



## Minutes

Meeting of Ogbourne St George Parish Council

Held in the Village Hall

**Date:** Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> Jan 2013 @ 7:30pm

**Present:** Councillors K Wallace, K MacDonald, W Reardon-Smith, T George, R Iliffe, K Howard, Cllr J Milton

**Apologies:** PC David Tippetts

The Meeting Opened at 19:31

### **1. Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting(s)**

Accepted and signed by the Chair

### **2. Declaration of interests**

Richard Iliffe declared interest in Pooles developments to be discussed at point 5.1

### **3. Police Report**

3.1. PC Dave Tippetts sent a report

No incidents have been reported in Ogbourne St George since November 2011. However, there have been reports of attempted Oil and Diesel theft from parishes around us so be aware.

### **4. Acceptance of proposed update to Standing Orders**

Councillor George had prepared and proposed updated Standing Orders. The choice was between 50 pages proposed from NALC or a more modest updating to our current document; his proposal is the latter as distributed to the Council with the agenda and calling notice.

Whilst the proposal is a considerable improvement on the previous document, Councillor George noted there is still a need to improve consideration of decisions made between meetings, particularly those made by email. Councillor Wallace noted that there is an outline provision within the existing Standing Orders but recognised that it is not really adequate. Councillor George is to propose an addition clause for inclusion at the next meeting addressing decision making and recording.

Proposal Accepted the new Standing Orders was accepted unanimously. The Chair noted that there is a copy of the updated Standing Orders on the village web page.

### **5. Planning**

5.1. Pooles Yard and Pooles Field E/2012/1467 – Councillor Iliffe left the meeting.

30 minutes was allocated to public discussion, the addendum to this minute record comments made in that discussion.

Councillor George noted that the offer by the Iliffes is generous and with community support we could and should take advantage. He expressed concerned about separation of affordable from commercial and we have advantage. If we can make both areas mixed it would be more attractive and in keeping with the feel of the community. He proposed we oppose the offer as it stands but recognise the benefit the community may gain that the Council would consider a more mixed development.

Councillor Reardon-Smith endorsed these views, particularly to the affordable houses being put in a block such as proposed but she also noted the issue of increased traffic on Jubb's Lane that would result.

Councillor Wallace opposed both applications as they stand; they both encroach on green field sites, as we made clear in our objection to Pooles Yard. However, he endorsed the issue of mixed housing but noted that two large developments at one time would be too much. He also noted that over the last 25 years there is no evidence of a sustainable group in the village being able to maintain the area; the village is not ready to be able to plan for something of this size or make proper use of it. A further issue this Council must consider is that elections will be called in May – he is uncomfortable in leaving a legacy for a new council; as they stand, he oppose both plans.

Councillor Howard shared most of the points expressed, particularly the issue of mixed housing and green field development but expressed concerns that plans that have been proposed, that including building and parking areas, suggest a commitment of some kind tends to mislead the community in what the area might be used for; they are suggestions only and the area is offered levelled and seeded only; it might be put to a wildflower meadow or similar conservation area at low cost and considerable value to the school and community.

The Chairman shared the views about mixed housing needs. On the question about what it's to be used for; the parish plan indicated that the two greatest requests from the community were a village shop and leisure facilities but the last open meeting indicated the lack of support for actually running a shop. Management of 4 acres would need a greater commitment from the community as a whole to make it viable.

Two proposals were then put to a vote

- 1 The change of the Pooles Yard development to be entirely public sale: opposed unanimously on the basis that mixed housing will integrate with the community better.
- 2 The planning application of Pooles Field: application as affordable housing only was opposed but the council appreciate that the offer is generous. The Council might consider an offer based on mixed housing development.

The Council resolved that Ogbourne St George Parish Council should:

- a) Oppose the change of status proposed to the affordable houses in Poole's Yard (E/2012/1476/FUL) on the grounds that the concept of mixed housing is valuable and within the village tradition, and that it would be wrong to have a separate "commercial" development.
- b) Oppose the development of affordable housing in Poole's Field (E/2012/1467/FUL) on the grounds that it would be on green field land, and would consist of affordable houses only, contrary to the wish that any development should be mixed. It would also cause the requirement to be exceeded for affordable housing, as revealed in the recent housing needs survey. It was furthermore felt that the simultaneous absorption of two estates in the village might prove difficult.

However the Parish Council considered that the offer by Mr and Mrs Iliffe of four acres of recreational land (on a renewable 50 year lease, with provision for land formation etc.) was generous. The PC would wish to take advantage of such an offer. It was aware of the usual rules for a "rural exception" development, but if a proposal involving mixed housing on the Poole's Field site were to be presented, the Parish Council would consider it.

