

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford. OX10 6LZ

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Minutes of the Benson Parish Council meeting held on **Thursday 24th August 2017 at 7:30pm** in the Benson Parish Hall Committee Room.

Present:	Cllr J Fowler (Chair)	(CJF)
	Cllr P Baylis	(CPB)
	Cllr R Jordan	(CRJ)
	Cllr F Lovesey	(CFL)
	Cllr P Murray	(CPM)
	Cllr D Olley	(CDO)
	Cllr T Stevenson	(CTS)
	Cllr M Winton	(CMW)
	Cllr R Workman	(CRW)
Proper Officer:	D Brooks	(CLK)

Mr Robert Anderson-Besant and Mr George Verdon

There were 3 other members of the public present

1. **Apologies:** Cllr P Peers, Cllr S McCann, Cllr T McTeague
2. **Declarations of Interest.** – There were no declarations of interest
3. **To receive reports from the following:**
 - a. Cllr M Gray – OCC Member sent his apologies
 - b. Cllr F Bloomfield – SODC Member. Cllr Bloomfield sent his apologies and a report (see Annex A).
 - c. Cllr R Pullen – SODC Member. Cllr Pullen sent apologies and a report (see Annex B).

4. **Public Session.**

A member of the public expressed real concern about the recommendation that the Parish Council allocates a sum of £17000 towards the cost of resurfacing Castle Square. It was felt this was a large sum of money which had not been precepted and would be setting a precedent for other Parish Councils. Highways should be the responsibility of the County Council. The member asked the Parish Council to defer any decision and first seek the opinion of others.

Mr Anderson-Besant, Trustee and founding member of Friends of Benson Library (FoBL) gave some background to the reason for their Grant Application (item 16a)i). He explained that the charity was primarily formed to help prevent the closure of the library and had reached a partnership working agreement with the County Library Service. The main role of FoBL is to recruit and manage the volunteers alongside fund raising activity. The number of Trustees is contracting and there are concerns about how much longer the charity can survive. Fund-raising which takes up around 80% of Trustees time is a real challenge and it is not clear for how much longer the charity will be able to meet its financial commitments.

The challenge of fund-raising for FoBL was also expressed by another member of the public who has been an active fund-raiser; managing to raise just under £1000 this year. This member of the public also asked when the Tree-cutting season on Sunnyside would begin? **Action:** raise at next Recreation and Lands meeting.

5. **Minutes of Last Meeting:** To approve and sign minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 27th July 2017. **Members who were present at the Benson Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 27th July 2017 unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting.** Cllr Fowler (Chair) signed the minutes as a true record.

6. a. To approve and sign the minutes of the Planning Meeting held on Tuesday 16th May. **Members who were present at the meeting unanimously resolved to approve the minutes.** Cllr Murray who chaired the meeting, signed the minutes as a true record.

b. To consider Planning Applications:

i. **BPC49/17/S2728/FUL** Application Type: Minor Proposal: Construction of two 3-bedroom detached houses. Address: Land between 51 Preston Crowmarsh and Lower Farm House Preston Crowmarsh OX10 6SL

Members voted unanimously to object to the application on the following grounds:

- **The visibility splay is insufficient**
- **Parking spaces are too small**
- **Concern over the height of the buildings**

It was also noted that there is a holding objection by OCC on the website.

c. The following planning decisions were noted.

i. BPC47/17/P17/S1108/LB Application proposal, including any amendments: Change of use of a disused storage barn to a retail deli shop.

Site Location: The Crown Inn 52 High Street Benson OX10 6RP

LISTED BUILDING PERMISSION GRANTED

ii. BPC41/17/ P17/S1389/FUL Application proposal, including any amendments: Change of use of a disused storage barn to a retail deli shop. Site Location: The Crown Inn 52 High Street Benson OX10 6RP

PERMISSION GRANTED

d. To discuss:

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)

NOTIFICATION OF APPEAL

Location: Land north of Littleworth Road, Benson

Development: Outline application (with all matters reserved except for access) for the erection of 241 dwellings (40% of which will be affordable) with associated access, public open space, landscaping, nature park and woodland; up to 230 sqm retail space; provision of community facilities including relocated school playing fields, youth facilities hut, skate park and play space. (As amended by drawings and accompanying letter from agent dated 26 February 2016 and minor amendment received 24 March 2016).

Currently it is not known whether the appeal will be a hearing or an inquiry or what the date will be. Cllr Fowler explained that SODC are contesting the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in the plans. The Parish Council will object as there is no provision for an Edge Road.

