes of the meeting on 12th October 2023 were approved by Council and signed by I. Duff.

4. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS: I. Duff welcomed A-M Simpson to

the meeting, and noted receipt of the District Councillors report circulated by B. Manning ahead of the meeting. I.

Duff queried the local plan progress and A-M Simpson confirmed that the Joint Local Plan should be going to consultation in Jan/Feb 2024, noting that the district council's responses to other local plans can be found on the website and make interesting reading.

5. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

2022-12-01 Footpath 4 surface improvements: L. Lloyd reported that TOE have confirmed that FP4 improvements would meet the funding criteria for the Local Environment Fund. If the parish council applied ahead of the next deadline on 8 January 2024, TOE would advise whether the bid was successful before the end of March which would work well for a contractor completing the work next summer at the latest. South Moreton recreation ground recently had a path installed with part-funding from TOE. P. Dixon visited the site and felt that the construction was a good basis for FP4. Councillors agreed that in order to progress this project, L. Lloyd will contact OCC to provide more detailed specifications and to quote for the works.

2023-03-01 Deanfield Homes Car Park Land Transfer: I. Duff confirmed that no progress has been made this month.

2023-06-01 Grass Cutting Resident Consultation: This will be covered under item 7.c). The consultation process is now complete.

2023-06-02 Parking and Traffic Management on Main Road: N. Milner confirmed that she has not been able to write a proposal this month but will work on this when she has more time.

2023-06-03: Footway repairs in the Parish: I. Duff reported that together with P. Dixon and R. Jaboor he recently met with a resident with knowledge of footway works to consider the practicalities of an S278 lite agreement. The outcome of the meeting was that the best proposal would be to work with the county council with the Parish Council agreeing to part-fund the works if required, possibly contributing 30% to the costs. Currently, works outside the Fleur that have been paid for by J. Murphy's Councillor Priority Fund are still pending. There is an issue with the overhanging hedge at Green Shutters, which could have a strong impact to the extent and cost of repairs to the footway at this location. I. Duff agreed to ask the new owners of Green Shutters about cutting back the hedge. There are still issues in other areas including the raised footway between the Fleur and Shoe Lane which has resulted in some pedestrians resorting to using the road.

2023-07-01 Kingsholm Close dropped kerb: L. Lloyd confirmed that a quote for this work from the minor civils team is still pending, but it is on the priority list.

2023-10-01 Disabled Parking Spaces in the village car park: L. Lloyd confirmed she has approached two line painting companies for initial advice and quotes, as well as Deanfield Homes in case they are planning further line painting works on site as this may help with costs if the Parish Council is able to add a small job to their planned works.

2023-10-02 Japanese Knotweed at the allotments: See item 7.a)

6. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- a) **Deanfield development adjacent to the village hall:** I. Duff provided an update: There are now 10 occupied properties, 2 more houses will be occupied later this month and another 3 before Christmas. The first residents in affordable housing should be arriving in late January. The access to the embankment is still planned to be open in the near future.
- b) **Footpath accessibility in winter months:** C. Shaikh confirmed that an informal group consisting of D. Rickeard, P. Dixon, C. Gover and herself has been formed, with the intention to assess all footpaths in the next two months and report back to Council.
- c) **Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan:** D. Rickeard confirmed that he has circulated a draft to councillors for comment, covering what the Parish Council can do such as managing facilities and assets, as well as the need to engage with the community to encourage action from volunteers and residents. MOP1 noted that an organisation called Climate Outreach may be able to help the Parish Council with public communications. I. Duff encouraged councillors to read and comment on the draft so that a version could be proposed for publication at the December meeting. I. Duff recognised that this strategy is an important result following the grass cutting consultation which highlighted biodiversity as a key concern.

A-M Simpson left the meeting (20:18)

- d) **Community Projects and CIL money:** I. Duff noted that the Community Projects Strategy has been recently updated by D. Rickeard and noted that the projects list should definitely be discussed at the next Annual Parish Meeting to gauge public interest. D. Rickeard asked how the projects should be prioritised and it was noted that cost would be a significant factor. The Butts Piece land was briefly discussed. As the current lease ends in 2028 any plans will require discussion with Hagbourne Parochial Charities.
- e) **Winter Warm Spaces:** D. Rickeard confirmed that he received communication from SODC offering grants to organisations offering warm spaces. There are two warm spaces in operation in Didcot, The Wave and the Library, both of which are already open to the public on a daily basis. Without a similar space in the village, we could not offer the same service, but it was agreed that the Parish Council should help publicise the local initiatives and help that is available.

