

**Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF STANFORD IN THE VALE PARISH COUNCIL
held on Wednesday 17th April 2019 in Playarea adjoining Village Hall**

Present: 6 Parish Councillors 2 Parishioners Parish Clerk

1. Apologies: Cllr.P.Lewis County Councillor A.Fitzgerald O'Connor

2. In the absence of Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Isaacs welcomed those present.

Due to over booking of Village Hall the meeting was held in the Playarea adjoining the hall using the picnic tables

3. Report of Parish Council Chairman

The report was read by Cllr.Isaacs.

- Chairman sends his sincere apologies that he is unable to be here in person, but has been called away on business at short notice (has to be in Durham tomorrow morning)
- In addition to the “general maintenance” and routine tasks that we undertake throughout the year, including mowing and play area repairs, the following provides a summary of Council’s activities for the year.
- As always, we have been working with the Planning team at VWHDC to:
 - Secure improvements to the applications for both parts of the Strategic Site, which is now being brought forward by David Wilson Homes(DWH)
 - Continuing to press VWHDC/Planning Enforcement with regards the numerous outstanding matters relating to DWH’s previous development, Nursery End (inc. public open space, bird/bat boxes, landscaping and boundary issues). Part of this has resulted in approx. 20,000 bulbs being planted along the verge of the A417 – a mix of snowdrops, autumn flowering crocus and narcissus.
 - Similarly we are actively chasing VWHDC planning to provide details of the Horsecroft-Bow Farm footpath agreement
 - Working to minimise the disruption caused by the developers at Penstones Farm, Horsecroft
- Continuing the planning theme, you will hear from the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee later.
- Council arranged for three boulders to be installed at Upper Green to protect the triangle of grass from vehicular damage. We hope to introduce some planting over the coming months to further reinforce the concept that the Green is not for driving across.
- After a significant amount of legal delay from the County Council, we were finally able to proceed with burying the power lines that had been crossing the proposed QE II Recreation Field during the autumn of 2018. We were also successful in securing grant funding from both VWHDC & the Public Purposes Charity, to cover the substantial costs of this, which puts us in a better position as we look to level the site and create the necessary facilities for the village to enjoy. Whilst there are further legal “hoops” to agree with OCC in relation to the site levelling, we are developing a plan to minimise the impact that any such delay might have.
- Council continues to seek a suitable location for a new burial ground, since we are all aware that the existing is rapidly approaching capacity.
- Last summer, saw a village BBQ event which raised £750 towards new play equipment in the parish – the funds were gifted to the PC and our Leisure and Recreation sub-committee are investigating the most appropriate equipment to add to the play area.
- The Nursery End development included a contribution for Public Works of Art and we have been working with local artists to turn conceptual ideas into reality. Whilst we have had to change artist part way through, we are hoping to have designs available ahead of the Summer Festival.
- As an addition to the Community Woodland, Council has sourced and planted ten fruit trees to form the start of a Community Orchard. These are a mix of Apple, Pear, Plum and Greengage. In addition to this, the strategic site developer has also agreed to include fruit trees within the planting mix as the site is developed.

- A further 2,400 bluebells (in the green) have been planted alongside Manor Green – whilst it is unlikely that they will flower this year, we hope that they will naturalise and spread to produce some wonderful displays during the years ahead.
- Council has also replaced the Clerk's computer equipment and adopted internet banking during this year, both of which should provide efficiencies.
- Council would like to thank our Clerk, staff, contractors & volunteers for all their hard work throughout the year, without them, our we would be unable to deliver the levels of service we do.
- Finally, Chairman would like to extend his personal thanks to Members, who give up their time to provide expertise and insight into all Council matters including recreation, leisure, environment, finance & planning.