Actions:

- Ask SODC to inform the PC as soon as dates are known and whether an inquiry or a hearing.
- Reserve the right to engage a barrister if appropriate
- **Cllr Murray** to draft a statement to send to Planning.

e. Cllr Fowler reported that when OCC commented on the planning application for BEN3/4 for 240 dwellings, there was no mention about Benson Library or the wider library service. This has not been the case with other applications where library provision has been included in the Section 106 monies. It could be an omission or a decision has been made not to contribute in this application. The situation needs clarifying.

Action: Cllr Fowler to seek clarification from OCC.

7. **Benson Parish Council Finance Committee:**

a. To approve and sign the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on Monday 24th July 2017

b. To present recommendations to Council

There were insufficient members of the Finance Committee present to approve the minutes and hence make any recommendations.

8. **Benson Parish Council Halls Committee:**

a. To approve and sign the minutes of the Halls Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 15th August 2017. **Members who were present at the meeting unanimously approved the minutes subject to the change of date from 27th July to 15th August.**

Cllr McTeague to sign the minutes.

b. To present recommendations to Council

Recommendation to Council

i. **To engage ACH Flooring Services to sand, clean and seal the maple strip floor in the main hall and to include professional marking of the badminton court for the total cost of £3990 + VAT.**

There were concerns expressed over the permanent marking of a badminton court. It was explained that the mats currently in use were worn and took up a lot of space. **The recommendation was approved: 5 in favour, 2 against and 2 abstentions.**

ii. **To engage Oxford City Flooring to supply and fit carpet tiles to the appropriate areas and to supply and fit the aluminium cover strip between the wood floor and the carpet; the total cost will be £4176 + VAT.**

The recommendation was approved unanimously.

c. No report was given due to the absence of the chair.

9. **Benson Parish Council Recreation and Lands Committee:**

a. The minutes of the R&L Committee meeting held on Thursday 17th August 2017 were approved and signed as a true record by the chair.

b. To present recommendations to Council

i. **Recommendation that Benson Parish Council spends no more than £645 + VAT on important remedial works to the large willow on Bertie West Field per the report and quote from Heritage Tree Services dated 3rd August 2017.**

The remedial work to the large willow which includes cutting branches and supporting others is a requirement for the Forest School to proceed. It was agreed that this would then become a community asset and **members unanimously approved the recommendation.**

ii. **Recommendation that Benson Parish Council spends no more than £1200 + VAT on replacing the two benches (including fixtures and fittings) already removed from Sunnyside; one by the kicking wall and one by the entrance to Hale Road.**

Cllr Baylis explained that the benches would be re-cycled plastic so maintenance free and also bolted to the ground. **Members unanimously resolved to approve the recommendation.**

- c. Cllr Baylis reported that HAGS require a formal Purchase Order to proceed with any installation of play equipment at St Helens. Concern had previously been expressed by a member of the public over the installation of a zip wire; residents would be polled about the positioning of the wire. CMW has asked for quotes to be forwarded.

Action: clerk

10. **Benson Parish Council Technology Committee:**

There was no meeting of the Technology Committee in August so nothing to recommend or report.

11. **Benson Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

- The Group has been waiting for a response from both SODC and OCC on the need for a Transport Assessment; nothing has been received.
- John Howell, MP, has an action to set up a meeting with the new OCC Cabinet member for Transport
- At the next meeting alternatives will be investigated that will allow the plan to progress
- A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be completed as part of the SODC Local Plan and is not required to be completed by Benson
- 3 developers have now committed, to a significant degree, on the plans for an Edge Road. OCC has specified it will need to be 6.75m wide

12. **Benson Parish Council Working Groups and Outside Bodies:**

There were no other reports

13. **Benson Parish Council Chair:**

The Chair was not present at the meeting.

14. **To discuss and agree any Proposals or Approvals:**

- a. To discuss and agree Benson Parish Council forming a Working Group to commemorate the end of WW1 in 1918

The proposal is to set up a working group consisting of council members and members of the public. This was unanimously approved and Cllrs Lovesey and Baylis have volunteered. £2000 funding has already been approved.

Action: CPB and CFL to recruit other members and establish terms of reference for the group.

- b. To continue discussion on the proposal from Friends of Benson Library to allocate land on Sunnyside for the development of a new Library

The following points were raised/discussed:

Sunnyside is the only open space for enjoyment in the village. However, could there be an option to extend the Parish Hall to include a library?

There could be problems with extending the over-flow car park as a permanent fixture

There may be options presented through the new developments for example, BEN1, phase 2 includes a 230 sq m retail unit which the developers would be prepared to drop in favour of a library/heritage centre.

Members unanimously resolved to respond formally to FoBL proposing alternatives other than Sunnyside.

