

## BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford. OX10 6LZ  
Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: [bensonparish.council@virgin.net](mailto:bensonparish.council@virgin.net)

**Minutes** of the Benson Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016 at 7:30pm in the Benson Parish Hall Committee Room.

### Present:

Cllr P Peers	(Chair)	(CPP)
Cllr P Baylis		(CPB)
Cllrs J Fowler		(CJF)
Cllr R Jordan		(CRJ)
Cllr F Lovesey		(CFL)
Cllr T McTeague		(CTM)
Cllr P Murray		(CPM)
Cllr D Olley		(CDO)
Cllr T Stevenson		(CTS)
Cllr M Winton		(CMW)
Cllr R Workman		(CRW)

Proper Officer: P Eldridge (CLK)

OCC Cllr M Gray

A reporter from the Henley Standard

There were 4 members of the public present

1. **Apologies.** Cllr S McCann
2. **Declarations of Interest.** – There were no declarations of interest.
3. **To receive reports from the following:**
  - a. Cllr M Gray – OCC Member. Cllr M Gray reported:
    - i. I had arranged a meeting with Thames Travel directors for interested parties to discuss with them the future of the bus route 139 from Wallingford to Henley on Thames and back. Unfortunately this meeting was cancelled at short notice. I have spoken with a director and have been informed that there will be still time later in the year for the parish council to meet with Thames Travel to discuss the service.
    - ii. I now have a map of the drainage ditches along Oxford Road and have had discussions about issues with Mr D Baldwin of Monson who has noted that the ditches only provide soakage and are virtually redundant. I have passed the information I have gathered to Cllr P Peers.
    - iii. I am wondering if I should attend Transport Advisory Group Meetings (TAG) when they are discussing issues around Castle Square brought to the last meeting of the Benson Parish Council by a parishioner. Cllr P Murray responded that the TAG had been subsumed into the Neighbourhood Plan and that it would be best for Cllr Gray to contact Mr Rushton.
    - iv. I am pleased to tell you that Oxfordshire child centres will not now close until at least March 2017.
    - v. OCC have appointed an Interim Director of Transformation to drive

the required OCC budget cuts.

vi. I would like to confirm that Benson Parish Council has received the information on SODC grants for HM The Queen's birthday celebration events. Cllr Peers responded that the information had been received and circulated.

b. Cllr F Bloomfield – SODC Member. Cllr F Bloomfield was not present at the meeting but had submitted a written report which is at Annex B to these minutes.

c. Cllr R Pullen – SODC Member. Cllr R Pullen was not present at the meeting

4. **Public Session.** Two parishioners from Preston Crowmarsh addressed the chairman on the variation of approved planning application P16/S3450/FUL: Both parishioners were strongly against the variation plans noting that the changes made no difference to them as neighbours and urged the council to object to the application on the same grounds previously made on the application. Cllr P Peers brought forward item 6.b.ii. for immediate discussion.

5. **Minutes of Last Meeting:** Cllr Peers reviewed the minutes of the Benson Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016 page by page:

a. On page 132 Cllr M Winton objected to minute 2. Declarations of interest stating that he had not signed the declarations book at this point because he had no interest to declare. It was explained that regardless of when the book is signed at a meeting it is always minuted at the beginning of the minutes under the item Declarations of Interest.

b. On page 133 Cllr M Winton noted that minute 5. Public Session did not include his statement that he lived in Oxford Road and had requested the police and OCC Highways to do speed checks as traffic can travel at speeds well in excess of 30mph. It was agreed that minutes should be amended to state that Cllr Winton had stated that he had asked for additional speed checks.

**Action:** Clerk to amend minutes.

CLK

c. On page 134 Cllr M Winton objected to Minute 7.b.i.

**BPC15/16/P15/S3916/O.** Land north of Littleworth Road Benson. After a vigorous discussion Cllr Winton remained firm that he felt that he had no pecuniary interest in the development and it was agreed that the signing of the minutes should be deferred to a later meeting so that more time could be spent reviewing both the advice on pecuniary interests and the wording in the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016 Minutes.