4. Finance report

Please note that as it is only 17th April, these are the draft reports – it is quite possible that there may be some more adjustments before these are finalised, as we prepare for our internal audit

Income & Expenditure

- We have been gradually increasing the precept in recent years, mainly to offset the loss of Precept Grant and reduction in income from OCC towards grass cutting. This has worked well, resulting in a strong and stable operating position for the year ahead.
- You'll note that there is a significant increase in income for the year, over £18k of which relates to one-off grants from VWHDC and the PPC relating to the removal of the power lines that were crossing the QE II Recreation Field.
 - This is offset by the Capital Spending and Legal fees for the same (which are found near the bottom of the first column)
- £2,800 of S106 (from Nursery End) has been received for improvements to the Village Hall.
 - Again, offset by expenditure (Capital Spending)
- £2,285.12 of CIL funds received – CIL largely replaces S106. These funds can be allocated to our recognised Infrastructure projects, as detailed in Council's CIL List
- Donations received – village BBQ, TSB compensation and a rebate from printer purchase
- Modest increase in Interest following a new deposit account that council has opened

Expenses

- Neighbourhood Plan expenses are mainly one-off items. As such, there is considerable variance year on year. These are "drawn down" from grant funding already received, rather than being paid for by precept
- General Administration expenses are slightly down – combination of improved insurance costs and reductions in both office and telephone expenses (although these are variable)
- Salaries, Wages – (nb this also covers contractors) – increase in Clerk's salary in line with national guidelines, and additional maintenance works that were undertaken including fencing repairs and additional salting that was required during the "Beast from the East"
- Capital Spending – includes expenses relating to power line removal, S106 monies to Village Hall, Community Woodland (fruit trees), Leisure & Recreation (bluebells) and "other" – replacement IT equipment (laptop, wireless keyboard/mouse & multifunction laser printer)
- Running Costs – modest increase – whilst mower servicing costs were down, additional expenses relate to fencing materials and the repairs necessary to the skate park

Balance Sheet

- Prepayments from previous year relate to pylon move, now recorded & complete
- Accounts Receivable – subject to change, but relates to some underpaid rent, since resolved
- Bank accounts
 - note the sub-accounts created for ease of reporting relating to reserves

- also, the replacement of previous savings account with new Redwood account
- Accounts Payable – largely invoices received in late March inc. laptop, bluebells, newsletter printing

Report of County Councillor

Nil

5. Report of District Councillor

Nil

6. Questions/comments from Parishioners

Nil

7. First Responders report

The 2 First responders present demonstrated new item of equipment and spoke about their work and areas covered and the need for them to requalify every 6 months. Finance was discussed and donations should be made clear that it was for the Stanford team. They were thanked for the work that they carried out towards the continued health of the people of the area covered.

8. Environmental report

Community Woodland – as per Chairs report

9. Recreational & leisure report

As previously reported

10. Neighbourhood Plan report

Since last April when we shared our last report we have had a consultation Event over the Festival Weekend. The consultation centred on the Wildlife Report and Desktop Studies of three potential sites for a new school if the present site is not able to expand, either now or at some time in the future. Consultation comments appear on our website www.sitvnp.com. The Wildlife report and Desktop Studies can also be read there. The Desktop Studies form part of the evidence base of the Neighbourhood Plan. They have also been shared with Oxfordshire County Council, to inform and enable them to consider all options in relation to expansion. Currently evidence suggests that OCC are unlikely to act on its own feasibility study of 2016 nor the independent desktop studies. OCC state they have no funding to build a new school and can only consider expansion of the present site despite the forecast increase in numbers that would accompany 250+ houses (Bow farm, Horsecroft and Strategic Site west of the A417). Nonetheless, the Neighbourhood Plan must anticipate the requirements of the Parish as far as 2031 and needs to ensure that allocation is made for sites so that the school has suitable future land space available to meet the needs of all the children coming to live here. Although we submitted a Sustainability Scoping Report we still await final signing of this by Vale District Council. This has been frustrating. Due to staff changes at the Vale DC we have been allocated a planning consultant to assist. We have received some good advice in the collation of Draft Policies and Design Guide. Since April 2018 we have met 14 times (7.30- 9.30pm). Sincere thanks to the Steering Committee for their support and commitment.

Sue Murrin, Richard Ryan, Roger Griffin, Hadyn Wood, Peter Gill (Senior Parish Councillor), and Peter Lewis (Chair Parish Council)

11. Questions/comments from Parishioners

Nil

