KIRTLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL <u>Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting</u> held in the Church of St Mary the Virgin on Monday 26th September at 6.15 p.m.

Present: Mrs K Chacksfield, Ms J Conway (Chair), Dr B Enser, D Grimshaw, Mrs R Powles (Clerk),

Cllr Simpson (Oxfordshire CC), from 7 p.m.

In attendance: Mr Jim Draper (to about 6.30 p.m.)

Action

1. Apologies

None.

2. Declarations of pecuniary interests / other conflicts of interest

None.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 25th July 2022

The Minutes were approved and signed.

4. The death of Queen Elizabeth II, 8th September 2022

On behalf of the Council Cllr Conway expressed gratitude for the Queen's life of dedicated service and wished King Charles III a long and fruitful reign.

5. District & County Councillor Reports / Members of the public

Cllr Grimshaw asked Mr Draper to summarise the condition of the tarmac surface at the Multi-Use Games Area and give recommendations on the way forward. Mr Draper advised the dips in the MUGA surface might be settlement following the past removal of two large trees at the location. Rectification would require excavation and the formation of hard shoulders to prevent a replacement surface also sinking. A new tarmac surface would cost around £8,200, and the cost including excavation would be of the order of £10,000. He suggested it would be sensible to consider how much the surface was used. Mr Alan Draper had provided a quote of £4,400 to remove the damaged surface and return it to grass (some extra top soil might be needed); any further subsidence could be remedied easily. Noted: there was no need to remove the Sports Wall itself.

Mr Draper also advised on the condition of Sports field football pitch and surrounds: he and Mr Cherry had chain-harrowed this area. The Sports field would benefit from reseeding and as there would be no adult football over the winter (*see below at Item 9*) there was an opportunity to do this. He referred to the purchase of a trailer from Turney's to help move heavy items, paid for by the Village Fete Committee. With regard to the Council's ride-on Toro mower Turney's had advised him that the Toro was now obsolete and so they could no longer obtain spare parts.

The Council thanked Mr Draper for his report and all the work on the field; Mr Draper left the meeting.

6. Highways (including road safety, place-making and traffic calming)

- a) OCC 20mph Steering Group and KPC Traffic Subcommittee: the next Steering Group meeting would be on 28th September. Traffic Subcommittee: Cllr Conway had ordered sleepers for new planters and was awaiting delivery. OCC had approved the installation of an air monitor by the School.
- b) S106 monies for parishes around Heyford Park, OCC to host hybrid meeting on 13th October: Cllr Conway and Cllr Simpson (OCC) would attend, Dr Macbeth hoped to attend. Cllr Conway said there was doubt about the sum originally thought to be for Kirtlington's use.
- c) School flashing sign: Cllr Conway confirmed Cllr Simpson's agreement to a grant for this.
- d) OCC Highways maintenance e.g. roads and pavement repairs, Crowcastle Lane tarmac: OCC Highways contractors had carried out tarmacking of the southern section of Crowcastle Lane on 16th September and had referred to complaints received over recent years about the surface condition; Cllrs Conway and Enser had spoken to the team as they felt the new surface was inappropriate for a bridleway. Also, the tarmac had infringed on the

- grass at the sides of the bridleway. Work had stopped but it seemed the contractors would return. Councillors noted that Katie Walther (OCC Countryside Access) might be able to assist.
- e) Footpaths, grass verges and environment: the Landscape Group Oxford had not responded to Cllr Enser's requests over the summer for a date to cut the verges, so she had contacted OCC Highways for assistance, and another contractor, Greenscythe. An unknown contractor had cut the verges by mid-September without giving notice and as the mowing was not in accordance with the agreed areas Cllr Enser assumed it was not the LGO. To date no invoice had been received.

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7. Parish Council-owned assets and community assets

- a) Catalogue and Review of all assets: work was ongoing.
- b) Gravel Pit field: Councillors commented on a possible annual grazing agreement; Cllr Chacksfield offered to review the draft and invite comments for the next meeting.

(c) Orchard project, application for grants for access improvements: no updates.

(d) Allotments: produce stalls would be set up on South Green at the weekend. Cllr Enser had drafted updates to the Allotment Committee's website page.

8. Maintenance (Parish Council and community assets): priority actions

a) Village Footpaths including Pound; broken gate on footpath from Hatchway to Pound: Cllr Enser had written to the landowner who had confirmed ownership; Cllr Enser had replied, requesting a proposal for the way forward.

b) Bridleways: no updates.

