

# **BECKLEY AND STOWOOD PARISH COUNCIL**

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH OPEN MEETING 2018

Held on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> MAY 2018 AT 7.30 PM

AT BECKLEY VILLAGE HALL, WOODPERRY ROAD, BECKLEY

### **Meeting Number 05.2018**

**Present:** Cllr David Scott (Chairman)  
Cllr Michael Soanes (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr Chris Cox  
Cllr Vivienne Rust  
Cllr Ginette Camps-Walsh  
District Cllr John Walsh  
Clerk – Sue Cox  
8 residents of the Parish

1. **Apologies for absence:** received from Cllr Kirsten Johnson and Kate Kelly.
2. **Welcome and Announcements – Chairman:** Cllr Scott welcomed everyone to the meeting, with a reminder that the meeting is the Annual Parish Meeting facilitated by the Parish Council, rather than a Parish Council meeting.
3. **Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.
4. **Chairman's Annual Report for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018:** Thanks to Councillors Ginny Camps-Walsh, Chris Cox, Vivienne Rust and Michael Soanes, and respective District and County Councillors John Walsh and Kirsten Johnson - particular thanks must go to Clerk Sue Cox for managing all administrative and financial aspects of the Parish Council. Thanks must also go to Geoff Mills and his fellow Trustees and Friends of the Village Hall Management Committee for running the hall, and to Stuart Marshall the booking clerk, an income of £15k was achieved in the last year. The hall snagging will be completed in a couple of months. The terrace has been extended. Thanks to Adrian Hampshire for looking after the website, to Ann Henman for putting together the Beckley Newsletter four times a year, and to John Baker for the Beckley aspect of the monthly Four Parishes. We have dealt with 36 planning applications, insurance, grass cutting, goal posts (installed by Dave Drew – thank you), the Otmoor Flyer Bus Group - agreeing to fund 25% of any losses. Cllrs Cox and Soanes organised the bonfire night for 500 people with help from the Clerk with fireworks and first aid cover. This was the first event held after a two-year gap while the hall was being built. FOBS and BVHMC provided food and drink for sale on the night. Cllr Soanes looks after the

playground in preparation for the RoSPA inspection in July. Cllr Camps-Walsh has taken on the big project of the Neighbourhood Plan which is a huge amount of work. Cllr Rust is our link with the Community Orchard group down Otmoor Lane. Cllr Cox replaced the gates to the playing field and cuts the hedge around the playing field.

5. **Cllr Ginette Camps-Walsh – Neighbourhood Plan and Expressway:** Statutory consultees had to respond to the draft neighbourhood plan. SODC defined the village boundary. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has redefined the village boundary because it will allow for new development. Next stage is to hire a planning consultant and then to have another consultation. OxCam Expressway – Beckley has a dynamic group with their own website Saveotmoor.org There is a petition on both websites which everyone is encouraged to sign up to. 4,500 signatures, so far but need more to trigger a debate. Posters have been put up and PC funded banners for Otmoor Challenge and Open Day. Can write to MPs and Ministers. The PC has sent a letter but also need individual letters. MPs have been invited to the Otmoor Challenge. The Government haven't yet responded. 320,000 extra houses on top of 100,000 already agreed. Housing could go on the Green Belt. Corridor A to the south of Oxford – is the most southerly – towards Thame. Beckley is in Corridors B and C either side of Oxford. Submissions are being sent in to Highways England and because we are in two corridors, we will have a long fight. Decision due by July on the chosen corridor. Q - *will there be any more corridors?* Cllr Camps-Walsh replied that it was very fluid at the moment but they are consulting on three corridors. Beckley are opposing S2. No point in campaigning against the whole scheme. Fight the route rather than the corridor.
6. **County Councillor Dr Kirsten Johnson – Annual Report for 2017/18 (by email):** This time last year, Mrs Anne Purse was your County Councillor. I would like to begin by paying tribute to Anne's 24 years of hard work for this division. She continues to serve the area, both as Chair of the Maple Tree Children's Centre committee and as Parish Transport Representative for Beckley, as well as other local roles. I have enjoyed getting to know you and the parish in my first year as your County Councillor. I have worked hard on local issues, doing my best to represent you and resolve local concerns. One of my roles is as Chair of the Woodeaton Parish Liaison Committee. If any resident has complaints about mud on the roads from quarry lorries; notices lorries coming through the village; concerns about the speed of lorries; etc., please do get in contact. McKenna Environmental is keen to maintain good relationships with surrounding villages and takes complaints seriously. Many residents in these villages have missed having regular bus services. In November, I submitted a motion to Full Council which passed unanimously, calling for public transport in our rural villages. Since then, there have been many meetings of the Bus Task & Finish Group as we explore options for bringing back our buses. I am grateful for the Otmoor Flyer team who keep the twice-a-week Comet service running, and I hope that we can have a daily service again soon. I have also been working with the Expressway Action Group

