

Sydenham Parish Council

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 2nd April 2015

Present: Paul Stancliffe
Alison Isherwood
Rachel Blake
Heather Mullins
Apologies: Roy Harrison
Janet Potts

The meeting was pleased to welcome Councillor David Wilmshurst and seven members of the parish.

Development of Sydenham Grove

- The discussion from the earlier meeting was summarised by the Chairman, who read the report received from Soha.
- The current tenants in Sydenham Grove have been offered accommodation in Kingston Blount whilst redevelopment takes place, although the scheme is as yet unspecified.
- It was felt that Soha have not taken into account the three owned properties.
- Mr McCaffrey, Head of Housing at Soha, is to be asked to a village meeting.
- The parish council will be requesting sketches of the proposals before Soha apply for planning permission.

Report from County Councillor David Wilmshurst – see attached, but main points:

- Ongoing financial pressure on local government for provision of services.
- Decreasing financial support from central government coupled with increasing pressure from Adult and Children services.
- As part of OCC saving strategy there have been overall staff reductions of 30%. Organisation changes are being discussed and announcements are expected in the next three months.
- Some functions such as IT, Finance and HR are being shared with Hampshire County Council, saving costs for both councils.
- Further cost savings are being considered with Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire working together on transport and infrastructure.
- As part of the OCC budget two funds have been removed, namely the Area Steward fund and the County Council Community Fund
- It has been a pleasure working with Sydenham Parish Council on local issues. The resurfacing of Sewells Lane has been a very satisfactory result.

Questions from the floor:

- Why is it so difficult to get support on the B4445 speeding issue? More regular camera van presence was requested as this is felt to be an effective deterrent. The issue of pinch points has been taken up with County and Councillor Wilmshurst is trying to follow this up with Chinnor Parish Council.

Review of previous minutes from Annual Parish Meeting on 29th April 2014

Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council - given by Mr Paul Stancliffe

- The Parish Council has dealt with thirteen planning applications. Two of these were outside the parish, namely the pumping station at Kingston Stert and The Folly in Aston Rowant. The applications from the village included the churchyard wall which was damaged in the icy weather at the start of 2014.
- Sewells Lane road surface has received some substantial repairs by Oxfordshire County Council. The route remains a bridleway and cannot be reclassified due to a change in the law.
- The new Pumping Station has been installed and since October has been taking waste from Crowell, Kingston Blount, Lewknor and Aston Rowant. The work is not completely finished as the pumps are on standby generators, awaiting the energy supply from Southern Electric. This issue is to be raised with SSE at the next meeting regarding the village power supply.

Signed Date

- The scheme to improve the power supply to the village should be completed during this financial year, and the funds allocated by SSE are allowed to roll over. The signing of the necessary wayleaves is proving to be more difficult than anticipated, but hopefully this summer cables will be underground from the Folly and Kingston Blount to the village, resulting in a much more secure supply. The tree work undertaken has shown a definite effect over the last twelve months. The new remote controlled switchgear to the north of Chalford ensures that a fault does not interrupt the supply to the village.
- The Broadband green cabinet is due to be installed on the green imminently, and high speed broadband should be available to the houses served by this cabinet by June. The speed of the supply will depend on the proximity of a property to the cabinet. At present high speed broadband is not being rolled out to 46 properties at the Emmington end of the village, and the results of a survey are awaited from BT Openreach.
- The application to divert Bridleway 7 was unsuccessful and the path remains the same.
- The Defibrillator is now the responsibility of the parish council.
- In response to the presentation at the previous Annual Parish Meeting an emergency plan has been produced for the village.
- All details of the minutes are available on the village website at <http://council.sydenhamvillage.net/Minutes>.

Report from District Councillor

Councillor Dorothy Brown was unable to attend the meeting and there is no report.
There will be two councillors elected for this ward in the May elections as it is a joint seat.

Report from Munday's Charity - given by Paul Stancliffe

This charity runs the allotments, and started the year with just over £1,700 in the account having given £500 towards the defibrillator last year. £150 has been spent on trimming the allotment hedges, and the balance carried forward to next year is just under £1,900.

The income can be given to groups and amenities operating within the parish, and ideas of what the funds could be spent on would be welcomed. Suggestions made were - the Playing Field, the Playing Out scheme raised last year (although this is only suitable for Brookstones, not the main road), and the village coffee mornings.

Open Forum

Points regarding Sydenham Grove were covered earlier in the meeting.

A question was raised about building on Green Belt land as there is now pressure from the County Council to allow building around Oxford. The best contact on this subject is our local MP.

There being no further questions the meeting closed at 9.00 for refreshments.

Signed Date

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT 2015

In giving this report I would again stress the on-going financial pressure on Local Government for the provision of a service to Oxfordshire residents from ever decreasing financial support from Central Government coupled with ever increasing financial pressures from Adult and Children services

Major changes have already been made to reflect OCC reduction in income from Central Government which currently amount to some £292 million with the likelihood of a further £49 million of savings to be made later in the year. As part of OCC saving strategy, the position of Chief Executive was made redundant, coupled with the reduction of directors by 50%, senior management by 40% together with overall staff reductions of some 30%. The redundancy of the Chief Executive was latterly reviewed and withdrawn and is now under discussion with other organisation change proposals. Other areas of change, working with Hampshire County Council, some functions are now shared, such as IT, Finance and HR. Trading standards also provide services for other Councils making the service almost cost neutral to Oxfordshire residents.

Further cost saving are being considered with Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire working together on transport and infrastructure.

Further organisation announcements will be made in the next 3 months reflecting the the Chief Executive Position, and subsequent organisation changes.

On a personal front I have regular discussions with Chinnor PC on local issues; I remain the Chairman of OCC Audit and Governance Committee together with joint Chairman of the Employees Joint HR Committee. As part of the OCC budget two funds have now been removed- County Councillor Community fund and the Area Stewards fund, of the former, funding was allocated to Chinnor Village Centre – hearing loop and the latter to Chinnor Silver Band roof repair.

In conclusion, on local issues, it has been a pleasure working with Sydenham Parish Council

David Wilmshurst

County Councillor