**Signing of the Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016 Benson Parish Council Meeting Deferred.**

**Action:** Cllr P Peers to carry out further review of the minutes seeking further advice on pecuniary interests.

CPP

**Action:** Clerk to bring forward March 2016 minutes to next council meeting for signing.

CLK

6. **Benson Parish Council Planning Committee:**

a. To approve and sign the minutes of the planning meeting held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016. **Members who were present at the planning meeting held Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016 unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting.** Cllr J Fowler chair of the planning committee signed the minutes as a true record.

- b. To consider Planning Applications:
  - i. **BPC18/16/P16/S1058/HH.** 9 Millar Close, Benson, OX10 6LE. Proposed ground and first floor rear extension. Cllr J Fowler noted a concern that the planned bathroom window would overlook neighbouring properties.  
**Members unanimously resolved to return no objections with the comments that the bathroom window be fitted with frosted glass and that the opening of the window be restricted so that overlooking cannot occur.**
  - ii. **BPC19/16/P16/S0213/FUL.** 68 Preston Crowmarsh, OX10 6SL. amendment No 1 to variation of approved planning application P14/S3450/FUL (Demolition of existing dwelling and industrial units with erection of three dwellings of varying designs and form). (As amended by plans 2a, 3a, 4a and 1a which reduces the size of the development).  
**Members resolved to object to the amendment of variation by 10 votes with 1 abstention** on the grounds:
    - 1) Amendment 1 to the variation of approved planning permission P14/S3450/FUL was overdevelopment of the site.
    - 2) There would be a significant impact on local infrastructure.
    - 3) The increased development would have a detrimental effect on neighbouring properties as the revised plans still show larger units and changed orientation which increases overlooking.
    - 4) The development is out of scale with surrounding properties and intrusive.
- c. To note Planning Decisions. No planning decisions have been received.
- d. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Planning Committee.  
Cllr J Fowler reported:
  - i. A meeting had been held between the planning committee and Archstone Projects Limited the developing agents for the area at St Helen's Avenue known as BEN8. Cllr Fowler continued that the meeting had been quite positive and that the Archstone will be keeping in touch with the Benson Parish Council on any proposals for the land.
  - ii. That he had been in touch with SODC Cllr Felix Bloomfield to ask for support in rejecting the phase 2 plans for the Littleworth Road. Cllr Fowler continued that he would also raise the unacceptable issue of SODC paperwork arriving at the last minute with limited time for the parish council and parishioners to respond.

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

- a. To approve and sign the minutes of the Finance Committee held on Tuesday 22nd March 2016. **Members who were present at the finance committee meeting held Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting.** Cllr P Peers chair of the finance committee signed the minutes as a true record.
- b. To present finance recommendations to Council:
  - i. **Recommendation to Full Council to increase the Tennis Club rent to £122 per annum effective 1/5/2016.**

**Members present resolved by 10 votes with 1 against to approve the recommendation.**

ii. **Recommendation to Full Council to increase the Cuckoo Pen rent to £1550 per annum effective 1/7/2016.**

**Members present unanimously resolved to approve the recommendation.**

iii. **Recommendation to Full Council to review the Halls Managers pay scale from LC1 20 to LC1 22. (Representing a full time equivalent rise from £19048 to £20252pa).**

**Members present unanimously resolved to approve the recommendation.**

c. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Finance Committee. Cllr P Peers reported that currently the RFO was very busy preparing the year end accounts for audit.

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

a. To approve and sign the minutes of the Halls Committee held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016. **Members who were present at the halls committee meeting held Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016 unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting.** Cllr T McTeague chair of the Halls committee signed the minutes as a true record.

b. To present a halls recommendations:

i. **Recommendation to full council that badminton lines are painted on the parish hall refurbished floor and the costs be incorporated into the total cost of the hall refurbishment.** Cllr Fowler queried whether the main Hall floor was a 'sprung floor' and pointed out that the painting of lines would incur an ongoing maintenance cost to the Council. Cllr McTeague reported that the floor was 'sprung' and the cost of painting the lines was estimated to be between £900 and £1000. Further discussion ensued at the end of which it was agreed that the main parish hall floor would need to be refurbished prior to lines being painted . **Members present resolved by 6 votes with 4 against and 1 abstention to approve the recommendation.**

ii. **Recommendation to full council that the halls committee seek advice from Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) on the requirements for the 'safeguarding' of children using parish council facilities.** Cllrs discussed the recommendation noting the background leading to the requirement and that there would be no cost to the council during the period that advice would be obtained. Cllrs then agreed to amend the recommendation to read:

**Recommendation to full council that Benson Parish Council seek advice from Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) on the requirements for the 'safeguarding' of children using parish council facilities**  
**Members present unanimously resolved to approve the recommendation.**

iii. **Recommendation to full council that the halls committee be authorised to move forward with the halls regeneration plans with a review of the options available by combining elements from both the original halls extension plans and the current halls regeneration**

**plans.** Cllrs discussed the recommendation and agreed that scope of the work should be to provide a new office for the parish staff to work in, refurbishment of the toilets and kitchen.