7. ITEMS FOR DECISION:

- a) **To review and approve the quote for £1,800 from SE Environmental to treat the Japanese Knotweed at the allotments:** P. Dixon confirmed that he has contacted 6 specialist companies for quotes. One advised that a figure of £1,800 with 2-3 treatments would be needed. SE Environmental have provided a full quote at the same price of £1,800 with 3 annual treatments starting in Spring 2024 and including follow up monitoring. D. Rickeard noted that councillors have not had sight of the full quotation and treatment plan at this stage and with the proposed cost should also strive to obtain other quotes before making a decision on the matter. It was agreed that the SE Environmental quote would be circulated and further efforts to secure additional quotes would be made ahead of a decision at the December meeting.
- b) **OPC Drain Services – to approve the quote for £252 for emptying and jetting the village car park drains, plus the potential £125 cost per tonne for silt dumping if required:** I. Duff confirmed that jetting the drains is a regular maintenance item and should be carried out every few years to ensure the drains are working efficiently. L. Lloyd noted that this quote approval is a precaution, following recent heavy rains causing flooding of the village car park. The situation is currently being monitored and if there are recurrences of standing water, a jetting will be booked. Councillors approved this possible expenditure.
- c) **Grass Cutting and tidiness in the parish:** I. Duff confirmed ahead of discussion that the wording of agenda items under 7.c had not been subject to the standard approval process with the Chair due to late submission and as such councillors may not be in a position to make decisions at this meeting.
 - i) **Decision to liaise with OCC and set up an S101 agreement for delegation of grass cutting duties in East Hagbourne parish:** It has now been confirmed that it is not possible to select verges the Parish Council wishes to maintain, and the s101 agreement would include all verges currently under OCC's responsibility in the parish. After some discussion it was agreed that additional information and clarity on the s101 agreement and OCC's current grass cutting map (which was only received yesterday) is required before a decision can be made on whether to set up an s101 agreement.
 - ii) **Decision to revise the existing BGG cutting schedule in line with public consultation results, to ensure that all areas under Parish Council control in zones A, B and C are cut to a 2-3 week**

schedule, with zone D to be discussed ahead of the December meeting: This item prompted a lengthy discussion between councillors who expressed different views on the matter. There was support for moving forward and taking actions arising from the public consultation, but it was also clear that it was perhaps premature to move on this without fuller analysis of survey results. The number of responses to the survey was questioned by an MOP, who felt that 95 responses was not fully representative of the parish. N. Milner responded confirming that following the public meeting and a leaflet drop to all houses in the parish promoting the survey, it could be concluded that those who did not respond did not have strong views on the matter. L. Lloyd clarified that any decision on this item would relate specifically to the parish council's existing schedule with BGG for grass cutting. Any additions to the existing schedule would be included in the cutting regime which will commence again in Spring 2024.

D. Rikeard noted that this summer has been very difficult with respect to the grass cutting debate. N. Milner and D. Rikeard debated on having 'no exceptions' to the 2-3 week cutting schedule, with D. Rikeard noting that in order to allow areas of biodiversity, some areas are already cut less often and a blanket rule would prohibit the biodiversity efforts already underway in the parish. He declared an interest due to an existing owner management agreement for the inner verge outside his property.

I. Duff again reiterated that he was not involved with the final agenda item and was not at all comfortable with the items and decisions that have been included. D. Rikeard raised serious concern over protocol as the agenda items were received after the 5 clear days noted in Standing Orders. It was evident that any decision on this item required further consideration and it was agreed that this item would be deferred and reworded accordingly. C. Gover stated that it is very clear the parish council is striving to come to decisions on this matter, however it is evident from this meeting that it is proving hard to find the right balance.

iii) Decision to pursue a workable solution with OCC and SODC for the overgrown areas of vegetation along Main Road, in as eco-friendly a manner as is feasible. This may require the Parish Council to fund agreed works: Councillors agreed with this decision. L. Lloyd to arrange a site meeting.