- c) Notice board repairs: Mr Sissons had re-stained and repaired the three notice boards and recommended replacement of three sheets of Perspex for two of the notice boards, at £75; Councillors *approved* this cost.
- d) Toro mower repair: as it seemed the Toro was obsolete in terms of spare parts Councillors suggested it should be kept and used until it failed, and then a second-hand replacement should be obtained.
- Replacement tree planting, tree health and safety survey, tree surgery: Councillors discussed the quotes received from Bowards and Town & Country. Boward's quote for the work stood at £5,980 plus VAT (recoverable by the Council) at £1,196. The Town & Country quote was slightly higher for some of the work but gave no written assessment of the trees alongside Molly Minns lane and omitted some other details. Sylva Consultancy had declined to quote because of workload. *Resolved:* the remedial works were needed; *resolved:* to appoint *Bowards*, which had provided greater detail, subject to two queries: whether the two hollow Sycamores in the belt of trees alongside Molly Minns lane needed to be felled or were sound, and provision of the cost of grinding out the Beech stumps in the Play Area.

RMP

Cllr Simpson (OCC) joined the meeting at around 7 p.m.; Cllr Conway invited him to give his report.

Redundancies were anticipated at County and District Level, as savings were needed across all departments. The greater proportion of County staff were employed by agencies which was a current and future problem because of lack of continuity. Cllr Simpson referred to the scrapping of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, which meant the County's development policies would be formed by District Local Plans; this seemed short sighted. He suggested that where there were calls for sites it would benefit parish councils to select sites. There was regret at the city-centric nature of some decisions such as those relating to public transport. Cllr Conway referred to the village support for continuation of the current 250 bus service and asked what a Demand Response Transport (DRT) alternative might be able to provide and how a community could get the most out of such a service.

On local concerns Cllr Simpson mentioned correspondence with a parishioner on drainage problems in Troy Lane. Cllr Conway queried the purpose of the meeting scheduled for 13th October on the Heyford Park S106 monies; Cllr Simpson said he hoped it would conclude matters and allow the affected villages an opportunity to liaise. Councillors were in agreement that a weight limit was needed to reduce the unwanted number of large and heavy vehicles through the village centre.

9. Village Hall, Sports Field and Play Areas

- a) KVMHC Committee meeting 19th September, Winter Warm project in Hazel Room: the Committee proposed the use of the Hazel Room for hospitality and a free simple lunch on two or three days a week. Councillors welcomed the proposal and discussed whether voluntary donations towards the Committee's costs could be encouraged, perhaps by use of an honesty box, and how to communicate the project to those in the village most in need.
- b) Sports field & outfield maintenance; MUGA surface deterioration: Cllr Grimshaw referred to the discussion with Mr Draper at the beginning of the meeting. *Resolved:* to accept Mr Alan Draper's quote to remove the MUGA surface and return it to grass, *also to agree* to the re-seeding of the Sports field by Ady Podbery: Mr Jim Draper had previously indicated the grass seed would cost approximately £800 (if 10 bags of seed needed at £80/bag) but

an additional sum might arise for Ady Podbery's labour. Councillors noted that while these costs were unbudgeted the removal of the MUGA surface was the most practical choice given it was little used, and that it would be good to re-seed the field while it was not being used for winter football. The Clerk would write to Mr Jim Draper to confirm agreement for both jobs.

RMP

Sports field Play Area, play bark top-up: Cllr Grimshaw referred to the annual safety inspections and reports from Rospa PlaySafety, and his visit to both Play Areas with Cllr Conway in August. He had contacted Kompan (supplier of the Climbing Frame) with regard to a site visit, spare parts and repairs, as the item was still within its guarantee period. The site visit would cost about £260. Cllrs agreed to the site visit and Cllr Grimshaw would follow this up with Kompan. Resolved also: the purchase of 6 bags of play bark from Banbury Turf: Cllr Grimshaw would arrange delivery. Cllr Conway referred to the Roman Close Play Area where the Playsafety reports had highlighted that the edges of the wet surface were lifting in some places; Cllr Grimshaw would ask Mr

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Draper for advice.

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Football teams: Cllr Grimshaw reported the Kirtlington Men's football team had decided to close; there would be no use of the field for football in the coming season. The two Bletchington youth teams were using the field for training on Monday and Thursday evenings in September while their ground was still being used for cricket. The Village Hall Committee had contacted Cllr Grimshaw for guidance on what to do with the goalposts. Having reviewed the situation of the posts and taken advice from Jim Draper he had suggested to the VHC that they take up the offer from the football team to have them removed. Councillors expressed a preference for keeping the goalposts, in the hope that a new village team might be established in the future. The Clerk would write to the VHC to inform them of the change in decision, and would seek advice from the Council's insurers (Zurich) on any liability which might fall to the Council as the goalposts would now reasonably be deemed Council assets.

RMP

Churchyard extension: Oxfordshire CC's archaeology department had approved the Written Scheme of Investigation for the required excavation east of the current churchyard wall and on 20th September Cherwell DC's planning department had given approval for this next stage of the process.