**Members present resolved by 10 votes with 1 against to approve the recommendation.**

c. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Halls Committee. The chairman had nothing to report. Cllr R Workman asked what progress had been made with the installation of the new parish hall main entrance doors. Clerk responded that the doors had been ordered and the manufacturer had made a site visit to check the measurements. Clerk continued that during the site visit the installers had found what they believed to be asbestos panels above the doors. This was currently under investigation and testing.

*Post meeting note: After investigation and testing no trace of asbestos was discovered.*

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

a. To approve and sign the minutes of the Recreation and Lands Committee held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016. **Members who were present at the Recreation and Lands committee meeting held Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016 unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting.** Cllr P Baylis chair of the Recreation and Lands committee signed the minutes as a true record.

b. To present recreation and lands recommendations:

i. **Recommendation to full council that Benson Parish Council allow Mr P Collins to keep one hive of bees on his allotment, subject to his acceptance of Benson Parish Councils Beekeeping Policy, and the provision of all relevant documentation, and subject to no fewer than 90% of allotment holders (at St Helen's Avenue allotment site) not objecting to the hive.** Cllr T Stevenson commented that the letter would only need to be sent to allotment holders in the vicinity of where the beehive would be placed. Cllr R Jordan noted that he was aware of several allotment holders who would object to the installation of the hive. Cllr T McTeague expressed a concern that the bees may be disturbed by the activities of individuals visiting or tending their allotments and also be subject to vandalism. Cllr McTeague continued that she had seen bee keeping equipment arriving at the location for the hive and yet she had still not been consulted. Cllr P Baylis noted that the introduction of bees on the allotments would help support biodiversity. The discussion ended with a question on insurance cover for any liability the council would have if a bee related incident occurred, it was agreed that the clerk should check with the council insurance brokers. It was also agreed that the recommendation should be deferred while additional information is gathered.

**Action:** Cllr P Baylis and clerk to identify the scope of the area for the letter drop and arrange delivery of letters.

**Action:** Clerk to check insurance cover for bee keeping on allotments.

**CLK  
CPB  
CLK**

c. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Recreation and Lands Committee. Cllr P Baylis reported that:

i. There had been a serious leak of water on the allotments reported to

the clerk by Thames Water. Clerk met with Thames Water on site and subsequently arranged for an emergency repair the following day. Due to the nature of the leak several holes were dug and at 3 points on the water main new stopcocks were fitted to section off different areas served. Additionally a new lockable tap was fitted at the site of the leak. Work to repair the leak was completed within 36 hours of the report of the leak.

ii. There will be a site meeting on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2016 with the individual wishing to place a commemorative plaque at Rivermead.

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

a. To approve and sign the minutes of the Awards Committee held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016. **Members who were present at the Awards committee meeting held Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016 unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting.** Cllr T Stevenson chair of the Awards committee signed the minutes as a true record.

b. To present recommendations to Council:

i. **Recommendation to full council that for his outstanding commitment and dedication to form and chair the Friends of Benson Library committee and the subsequent work carried out to keep the Benson Library open Mr D Rushton is awarded the 2016 Don Fletcher Community Award. Members present unanimously resolved to approve the recommendation.**

c. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Awards Committee. Cllr T Stevenson reported that no nominations for the 'Bob Griffiths; Trophy had been forthcoming for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row and that the trophy would not be presented again this year.