iv) Decision to ensure the broader Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy/Action Plan includes specified areas of land to be developed and managed in support of biodiversity agenda: Councillors agreed with this decision, and noted that areas for biodiversity are highlighted and under consideration within the Climate and Biodiversity Strategy.

v) BGG Garden and Tree care – to approve the quote for £75.00 to cut the longer grass to the front of Ryman's Crescent/New Road: Councillors approved the expenditure.

d) Royal British Legion – to consider granting a donation of up to £100: I. Duff confirmed that the memorial service at Lower Cross will be held at 12.15pm on Sunday 12 November, and the parish council will be laying a wreath. Councillors resolved to award a grant of £100.00 in accordance with the council's powers under Section 137 (S137) of the Local Government Act 1972. This includes the cost of the wreath.

8. ITEMS FOR REPORT:

a) Planning Applications: I. Duff confirmed that planning application P23/S3662/HH for 35A Blewbury Road has recently been received, and he intends to speak with the applicant ahead of proposing the council's response.

b) East Hagbourne Sport and Recreation Committee: D. Rikeard confirmed that he has reviewed the RoSPA report and confirmed that no immediate actions are required.

c) Cemetery Committee: P. Dixon confirmed that the Cemetery Committee met on Monday 6th November. The budget has been reviewed and it has been agreed that fees will remain the same for 2024/25, with a review of the fund and anticipated longer term expenditure/reserves to be carried out in coming months.

d) Employment Committee:

i) To note the NALC revised cost of living salary scale for the Clerk for 2023/24 together with backdated pay from April: C. Shaikh confirmed that the salary scale was published on 1st November and the clerk's salary has been adjusted accordingly. The new monthly figure and backpay for months April-October will be paid in the November salary payment.

e) Butts Piece Allotments: P. Dixon confirmed that there has been interest in plot 10, and plot 27 is currently still awaiting a new tenant following reinstatement and herbicide treatment. BGG have been asked to quote for some hedge tidying along the south side of the allotments.

f) Community Speedwatch: I. Duff reported that R. Jaboor has made contact with Roger Bartlett and will be contacting the Harwell speedwatch team ahead of possibly reactivating speedwatch in the parish.

g) Didcot Garden Town: Nothing to report.

h) Flood Group: Nothing to report.

i) Future Oxfordshire Partnership: Nothing to report.

j) Neighbourhood Plan: D. Rikeard confirmed that the comments from the reg16 consultation are now available, some key points to note were circulated to councillors ahead of the meeting.

k) Climate Change and Biodiversity: See item 6.c

- I) Matters raised at the Chairman's Surgery and OALC Chairman's meeting:** I. Duff confirmed that he has not been to a Chairman's meeting or held a surgery since the October meeting.

9. Correspondence:

N. Milner confirmed that the Oxfordshire Councils round table event on 26th October was largely conducted in small groups for discussion, with outcomes from all attendees confirming frustration with lack of contact information and communication with OCC. Following on from the event, the Oxfordshire Councils Charter Survey (closing 10th December) is open for councillors and clerks to respond as individuals with their views and OALC are encouraging responses to the survey.

D. Rickeard confirmed the 94/94A bus service changes which will come into effect on 26th November, including the 94A loop through East and West Hagbourne, Upton, Blewbury and the Moretons. OCC have confirmed they plan to reinstate the school bus service for SBS and DGS in January 2024.

10. Finance:

a) Expenditure and receipts since the last meeting and account balances:

NB: Payments pending are shown in yellow and are not included in the account balance shown in c)

a) Payments since last meeting:

Payee	Item	Online Payment / Cheque No	Amount	VAT	Total	Date
Grundon Waste Management	PSI-0936109 Cemetery bin September	DD	£51.13	£10.23	£61.36	20/10/2023
BGG	INV 569.23 Parish grass cut 11/08	D Rickeard / C Shaikh	£215.00	£43.00	£258.00	20/10/2023
BGG	INV 682.23 Parish and Cemetery + long rec grass cutting September	D Rickeard / C Shaikh	£335.00	£67.00	£402.00	20/10/2023
BGG	INV 716.23 Cemetery and Car Park Hedge cutting 30/09	D Rickeard / C Shaikh	£400.00	£80.00	£480.00	20/10/2023
Moore	INV 319820 External Audit 2022/23	D Rickeard / C Shaikh	£315.00	£63.00	£378.00	20/10/2023
Edge IT	INV 37277 Cemetery Database Annual fee Y1 (renewed September 2023)	D Rickeard / C Shaikh	£236.00	£47.20	£283.20	20/10/2023
Hobs Reprographics	S2013INV23090125 Welcome Booklets reprint	D Rickeard / C Shaikh	£41.00	£8.20	£49.20	20/10/2023
Dark White Digital	INV001351 October web hosting	D Rickeard / C Shaikh	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	20/10/2023
Shield Maintenance Ltd	INV 6949 September bin emptying Butts Piece	D Rickeard / C Shaikh	£13.00	£2.60	£15.60	20/10/2023
Carolyn Shaikh	Welcome pack stationery expenses	D Rickeard / C Shaikh	£15.26	£3.05	£18.31	20/10/2023
Play Safety Ltd	INV74526 ROSPA Inspection July 2023	D Rickeard / C Shaikh	£85.50	£17.10	£102.60	20/10/2023
EHSRC	Meeting room hire 07/09/23	D Rickeard / C Shaikh	£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	20/10/2023
Laura Lloyd	October Salary	D Rickeard / C Shaikh	£734.83	£0.00	£734.83	30/10/2023
SODC	INV10345142 Dog Bin Emptying 1 April - 30 September 2023		£2,577.60	£515.52	£3,093.12	
Dark White Digital	INV001373 web hosting November 2023		£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	
Shield Maintenance Ltd	INV 6981 October bin emptying at Butts Piece		£13.00	£2.60	£15.60	
EHS&RC	INV 231004 Pavilion hire for meeting 12/10		£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	

Reg Dawson	Expenses - Paint for cemetery gate		£10.00	£2.00	£12.00	
Laura Lloyd	November salary and backpay from April		£1,133.71	£0.00	£1,133.71	

b) Receipts since last meeting

From	Item	Amount	Date
Reeves Memorials	Purse Memorial CM003A	£87.50	25/10/2023
SODC	CIL Payment Second instalment P19/S0357/RM	£106,843.63	27/10/2023
Redwood Bank	Interest on 35 day notice account October 2023	£122.40	01/11/2023
	Total	£107,053.53	

c) Accumulated Account Balances (reconciled online 08/11/2023)

Unity Trust Bank - T1 current account	£82,651.61
Unity Trust Bank - Instant access account	£72,154.91
Redwood Bank - 35 Day Notice Savings Account	£85,000.00
Total	<u>£239,806.52</u>

d) The Special Project Balances (as of 08/11/2023) are:

Community Infrastructure Levy Fund	Received 24/04/19 so requires spending by 23/04/24	£1,788.07
	Received 30/04/21 so requires spending by 29/04/26	£1,517.73
	Received 27/10/21 so requires spending by 26/10/26	£3,307.90
	Received 27/04/22 so requires spending by 26/04/27	£3,035.45
	Received 28/10/22 so requires spending by 27/10/27	£2,127.82
	Received 28/04/23 so requires spending by 27/04/28	£55,413.82
	Received 27/10/23 so requires spending by 26/10/28	<u>£106,843.63</u>
	Total CIL money	£174,034.42
Community Projects Reserve Fund		£4,712.91
Planned Development Support Fund		£5,303.15
Cemetery		<u>£15,290.89</u>
Total		<u>£199,341.37</u>

e) General Reserve (as of 08/11/2023) £40,465.15

b) Review and approval of pending payments: The Council reviewed the pending payments and approved those without prior minuted/regular payment approval.

c) Unity Bank change of signatory: L. Lloyd confirmed that one of the forms of ID was deemed too old to validate and N. Milner is currently sourcing an alternative document.

11. Items for report and inclusion on the December agenda:

Draft Budget 2024/25
Possible projects using CIL money
Biodiversity Strategy
Grass cutting decisions

The meeting closed at 10.08pm. The next meeting will be held on 7th December 2023 at the Pavilion, Great Mead, East Hagbourne.