## 5.2. Other Applications processed Ex Committee

Councillor Iliffe returned to the meeting

### 5.2.1. E/2012/1416 change to cladding at Berryfields

The PC objected to the application on the basis of the Village Conservation Statement. The application was passed by the Wiltshire planning with conditions.

### 5.2.2. E/2012/1468 Tree work at Poppins

No objection.

### 5.2.3. Lower Upham

The application to replace the temporary hanger with a permanent facility was refused by Wiltshire and the applicant is appealing against the decision. The Council saw no reason to change its position noted at the original application.

## 6. Matters arising

### 6.1. Action of former Clerk

Mr Freeman no longer works for the Council. He has initiated action with the Employment Tribunal Service against the Council's decision. Since the Council undertook the action with the full knowledge of our insurers our defence is being supported by the insurer's legal services.

Councillor Howard is acting as Clerk (unpaid) but this condition can only sustain for up to one year from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct 2012. Also, there is an election in May. The Council will need to employ someone soon but it would be inappropriate to expect someone to take over in the current circumstances. In preparation the Council agreed the need to define a process to employ someone such that it can be implemented quickly when necessary. It was agreed that the Staffing committee would make recommendations for recruitment processes, noting that after elections in May the Council may be in the position of operating with both an inexperienced Council and an inexperienced Clerk.

### 6.2. Council Archive

The council have again requested the archive from Mr Freeman – he has not responded. The Council noted that not having access to this material was compromising its ability to perform its duties for the benefit of the community.

### 6.3. Village Hall Lease status report

The Council agreed some time ago to bear the costs of the renewing the Village Hall lease but that no additional provision was made to cover the legal costs. Councillor George reported that the PC has now paid the advance costs demanded by the two Salisbury solicitors acting for the owners of the village hall and adjacent land, and had also made provision for the costs of their own solicitors, the Merriman Partnership. Thanks to help from Mr Frost on the background (buried in the missing archives) negotiations had begun. He hoped to have progress to report to the next meeting.

## 7. Financial Items

### 7.1. Bank status

The Council can now operate e-banking simplifying the processing of payments.

### 7.2. Budget for 2013 and setting of Precept

Budget forecasts were provided with the agenda. In 2012 the Council set a principal of maintaining the precept at the level existing at the time, however, a number of issues over the last year have increased our commitments and reduced our reserves to near zero. This year we have no choice but to increase the precept significantly.

The finance committee recommend setting a level of £6,500, an increase of approximately 31%. This was agreed unanimously

### 7.3. Specific expenditure items

Felling of Eucalyptus tree

£220.00

Approved

This has been reduced from £460 because Councillors undertook to clear the site.

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| Merriman's payment for hall lease | £900.00 | Approved |
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Addressing long term commitment by the Council to process the Village Hall lease on behalf of the PCC.

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| SSE Contracting | £71.23 | Approved |
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Contracting for both power and maintenance of street lighting has been the responsibility of the Council for some time, there was brief discussion about whether we should consider moving the lighting back to Wiltshire central authority. Councillor Wallace questioned whether we may also have been paying central authority through our council tax and undertook to investigate whether we might get a rebate because we're paying twice. He would also question whether the lighting contract can return to Wiltshire control to reduce the precept.

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| Clerks Salary | £140.72 | Not Approved |
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This represents the Council assessment of the losing salary payment up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2011. The Council has already attempted to make payment to Mr Freeman for his work as Clerk which he has rejected. The Council agreed to take advice from the Insurer's solicitor before making further payments.

## **8. Report from highways and traffic**

### 8.1. Speed watch update

The community is eligible for speed watch but the point of contact for the matter has resigned. We continue to progress the matter if rather slowly.

## **9. Highways report**

### 9.1. Status of roads and drains

The Highways Authority recognises that Church lane is beyond the capabilities of the maintenance team and it is no their list to be resurfaced subject to funding constraints – if it doesn't snow this year we might get it done.

They have inspected the drain outside Parklands and acknowledge that it is broken. It is also on their list to be addressed.

## **10. Open Community Spot**

The Council received a report from Brian Utton about the Parish Plan. Individual reports from groups to be due this Jan to report in Feb.

Mrs Scott asked about street lighting; do all the lights have sensors or timers? The light at the end of her lane remains on all day. We will raise the issue with the contractor.

She also noted the handrails on the path up to the bus stop on the main road are damaged. Councillor George will place the matter of the Community Team to do list.

Councillor Wallace stated that Emergency Plan has stalled – he had no response to the item in the Dragon. Thanks for trying.

The Meeting closed at 21:10.

Next meeting will be on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2013

Dr K Howard (Acting Clerk)