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

a. To approve and sign the minutes of the Technology Committee held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016. **Members who were present at the Technology committee meeting held Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016 unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting.** Cllr P Baylis chair of the Technology committee signed the minutes as a true record.

b. To present technology committee recommendations to Council:

i. **Recommendation to full council that the council purchase a PC for the Halls Manager to enable the processing of invoicing cost not to exceed £350 +VAT.**

**Members present unanimously resolved to approve the recommendation.**

**Action:** Clerk to order computer.

c. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Technology Committee. Cllr P Baylis reported:

i. Website administrator training had been arranged for the technology committee and parish staff on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

ii. That once the training had been completed the URL of the new site would be sent to Cllrs so they can review the site. Cllr Baylis asked Cllrs to send any comments on the site to herself and the clerk.

iii. That the website going live was still expected to be announced at the APM on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

12. **Benson Parish Council Working Groups.** To receive reports from the Benson Parish Council Working Groups:

a. Benson Community Hydro Working Group (BCHWG):

i. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Benson community hydro working group committee. On behalf of the chairman the vice chairman gave the following report:

- 1) A company had been selected to provide a professional feasibility study from the 4 companies tendering.
- 2) That subject to Benson Parish Council approval the working group would apply for a grant to cover the study from the Rural Community Energy Fund.
- 3) Working group had prepared a recommendation to Benson parish council to approve the appointment of the selected company.

ii. To present Benson community hydro working group committee recommendations to Council:

- 1) **That Benson Parish Council approves the appointment of Renewables First to carry out a Professional Feasibility Study for a Hydro Installation at Benson Weir at their quoted price of £23,141 (including VAT) – subject to the securing of full external funding.** Cllrs discussed the recommendation during which Cllr T McTeague asked if she could be briefed on the BCHWG project. Cllr Murray said that he would be happy to provide a briefing on the project. Other Cllrs also expressed an interest in a briefing and it was agreed that the clerk should set up a meeting so that Cllrs could be briefed.

**Members present unanimously resolved to approve the recommendation.**

**Action:** Clerk to arrange a briefing to Cllrs on the BCH project.

CLK

13. **Benson Parish Council Chairman:**

a. To receive a report from the Chairman. Chairman reported:

i. That she had sent a birthday card to HM The Queen to mark the celebration of her 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday on behalf of the Benson Parish Council and the parishioners of Benson. It was agreed that Cllr P Peers should place a note in the Benson Bulletin to inform parishioners that the card had been sent.

**Action:** Cllr Peers to send note about birthday card sent to HM The Queen to Benson Bulletin

CPP

ii. That it had been a very busy month and meetings had been held with:

- 1) The Benson United Football Club to discuss ongoing requirements for the maintenance of football facilities.
- 2) Mr T Shickle OCC Operational Development Manager to discuss the 'Oxfordshire Together' initiative.
- 3) Archstone Projects Limited to discuss a possible housing

development off St Helen's Avenue at the site known as BEN8.

4) The meeting with Thames Travel to discuss the future of the 139 Bus route had been postponed.

iii. That the Chair and the clerk would be attending the RAF Reception on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016

iv. Benson Parish Council has received one grant application for a Queen's Birthday Grant from the Benson youth club. A response is awaited to the request to use a grant for a permanent memorial such as seats in Church Road.

b. To report on any items or issues brought forward. No items or other issues were brought to the meeting.

14. **To discuss and agree any Proposals or Approvals.** No proposals were brought to the meeting

15. **Correspondence:**

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

**Post received for meeting Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016**

<b>Post/Emails Received</b>	<b>Action</b>
1. Addition of the alias property name: Gate Cottage circulated Thu 30 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2016 at 09:05.	Noted
2. Police Open Day - Saturday 6 August circulated Thu 31 <sup>st</sup> Mar 2016 at 10:36.	Noted
3. Public Service Reorganisation for Oxfordshire circulated Thu 5 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 11:11.	Noted
4. Maintenance of Footpath Number 8 circulated Wed 20 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 15:09.	Noted
5. Change of property name from: Annexe, The Old Inn to: The Barn, Beggarsbush Hill, Benson, WALLINGFORD OX10 6PL circulated Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 08:04.	Noted
6. Benson Parish Council Meeting - St Helen's Avenue Residential Development (Burial Ground) circulated Wed 20 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 15:18.	Noted
7. Recent changes to Flood Defence Consents circulated Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 11:24.	Noted
8. Query from Parishioner wishing to form a Benson Men's Football Team circulated Sat 16 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 11:26.	Noted
9. Letter from Cllr John Cotton - A Better Deal for Oxfordshire circulated Tue 12 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 17:55.	Noted
10. Change of alias property name from: The Dell to: December Cottage for: 43 Littleworth Road, Benson, WALLINGFORD OX10 6LY circulated Fri 15 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 17:00.	Noted
11. Founder's Day Celebration Evening & Prize Giving circulated Wed 20 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 15:45	Noted
12. Community First Affiliation Letter circulated Wed 20 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 15:57.	Noted
13. Youth Club Queen's Birthday Grant circulated Wed 20 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 16:23.	Noted
14. Wallingford School Community Work circulated Wed 20 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 14:37. <b>Action:</b> Clerk to place item on next recreation and lands agenda to discuss Wallingford School Community Work.	<b>CLK</b>
15. Letter from a parishioner on new car parking at Hale Road circulated Wed 20 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 16:35.	Noted



