

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL  
OF OGBOURNE ST GEORGE HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL  
ON THURSDAY 12 MARCH 2009 AT 7:30pm

Those Present: Mr M Grove (Chairman)  
Mrs C Mudge  
Mrs C Manos  
Mr R Smith  
Mr K Wallace  
Mr P Willis  
Mr C Freeman (Clerk)  
Mr D Hunter (Kennet)  
Mr C Humphries (WCC)

Apologies were received from Mr P Rouse, but he attended from 9:15pm  
7 residents were present

Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting, having been circulated, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising: **Chairman's Statement:** The former Chairman Cllr Wallace read a statement, which he issued to the Clerk, as follows: "My understanding from the Parish Council Meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009, and the content of the Letter of Claim presented to me by the Clerk, is that the Clerk objected to the word "defamatory" used in the Mins\_Amendment document 27th November and my resignation letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> December 2009. As deformation (*sic*) has not been confirmed in a Court ruling, I would accept that it has not been proven, either way. Therefore, any reference to the word "defamatory" should correctly be prefixed by such words as "alleged," "potential," or "perceived." I have corrected the documents to incorporate one of the selected words. I apologise for the omission and any concern which has subsequently arisen."

**Street Lighting:** The Clerk had sought further quotations for the street lights from an electrical wholesaler but as the market for these lights is limited to local authorities they are not available at a lower price. Now that the grant funding from Kennet had been reported as almost all allocated by Cllr Wallace last October it would appear appropriate only to replace (or repair) lights as they fail for the forthcoming year and revisit the issue at some stage in future.

**Village Gateways:** The Clerk had met with Peter Hanson of WCC to finalise village gateways and order appropriate sized gates which had been delivered to the WCC site in Marlborough. Two posts were still awaited and as soon as received Peter Hanson would advise regarding the installation schedule. The Clerk would then write to the residents in the first three houses giving details of the work schedule and assuring them that the gateways were being installed by WCC highways in a professional manner such that they would not obstruct line of sight from their gateway.

**Development Control Service Meeting:** Cllr Wallace had reported on this meeting which he had attended with the Chairman. He had circulated his notes prior to the PC meeting. Two items were highlighted: the Ward Councillor was the only person who can refer a planning application to the regulatory authority and pre-application discussion was now an important part of each

application.

**Complaints from School:** The Chairman had received a complaint that the minutes of the last meeting were incorrect. As they recorded what was said it was agreed that they were correct; however the Chairman conceded that he had misunderstood information he had been given regarding letters.

**Eucalyptus Tree:** Following visits by Councillors the Clerk had advised the contractor that the PC would be happy with a 25% reduction in this tree. SEB had already cut back tree from power lines.

Finance:

**Payments:** A current statement of the financial position of the Parish Council was distributed by the Clerk. The following payments were made:

Honeystreet Sawmills - Village gateways	£368.00
T O Frost - Domain name	£140.00
UK-2 Ltd – Website Hosting	£94.00
Clerk’s salary	£255.16
Printing of Dragon – 2 months	£27.60
Village Hall – Annual expenses	£50.00

Planning:

**Procedures:** The Clerk had researched the procedures used by other Councils to deal with planning applications in a satisfactory way without having to call a meeting for every application. He had written a proposed standing order which would be discussed with the new standing orders.

**Applications:** Applications and outcomes since last meeting:

K/59938/F Whitefield Cottage – Refusal

E/09/0142/FUL Bytham Farm barn – No objection

School Hall - Approved subject to reduction in permitted hours of use from 10pm to 9pm, management of a bat roost, agreement on materials to be used and hours during which building work can take place.

E/09/0097 Mobile Classroom – No objection

Cllr Wallace enquired as to the progress of a planning application for Home Farm. The Clerk would check on the website.

Standing Orders:

The Clerk had distributed a revised set of the Council’s Standing Orders including a new standing order regarding planning applications. Cllr Rouse had submitted modifications to make the Standing Orders gender neutral and to include the Freedom of Information Act. It was **agreed to adopt the Standing Orders with revisions**, copy is attached to these minutes and will be available on the website. It was agreed to discuss in future a suggestion that parishioners could request a meeting of the Council to discuss a specific application if done within a certain period of time of the application being advertised for comment and suggested amendment.

Role of Clerk:

The Clerk had distributed various documents regarding the Clerk’s role, the national agreement and good employment practice. Cllr Wallace stated that he believes the Clerk should have a contract and be paid through PAYE. It was agreed that the Clerk, having been Clerk for 31 years, did have a *de facto* contract as he was working and the Council was paying. There remained two different points of view but it was acknowledged that, if the Clerk were given a new contract on the terms as shown in the model contract example, it would impose a significant financial cost on the Parish Council in terms of increased

hours, expenses and pension or gratuity arrangements. It was decided to retain the status quo pending further information. Cllr Wallace stated that he believed that the Council should have an internal audit procedure as a Parish Council Chairman friend of his had commented to that end having seen the Council's minutes on the website. The Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, stated that the Parish Council's procedures were wholly in line with requirements and at every meeting the Councillors were given clear spreadsheets showing income and expenditure and then approved payments. Each year the Council approved the Annual Financial Return and the Annual Governance Statement. The Clerk stated that it was a matter of scale and sense and asked what further internal audit procedures could be suggested. It was agreed that if any Councillors wish to discuss this matter further in future it would be put on the Agenda.

Wooldridge and  
Thomegay Charity:

The Chairman had been asked by the Rector to appoint Trustees to the Wooldridge and Thomegay Charity. Mr T O Frost outlined, on behalf of the Rector, the history of this charity. It was agreed that Councillors would consider suitable candidates from people who had lived in the village for most of their lives and make suggestions at the next meeting. The Parish Council wished to record its thanks to the Rector for bringing the matter to its attention.

Village Hall payment:

It was agreed to make an annual payment of £50 to the Ogbourne St George Village Hall to defray expenses incurred by the Parish Council meeting there six times a year.

Sustrans Cycle Path:

The Clerk had cycled the path in the Parish along with the area manager of Sustrans, Alistair Millington. Mr Millington's report on the cycle path in the parish had been circulated and the Clerk was looking at producing acceptable notices which, amongst other directions, would help guide horse riders along the correct route. Sustrans would be seeking funding for improvements to the path from a variety of sources. The Chairman would discuss with Mr Coplestone the availability of suitable gravel to fill potholes. It was agreed to publicise the forthcoming cycle path 'clean up' on the notice board.

Good Councillors Guide  
& Training Courses:

Cllr Wallace would obtain copies of the Good Councillors Guide for each member. He reported that training courses for councillors were being held at Sutton Benger on 4<sup>th</sup> April and Durrington on 25<sup>th</sup>. Cllr Wallace wished to register an interest in that he had been appointed to the Unitary Authority Standards Board.

Speeding:

It had been reported in the local paper that the area Neighbourhood Police Team manager PC Jeremy Batchelor was keen to distribute 30mph signs to be fixed to wheelie bins, as previously featured in Cllr Smith's speeding report. The Clerk would contact PC Batchelor to be included in the project.

Kennet District Councillor: As the district council would become defunct as of April 1<sup>st</sup> Cllr David Hunter was thanked for his efforts on behalf of the Parish Council and, by the Clerk, for his support.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:34pm. The next meeting, the APM and AGM, would be held on Thursday May 14th 2009 at 7:30pm.