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

ATTACHMENT 1: ACTION LIST

Action No	What	Who	Status
2022-12-01	Footpath 4 surface improvements	LL	Request quotes from OCC Apply for TOE funding
2023-03-01	Deanfield Homes Car Park Land Transfer	LL	With OCC Legal team
2023-06-02	Parking and Traffic Management on Main Road	NM	On hold
2023-06-03	Footway repairs in the parish	ID/PD/RJ	Prioritise potential repairs for OCC to review
2023-07-01	Kingsholm Close dropped kerb request	LL	Site visit and quote from OCC pending
2023-10-01	Disabled Parking spaces in the village car park	LL	Research options and costs
2023-10-02	Japanese Knotweed at the allotments	PD/LL	Obtain further quotes
2023-10-03	Weed management on Main Road	LL	Site visit with SODC/OCC to be arranged
2023-11-01	Footpath accessibility	CS/CG/PD/DR	Assessment of all footpaths

ATTACHMENT 2:

Title	District Councillors' Report
Councillors	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson & Cllr Ben Manning
Parish	East Hagbourne Parish Council
Date	9 November 2023

[Booking link](#) for planning surgeries for town and parish councils
Corporate Performance Report [Quarter 1](#)

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have pledged their ongoing commitment for paying staff at least the Real Living Wage.

Both councils currently ensure all directly employed council staff receive at least the Real Living Wage and have done for several years. The Real Living Wage (currently £10.90 with an update due to be announced on 24 October this year) is based on the cost of living – looking at the current cost of household goods and services.

Last week, at Vale's Council meeting on Wednesday 11 October, and South's Council meeting on Thursday 12 October, councillors put forward a cross-party motion on the Real Living Wage, which were both passed unanimously.

The councils are now working towards accreditation as a Living Wage employer with the Living Wage Foundation. This will include setting out a plan of action so all future companies seeking to win council contracts are committed to paying, as a minimum, the Real Living Wage. Whilst it is not in our power to change existing contracts, we will urge our current suppliers and contractors to follow our example and commit to the Real Living Wage.

More people eligible for help for energy-saving measures

As the cold weather starts to set in, we are promoting Welcome the Warmth - which offers a variety of fully funded energy efficiency measures including insulation, solar panels and heat pumps for those on a lower household income. The good news is that the income eligibility cap for the Oxfordshire scheme, including South and Vale residents, is now £39,000 (up from £31,000) which should mean that many more people are eligible to receive the help. Please help spread the word – [for more details, see the Welcome the Warmth website](#).

Grants available now to help look after local green spaces

If you know a local volunteer group or organisation helping nature, they could be eligible for funding from us. We've teamed up with Trust for Oxfordshire (TOE) to help communities protect and enhance their local green spaces and improve access for residents to benefit from being in nature. The next grant application deadline is midday 8 January

2024. If you've got an idea and want to give your project a boost, we recommend you have a quick chat with TOE before applying. Contact Rachel on admin@trustforoxfordshire.org.uk

Affordable housing grant to help address urgent need

A new improved grant process means as part of the district council's work to help meet the urgent need for genuinely affordable housing in the region, local developers, Community Land Trusts and self-builders can apply for a Section 106 **affordable housing grant to build affordable homes that meet the councils' climate criteria**.

The council approved an improvement to the existing affordable housing policy to enable funds from Section 106 developer contributions to be used as a grant to build affordable homes that are energy efficient and cheaper for residents to live in and heat. The policy includes a revamped application process which includes clear evaluation guidelines and free expert consultation services for applicants who would like additional guidance.

The new application form now includes questions which determine how projects will minimise energy use and carbon emissions, as well as how they have identified locally appropriate species and set up long term management plans if they are adding tree planting and biodiversity improvements.

For more information and the application forms, please visit – [the South Oxfordshire affordable housing page](#)

Free carbon Emissions calculator tool

We've launched a free simple-to-use carbon emissions calculator tool for town and parish councils to measure their current carbon emissions using energy and fuel bills. It makes it easy to work out where carbon and cost savings can be made.

For more information, email climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk

Changes to postal and proxy voting

A series of national changes were introduced on 31 October for postal and proxy voting, and our officers have prepared [this briefing note](#) for members to explain them in a bit more detail. The changes include new identity checking requirements, online applications, restrictions on the number of people a person can act as a proxy for and maximum periods for absent voter applications.