<b>16.</b> Email from Cllr M Winton to discuss SODC Legal and Democratic Services Advice on Bias in decision making Feb 2016. It was agreed that this item had been dealt fully earlier in the meeting including future actions.	<b>Action</b>
<b>17.</b> Free Cyber Safety Workshops At Keeping Safe Event – Friday 29 April 19/04/2016 09:06:05 [143851] circulated Wed 20 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 15:40. Cllrs interested in attending should contact the clerk.	<b>Action</b>
<b>18.</b> Email from SODC Cllr F Bloomfield about grid lock in the village circulated Wed 20 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2016 at 15:34. Clerk instructed post meeting to contact PCSOs. <b>Action:</b> Clerk to follow up and contact police and ask for patrols.	<b>CLK</b>

b. To review Parish Office Notes as detailed on attached list:

**Parish Office notes Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016**

1. No parish notes were submitted

**16. Finance:**

- a. To sign off the reconciled bank statement for the current account as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.
- b. To consider Grant applications payable under powers from 1972 Local Government Act (s137). No grant applications have been received.
- c. To sign cheques as detailed on the attached list:

Date of Invoice	Organisation/ Individual	Description	Cheque Number	Amount
21/04/2016	HMRC	PAYE and NI for April 2016	505944	680.43
21/04/2016	OCC	Pensions April 2016	505945	1021.78
21/04/2016	G Stock	Wages April	505946	137.10
21/04/2016	A Bates	Handyman services	505947	1228.43
04/04/2016	Cathedral Leasing	Hygiene services	505948	433.66
06/04/2016	Clearview (Paul Smith)	Window cleaning	505949	140.00
05/04/2016	Andrew Ashcroft Planning Ltd	Neighbourhood Plan assistance	505950	1446.48
08/04/2016	Azalea	Overflow carpark works	505951	490.00
22/03/2016	NP Design and Print	Neighbourhood Plan leaflets	505952	143.00
31/03/2016	Clarity	Photocopier hire	505953	152.25
24/03/2016	Benson Catering Equipment	Kitchen repairs	505954	72.00
04/04/2016	SODC	Annual alcohol licence for PH	505955	180.00
31/03/2016	Grundon	Waste collection	505956	88.54
31/03/2016	Colliers	Hardware	505957	39.30
08/04/2016	Ovenblitz (Peter Earnshaw)	PH oven cleaning	505958	140.00
19/04/2016	Martyn Ottery	Water heater in PV	505959	96.00
11/03/2016	Jon Fowler	Domain for Neighbourhood plan	505960	143.82
21/04/2016	P Eldridge	Teaspoons and water jugs	505961	15.74
29/02/2016	Donovan Bros	Cleaning sundries	505962	79.51

17. **Questions to the Chairman:** There were no questions to the chairman.

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

a. Cllr P Baylis asked by what date reports are required for the annual parish meeting. Clerk responded week ending Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

**19. To confirm the date of the next council meeting.** Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

**20. Dates of Next Meetings:**

a. Benson Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

b. Parish Council Meeting. Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

c. Finance Meeting Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

d. Halls Meeting Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

e. Recreation and Lands Meeting Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

f. Planning Meetings (to be notified).



