

ROTHERFIELD PEPPARD PARISH COUNCIL: MEETING MINUTES

Council members attended

The Parish Council Meeting of Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council

on **Monday 13th January 2024** at 7.00pm

at the Sports Pavilion, Stoke Row Road, Peppard Common.

Attendees: Cllr Berger, Cllr Hall, Cllr Freeman, Cllr Rowland, Cllr Seaton, Cllr Norman (PT), Cllr Bartholomew (PT), Press (PT), Clerk (JA)

1. Apologies – None
2. Declarations of interest – None
3. Minutes – The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 25/11/24 were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.
4. Open Forum – None
5. Kingwood Common Conservations Volunteers spoke about requesting assistance from the Parish Council. There is a 3m wide concrete track leading from Red House Square in a large loop, historically this originally gave access to many barrack huts. It is currently under vegetation but they would like to open it up for wheelchair access deep into the forest. They are requesting that the Parish Council might be willing to contribute for funding to help the project however this will be a minimal cost.
There was a concern about Scrambler bikes and track bikes using this and there needed to be measures put in place to prevent this.
The Parish Council, in principle, were happy with the project allowing wheelchair access into the forest, and happy to contribute a small amount of funds towards it, but questioned whether all 3 metres needed to be exposed and maybe 1.5metres would be a better compromise.
Cllr Norman happy to champion it as one of the conservators.
6. Mr Philip Collings shared his CV with the Parish Councillors and requested to be Co-opted onto the Council. He stated he was aware of vacancies within the Parish and with the current Councillors Top Common is not represented currently. He currently volunteers with many local projects including FISH and Shedquarters. Mr Collings left the room and the Councillors discussed and voted. Mr Collings was unanimously co-opted onto the Parish Council and was invited back to the room. Clerk will organise paperwork for the next meeting.

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7. Oxfordshire County Councillor's report – Cllr Bartholomew discussed his report and spoke about local issues. There were some questions raised about Unitary authority as it had come up from both OCC, SODC and Main Government literature. It was agreed that the Cost savings would be advantageous however the loss of any local accountability would be less appealing. It was asked whether there would be public consultation however there was no confirmation.

Cllr Berger raised the matter of the grooming gangs in Oxford in the light of the recent publicity on the grooming gangs operating in at least 50 towns / cities in the UK and the House of Commons vote, with Labour MPs instructed to prevent an independent enquiry. Cllr Bartholomew gave Cllr Berger the relevant persons in OCC as he was unable to answer the questions himself. Cllr Berger to make contact.

OCC have discussed their Budget final proposals and this will be advised at the next meeting. Cllr Bartholomew also wanted to bring to the Parish's attention that there was a further push on the Net Zero target and OCC were pushing this for 2030, which is 20yrs ahead of the Government's target.

- i. Church Lane Flooding improvement work – the work has been completed. Clerk to speak to the residents to ensure they are happy with the outcome.
- ii. Stoke Row/ Gallowstree Road Crossroads accidents and Junction improvement proposal – Cllr Bartholomew will escalate the 20mph date on our behalf as we have not got a date for installation.
- iii. Fix My Street items:
 1. 6611831 Potholes Colmore Lane – Investigating – Cllr Bartholomew will escalate

8. Update from Cllr Freeman on Superuser issues for Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council
Update on Cllr Berger becoming a Superuser – No updates

9. South Oxfordshire District Councillor's report – Cllr Norman discussed the SODC report and discussed local issues. Clerk will send photos of Blounts Court road from the Planning meeting to investigate who and why the hedgerow has been cut back and the road widened. Cllr Berger enquired about The Climate and Nature Bill. Cllr Norman gave Cllr Berger the relevant persons in SODC as he was unable to answer the questions himself. Cllr Berger to make contact.

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10. Parish Council Matters –

- a. Clerk advised CIL 23/24 form signed and sent to SODC as part of the Clerk responsibilities. CIL brought forward for 2023/24 £20,311.39, received £5,237.14, Spent £13,973.22 on NDCC Verge conservation, Hearing loop at PWMH, Grant to Springwater Church to make it more energy efficient, Millies dream continuous check on Defribs within the village and new pads/parts as required, QEII contribution to NDCC, Posts at the Unicorn triangle to prevent parking, Speed deterrents and hedging refurbishment for Carlings Orchard. CIL retained for 2024/25 £11,575.31
- b. Clerk advised Precept of £50,000 applied for 2025/26
- c. Clerk advised Wifi fully operational within the Pavilion
- d. CAF Bank, our trustee bank account has requested a second authoriser for monies withdrawn. Clerk sent details for Cllr Berger as 2nd authoriser. Clerk has passed on User name details as appropriate. System is now live for 2 authorisers
- e. 3rd Reading Bridge meeting update from Cllr Hall. Cllr Hall advised there was a lot of concern from neighbouring parishes that this might happen and proposed we should be in favour of the letter drafted to oppose to the 3rd Bridge. Clerk to advise committee that RPPC are fully behind the opposition.

11. Rotherfield Peppard Village Update:

- a. Update on accidents on Stoke Row/ Gallowstree Crossroads – Discussed under OCC agenda point
- b. Wishing Stone Update – This is now moved and all are happy with the new location. Can be removed from future agendas
- c. Clerk to get quote from Mr Kendrick for Grass cutting

12. Finance and Staffing –

- a. No update on audits 2020-21/ 2021-22/ 2022-23/ 2023-24
- b. Cllr Berger/Clerk updated Councillors on Financial matters and budget for 2024/25. There will be a variance of c.£11k at the end of the financial year. This is made up of a deficit in CIL receipts, £1.5k more spent on payroll, £2k on audits as we are backdating the audits from the Pavilion refurbishment, and £4.5k on Carling orchards for work on the hedgerow and grass verge. Grants may need to be revised accordingly.
- c. Approval of signatures on UTB for Jan 25 were Cllr Berger and Rowland
- d. All expenditure was approved for Jan 25
 - i. Clerk Salary, including increase and backpay = Confidential.
 - ii. Clerk Expenses Q3 – paperwork shown at meeting – moved to next meeting
 - iii. Village Cleaner (AP) salary = Confidential
 - iv. SODC Loan £327.31
 - v. Clerk – Nest Pension – Confidential

13. Matters for future meeting: NONE

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14. Next Meeting date – Monday February 3rd 2025

Meeting finished at 8:30pm.