to oppose the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway coming through our villages. Much of the proposed southern route of this major road is through Green Belt. Once Green Belt is destroyed, it is lost forever. I personally am not convinced of the need for this road, preferring investment in improving existing road infrastructure and rail networks. There have been local concerns on the loose stones and the kerbing on the high street. I have met with a highway's officer to survey this, and also to look at the condition of roads in the village. I am hopeful that works will be underway soon to remedy these situations. I am pleased that Highways replaced the grit bins after our meeting with them. It has been a privilege to serve the local community. I look forward to working with you in the coming year.

7. **District Councillor John Walsh – Annual Report for 2017:** The last year has been somewhat fraught with delays in producing our local plan. This has resulted in continual pressure locally for developers to be allowed to build on the green belt. Elsewhere in the district the lack of an up to date plan has meant that we could not demonstrate a five-year land supply. Developers found it much easier to get permission even where the previous local plan would have denied it. Fortunately, a combination of more houses being completed together with other councils being successful in court cases has rectified this. We now have 5.4 years supply and the immediate pressure is reduced. The new leader of the council has written to the minister to ask for more time in drawing up a new plan. This means that the local proposed strategic sites are back in the frame and at least one more round of consultations will be needed. Fortunately, the latest draft Government Policy on the Green Belt has strengthened the wording and the Government's own calculations of housing need have reduced the numbers for SODC and Oxford City. So hopefully these delays will not cause problems. A new fleet of vehicles has been acquired to collect the rubbish and this has restored a regular service which had been disrupted by breakdowns, though the winter weather has not been helpful. We have retained our place as having the best recycling rate in the country, although stricter rules on contamination have reduced percentages for everyone. SODC has a very good record for ensuring that residents do not become homeless. There is a policy of intervening early in the process before a crisis occurs, the law is being revised to require other councils to take this approach. We are buying some houses to shelter those who are made homeless instead of using bed and breakfast or hostel places. For the coming year SODC has increased its council tax charge for the first time in nine years. The charge for a band D house has increased from £111.24 to £116.24, it remains below the level it was ten years ago. Currently the main worry is the Expressway which is proposed to go from Oxford to Milton Keynes and on to Cambridge. The routes proposed to the east of Oxford would all be more expensive and cause more environmental damage than those to the west, which would mainly involve the upgrading of existing roads. I have ensured that all the parishes have been kept informed and encouraged them and other volunteers to make submissions to

Highways England and the Transport Secretary. A decision is expected in Early July. Highways England have closed their consultations but it is not too late to write to the Transport Secretary or sign up to one of the petitions that are available.

8. **AOB:** Q&A session -

- a. *What can be done about potholes and water down Otmoor Lane?* PC to speak to Cllr Johnson. These items can also be reported on Fix My Street by members of the public as well as the PC.
- b. *Spoil under the playing field hedge?* PC plan to remove the spoil and tidy up and mow the area.
- c. *Playground gate always left open?* Cllr Soanes has rehung the gate and will be doing so again on Saturday. It may need a new post but the gate has to be wide for the grass mowers. Will be added to the June PC agenda. Dogs need to be kept out of the playground.
- d. *Gates - notice for parents to shut the gate to keep the dogs out and need a gate that shuts with closures.* There are signs on both sides of the playground gates.
- e. *Tennis Court?* The PC is committed to spend the money but not put in action yet. Start date – spring/summer 2019.

Meeting closed at 8.10 pm