10. **Parish Services**

- a) 250 Bus service: Cllr Conway had arranged a meeting on 4th October to be attended by Cllr Nigel Simpson, Mr Dave Harrison from OCC, and village supporters of the bus service. Clerk's note: before the commencement of formal Council business some parishioners spoke to some of the Council members to emphasise their support of the continuation of this service and had then left the Church.
- Community Shop, Steering Group outline business plan, prior to planning application submission: as requested, on behalf of the Steering Group Mrs Hawkesworth had forwarded an outline business plan. Councillors discussed this and while appreciating the level of detail provided expressed concern with regard to various aspects, such as the projected daily income, the level of community engagement which would be required, and where ultimate legal and financial responsibility would fall if the project failed. It was therefore agreed that at present the Council could not support the submission of a planning application and would reply to the Steering Committee setting out the main areas for concern.

All

Village News profile of the Parish Council: Cllrs Conway and Enser suggested that any article on the Parish Council should portray all four members at the same time, although it might be preferable if a leaflet with this information and a description of the role of the Council could be circulated to the whole village, perhaps before the Christmas period. Councillors agreed to take this further if possible.

All

11. **Recent Parish Events, Correspondence**

A parishioner had written to express regret at the over use of the Village Hall car park and the volume of traffic at South Green, and to the Community Shop Steering Group opposing the proposal for the shop. Mrs Hawkesworth had replied to the latter. The Council noted the points of complaint and the Clerk would reply.

RMP

The Village Hall bookings clerk had received another request for a one-off overnight stay in the Village Hall car park; Cllrs Conway and Enser had suggested that VHC ask those making such requests for donations towards the Committee's running costs; the Clerk had forwarded this suggestion to the bookings clerk.

12. **Planning**

- Land at Jersey Cottages –Hextall Twiddy and Abbeymill Homes proposals of 8th March: Cllr Enser had written to Mr Twiddy on 8th August but no response had been received to date.
- Oxfordshire Strategic Railfreight Interchange first stage (non-statutory consultation), noted: OxSRFI had published a summary of the themes and issues from the Stage 1 consultation in August. OCC had advised Cherwell DC would submit a response and the next stage of consultation (statutory) was now envisaged for February / March 2023.
- Review of Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (MCNP), MCNP Forum Chairman's letter and questions to member parishes, Annual Reports 1 and 2. Chairman Martin Lipson had asked member parishes to suggest points

of policy review, comment on the effectiveness of the NP, assist in publicising the review, and for nominations on the review team. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the Council's MCNP reps.

d) Monthly Parish planning application report: Councillors noted the Planning Inspectorate had still not issued its decision on the 5G mast at the Bletchington Road junction (planning application 21/03452/TEL56, PINS application APP/C3105/W/22/3290284). RMP

13. Parish Council priorities

Councillors agreed on the need for communication and greater community engagement and that this should be emphasised in any leaflet (*see above, Item 10*), although it was suggested that door to door approaches might be more effective as a means of engaging others. Contact via the School might be fruitful in this regard.

Cllr Enser referred to her recent discussion with Alex Charlesworth and options for future updates to the website.

The Clerk would write to Nick Sissons to express the Council's thanks for his repair work to the notice boards.

RMP

Communication with parishioners: Cllr Chacksfield reported on her approach to ComputerPro for advice on the feasibility of installing a digital notice board: ComputerPro were investigating options. The choice of site was important and might require planning permission.

KC

14. Finance

- (a) Monthly receipts & payments: the Council *approved the proposed payments* (schedule as presented to the meeting and published on the Village Website).
- (b) AGAR 2021-2022, External Auditor Report: Moore had issued its Certificate of Completion of Audit and this had been published (Notice board and website).

Cllrs Conway and Chacksfield had carried out an initial review of the Council's income and expenditure, to factor in the outlay needed on tree surgery, the grass seeding and the Play Areas. It was assumed a Precept increase would be capped at 5 %. Cllr Conway hoped to investigate grant sources.

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15. Date of the next Parish Council meeting

Monday 7th November in the Hazel Room.

16. Other matters of information not elsewhere on the agenda (not for debate/decision)

Oxfordshire Councils' Councillor Code of Conduct 2022 (adopted by Cherwell District Council on 18th May 2022, adopted by Kirtlington PC on 25th July 2022): the training dates were not yet set by Cherwell DC.

Agenda items for future meetings:

Land at Jersey Cottages, proposal by Hextall Twiddy Ltd and Abbeymill Homes Parish Council priorities; Parish Council assets – maintenance From September - replacement tree planting, tree surgery; Village website review

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

Signed Jean Conway Chair 7 Nov 2022 Date