15. **Correspondence:**

- a. To review correspondence and post received as detailed on attached list

Post received for meeting Thursday 24th August 2017

Post/Emails Received	Action
1. Thanks, from Bensington Society History Group for Hall Hire Fees for 19 th May 2018 sent 07.08.17	Noted
2. New Data Protection Act May 2018 with implications for PC sent 09.08.17	Refer to next Tech Meeting
3. Better Broadband for Benson sent 10.08.17	Noted
4. RUG Navigation Charges Consultation sent 15.08.17	Noted
5. Rural Oxfordshire Network Event 20.09.17 sent 15.08.17	Noted
6. 3 communities to vote in neighbourhood plan referendums sent 15.08.17	Noted
7.	Note
8. Parish councillor to talk to Primary School children sent 09.08.17	Either CTM or CJF plus clerk

16. **Finance:**

- a. To consider Grant applications payable under powers from 1972 Local Government Act (s137) for the following:
 - i. Benson Library – transfer of payment of the annual supplement to Oxford County Library Services from Friends of Benson Library to the Parish Council (currently £3600 per annum).

Members recognised that the library is an essential facility in the village and wanted to support it. There were reservations expressed about an open-ended financial commitment. Mr Vernon confirmed that the amount for the next 3 years was set at £3960 with an average rise of 2-4% after that.

It was unanimously agreed to provide grant funding of £3600 to Friends of Benson Library for the financial year April 2017 – March 2018. Any further ongoing financial support would need clarification and to be included on future agenda.

- b. The reconciled bank statements for the current account as at 31st July 2017 were signed.
- c. Cheques etc. as detailed below were signed off

Date of Invoice	Organisation/ Individual	Description	Cheque Number	Amount
24/08/2017	A Pugh	Aug Salary	506193	217.30
31/07/2017	Grundon	July Waste Management	506194	119.20

24/08/2017	OCC	August Pension	506195	1291.58
24/07/2017	SODC	Dog bin emptying	506196	163.26
31/07/2017	Clarity Copiers	July metered photocopier usage	506197	24.00
03/08/2017	Paul Smith	Window cleaning Aug	506198	140.00
31/07/2017	SG Locksmiths	YH lock replacement	506199	97.00
28/07/2017	Heritage Tree Services	Bertie West willow tree report	506200	162.00
24/08/2017	Mrs Y Sweeney	Cleaning	506251	144.86

To approve Bank Payments

Date of Invoice	Organisation/ Individual	Description	Cheque Number	Amount
24/08/2017	Coop Bank	Aug Salaries	tfr	4014.48
24/08/2017	HMRC	Aug Paye and NI	tfr	677.38
06/08/2017	Coop Bank	RFO reimburse for key fobs	tfr	6.50

To approve Direct Debits/ Standing Orders

Date of Invoice	Organisation/ Individual	Description	Date of DD	Amount
04/08/2017	British Gas	Elec College Farm 7/7-2/8/17	23/08/2017	6.85
28/06/2017	British Gas	Elec PV 1/4 - 27/6/17	17/07/2017	288.00
01/07/2017	SODC	Business rates PV	monthly	123.00
01/07/2017	SODC	Business rates PH	monthly	757.00
17/07/2017	Oxford IT	IT support	monthly	49.19

To approve Barclaycard Payments

Date of Invoice	Organisation/ Individual	Description	Date of DD	Amount
21/07/2017	e-receptionist	Emergency call forwarding service	04/08/2017	9.00
6/7/2017	Screwfix	Heavy duty sack truck	04/08/2017	91.97
12/7/2017	Amazon	Paddling pool scrubber	04/08/2017	8.99

29/06/2017	Amazon	Orange hazard fencing	04/08/2017	23.74
19/07/2017	UK Aggregates	Bike racks for Bobs corner	04/08/2017	70.78
24/07/2017	Broxap	Litter bin	04/08/2017	196.74

17. **Questions to the Chairman:** there were no questions

18. **Items for Councillors to note:**

CDO: Greener spaces, Better Places offer of funding to improve run down or neglected spaces but the closing date is 8th September. **Action:** clerk to express interest in future project funding and add to next R&L agenda

CMW: Defibrillators need to be regularly checked and the PC need to set up a plan for this to happen. **Action:** refer to Finance Committee

CTS: Parish Hall should have its own defib. **Action:** refer to Halls committee

19. **To confirm the date of the next council meeting.** Thursday 28th September

20. **Dates of Next Meetings:**

- a. Technology Meeting (to be notified)
- b. Halls Meeting Thursday 12th October 2017
- c. Finance Meeting Tuesday 19th September 2017
- d. Recreation and Lands Meeting Thursday 14th September 2017.
- e. Planning Meetings (to be notified).



Dianne Brooks
Parish Clerk
29th August 2017