Peter Eldridge  
Proper Officer  
29<sup>th</sup> April 2016

**Annex A  
Actions for Parish Council Meetings as at  
21st April 2016**

Serial No	Action	Initials
1.	Clerk to place an item on the next regular halls meeting council meeting minutes 24th March 2016 (14.a.17.). <i>Item listed for halls agenda. Action closed.</i>	CLK
2.	Clerk to note availability of grants in parish notes section of Benson Bulletin council meeting minutes 24th March 2016 (14.a.19.). <i>Availability of grants notified in April 2016 edition. Action closed.</i>	CLK
3.	Clerk to amend minute's council meeting minutes 21st April 2016 (5.b.). <i>In progress.</i>	CLK
4.	Cllr P Peers to carry out further review of the minutes seeking further advice on pecuniary interest's council meeting minutes 21st April 2016 (5.c.). <i>In progress.</i>	CPP
5.	Clerk to bring forward March 2016 minutes to next council meeting for signing council meeting minutes 21st April 2016 (5.c.). <i>In progress.</i>	CLK
6.	Cllr P Baylis and clerk to identify the scope of the area for the letter drop and arrange delivery of letters council meeting minutes 21st April 2016 (9.b.i.). <i>In progress.</i>	CPB CLK
7.	Clerk to check insurance cover for bee keeping on allotments council meeting minutes 21st April 2016 (9.b.i.). <i>In progress.</i>	CLK
8.	Clerk to arrange a briefing to Cllrs on the BCH project council meeting minutes 21st April 2016 (12.a.ii.1.). <i>In progress.</i>	CLK
9.	Clerk to arrange a briefing to Cllrs on the BCH project council meeting minutes 21st April 2016 (12.a.ii.1.). <i>In progress.</i>	CLK
10.	Cllr Peers to send note about birthday card sent to HM The Queen to Benson Bulletin meeting minutes 21st April 2016 (13.a.i.). <i>Notified in May 2016 edition. Action closed.</i>	CPP
11.	Clerk to place item on next recreation and lands agenda to discuss Wallingford School Community Work meeting minutes 21st April 2016 (15.a.14.). <i>Agenda item noted. Action closed.</i>	CLK
12.	Clerk to follow up and contact police and ask for patrols meeting minutes 21st April 2016 (15.a.18.). <i>Police contacted patrols implemented. Action closed.</i>	CLK

**Annex B**  
**SODC Cllr F Bloomfield Report**  
**21<sup>st</sup> April 2016**

**It's official - South is best for rural dwellers!**

South Oxfordshire has topped a list of the best places to live in the UK countryside.

According to a survey produced by the Halifax, South Oxfordshire has the highest living standards, with happy residents, high levels of satisfaction and low levels of anxiety.

We also scored highly for health and employment, with 97 per cent of adults saying they were in good health and 81 per cent in jobs.

What's more, we were pleased to find that the vast majority of South Oxfordshire residents are satisfied with how the district council runs things.

Just over 80 per cent said also that the council offered good quality services, and two thirds of residents agreed that they provided good value for money – the best result since surveys began in 2005.

**Corporate Services Project**

The District Council's Corporate Services Contract has now been agreed by all of the participating Councils, which means that the work has moved from the preparation and planning phase into the initiation phase. Councillors and officers are now working with the other member councils to assist in getting this under way.

Another piece of work that has been running quietly in the background is the migration of the council's IT Systems to an external platform. This was originally expected to complete last year, but the fire at the Council's offices in Crowmarsh had seriously delayed the start of this and it is only now drawing to it's conclusion.

**Oxfordshire Vision**

The seven Councils involved continue to work on our Devolution Bid for a better way for Local Government, and recently the Oxfordshire Growth Board urged our friends in the County Council to join our independent consultation on how this may look. More information is available on the website. <http://www.oxfordshire.vision/>

**Community Safety Partnership**

Our Officers work very closely with their opposite numbers in the other local councils, and their work with the Community Safeguarding Partnership is no exception. This month, with Cabinet Members, they attended our Joint Scrutiny Committee Meeting to review performance and answer questions on the various matters covered by their remit.

Related to this as part of his Police and Crime Commissioner Panel role, Cllr Ian White visited the Oxford MASH (Multi Agency Support Hub) to help his understanding of the challenges faced by those in the front line. This is a centre that

is staffed by members of all of the community support groups (Police, Health and Social Services, and education.) This was established by Police and Crime Commissioner Anthony Stansfeld early on in his term to help prevent abuse of the vulnerable such as that identified by Operation Bullfinch and covering all aspects of child abuse. Other MASH Centres have either already been set up or are being set up in the Thames Valley Area.

Also under this heading the Community Safety Partnership we have just launched Hotel Watch in Abingdon and Thame, which is a scheme designed to help keep vulnerable people safe.

We'll be working with the police to provide hotel, B&B and guesthouse owners with information on how to spot and report signs of child sexual exploitation and human trafficking, and what to do if they believe something suspicious is happening at their premises.

Hotel Watch is another initiative set up in response to the findings and recommendations that came out of Operation Bullfinch.

It also allows the owners of these businesses to contact each other, the police and councils to share issues around criminal activity, like credit card theft and criminal damage.

For more information about Hotel Watch please contact Karen Brown.

### **Planning and Development**

Since the last report, we have received two decisions on planning appeals, that for the Chinnor Gladman Appeal and the Wallingford Wates Appeal. It is disappointing to note that these two appeals have been allowed and our Planning Team are reviewing the Inspectors' reports to determine what we will do about these decisions.

With house prices high and land at a premium across the South East developers are keen to get planning permission so it is important communities get Neighbourhood Plans drawn up, this will give local residents a say in where they want development and where they don't. It also assists us the Local Planning Authority when making a decision and should applications go to Appeal will carry weight with the Planning Inspectorate.

### **CIL money**

We've started collecting Community Infrastructure Levy money this month which is financial contributions from developers to put into local communities. We'll pass 15 per cent of the funds we collect to the town and parish councils where development is taking place, so they can spend it on local infrastructure.

If they have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan in place, we'll pass on 25 per cent.

### **Neighbourhood Planning**

Residents in Henley and Harpsden have voted in favour of adopting their Neighbourhood Plan. In the referendum on Thursday this week, 2,105 people voted in favour of adopting the plan, 471 voted against it. The turnout was just over 28 per cent.

Here's a quick update on a few of the other neighbourhood plans that have recently progressed:

Berinsfield - there's a public hearing on Tuesday 12 April to examine whether Berinsfield's plan meets the basic conditions set out in the Localism Act. It takes place at 10am at the Berinsfield Community Association, OX10 7NR.

Sonning Common - an inspector has now been appointed to examine whether the Sonning Common plan meets the basic conditions in the Localism Act.

Other updates - we've confirmed the areas that the plans for The Baldons, Warborough and Shillingford, and Wheatley will cover.

### **Licensing**

Our Licensing Panel not only reviews Taxi Drivers' conduct, but also the licensing of films for public screening. Normally, although having overall responsibility for these licences, Councils adopt the recommendations of the British Board of Film Censors. This month though, a request was received for a licence for a privately produced amateur production and so a Licensing Panel was convened comprising Cllrs Harrod, Nimmo-Smith and White. The three councillors all agreed, that whilst the film may not have been something they

would have gone to see at the cinema, it was produced to a higher standard than a lot of the stuff screened on TV!

### **Rubbish And Waste - Five tonnes of litter for Royalty**

Earlier this month, we invited residents to take part in a mass clean-up to celebrate the Queen's birthday.

32 groups across both the South and Vale districts took part and collected nearly four tonnes of rubbish and just under a tonne of recycling, which is about 300 bags of litter off the streets and roads.

There's still time to get a group together and have a clear up as part of Clean For the Queen. For more details, email [waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk).

### **Grants**

Whilst the Capital Grants Scheme window for applications is now closed, there will be opportunities later this year for further applications. To stand the best chance of getting what is needed, planning an application well in advance makes life easier for the applicants and with this in mind the future windows are

- \* Round two open: 2 May to 1 July 2016 for decisions by 15 October 2016
- \* Round three open: 1 August to 30 September 2016 for decisions by 10 January 2017
- \* Round four open: 31 October to 23 December 2016 for decisions by 1 April 2017

### **More on Grants - Sportivate funding**

We've just secured more funding from Sport England for Sportivate, which is a national project to encourage inactive 11-25 year olds to get involved in regular sport and activity. In the last year we reached more than 450 people through this scheme.

We'll use the £11,133 funding for sports such as Nordic walking, roller hockey, triathlon, swimming and boxfit.

For more information see our Sportivate South web page

Councillor Felix Bloomfield