

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BERINSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL held on Monday 4th March 2024 at 7.15 p.m. in the Church Hall, Wimplestraw Road, Berinsfield, Oxon.

PRESENT : Councillor S. Scott-Ely - Chairman
Councillor P. Bridge - Vice Chairman
Councillor Mrs. Beeby
Councillor I. Bunyan
Councillor K. Chrisp
Councillor S. Crawford
Councillor Mrs. A. Jones
Councillor D. Scate
Councillor Mrs. L. Sweetland
Councillor A. Woodington
Annette Loveland, Clerk to the Council
County and District Councillor Robin Bennett
Abigail Brown, Arts Development Officer, SODC
Hendriette Knouwds, Garden Community Project Manager, SODC
Craig Dransfield, Head of Development, SOHA Housing
Sarah Wilson, Locality Lead, SOHA Housing
Three members of the public

1. Items raised by Members of the public

a) **Allotment rent for 2025-26.** An allotment tenant, representing all allotment tenants, asked if the Parish Council would re-consider its decision to increase the rent for an allotment plot to £60.00 with effect from 1st April 2025. The current rent is £45.00. The Chairman explained that the income from the allotment plots does not cover the expenses and it was proposed by Councillor Scate, seconded by Councillor Chrisp and AGREED that there should be no change to the proposal to increase the rent for an allotment plot in Berinsfield to £60 per annum with effect from 1st April 2025.

b) **Flooding in Berinsfield.** Two residents from Fane Drive attended the meeting to raise awareness of the problems caused by the episodes of flooding at the junction of Fane Drive and Burcot Lane, Berinsfield. Photographs were circulated to Members of the Parish Council showing the extent of the flooding. Following the water receding, some photographs showed the gullies in the road being full of water as well as areas where sewage had overflowed from manhole covers. The Chairman informed the meeting that Oxfordshire County Council had attended the site on two occasions, but a request would be made for more work to be carried out on the gullies in the area in an attempt to prevent further flooding.

c) **Bus stop markings – Lodden Avenue.** The Parish Council was informed that the bus bay has been marked on the road and a new flag installed detailing when the area should be kept clear. It appears that some residents are still parking in the bus bay during the day time which prevents the bus driver from being able to use the bus bay. It was AGREED that information about keeping the bus bays clear will be included in the next Parish Council report in the Village Voice.

d) **Trees overhanging the footpath and front gardens of properties in Lodden Avenue.** It was reported that trees from the garden of a property in Fane Drive are overhanging a footpath and the front gardens of properties in Lodden Avenue. This matter will be reported on Fix my Street.

e) **Litter** It was reported that there was a lot of litter in the hedgerow, the ditch and on the open space area located between Wimblestraw Road and the A4074 at the entrance to the village. This will be reported on Fix my Street.

f) **Presentation by Abigail Brown, Arts Development Officer, from South Oxfordshire District Council.** Abigail gave a slide presentation regarding funding that had been obtained by South Oxfordshire District Council to improve pride in place. The principal objective of the project is to provide high quality engagement with arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities to improve the quality of life of residents and help address health inequalities through arts and creativity. The sum of £31,000 of capital funds are available for Didcot and Berinsfield through Fusion Arts and it can be spent on public art and decorative street furniture, wayfinding posts, interpretation panels, mosaic murals and decorative benches.

g) **Presentation by Hendriette Knouwds, Communities Project Manager from South Oxfordshire District Council.** Hendriette gave a slide presentation regarding the open space areas in Berinsfield and proposals for improvements and planting.

Councillor Bridge asked if it would be possible to change the locations of the “no mow” areas in 2024. There were many complaints last year about the “no mow” areas at Kennet Close and Green Furlong, which are normally both attractive areas at the entrances to the village. He suggested that the open space area in Fane Drive from the Boxing Club to Burcot Lane would be a much more suitable area. Hendriette informed the meeting that she would discuss this with the South Oxfordshire District Council’s Parks Department. Councillor Scott-Ely stated that South Oxfordshire District Council had planted trees in their open space near to the Burial Ground entrance, but most of these had died due to lack of water and maintenance. He also referred to the damaged boundary fence that runs alongside the South Oxfordshire District Council’s open space in Fane Drive and indicated that it would be more beneficial for the District Council to replace or maintain this fence and the open space area prior to considering new planting in the village.

h) **Presentation by Craig Dransfield, Head of Development, and Sarah Wilson, Locality Lead, SOHA Housing.** Craig informed the meeting that SOHA Housing have proposals for projects in the village, but they wish to ensure that the plans can be brought to fruition prior to consulting with the Parish Council and residents.

Sarah referred to the new community garden that has been created at the junction of Colne Drive and Fane Drive. The garden will be officially opened on 27th March between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. and residents are invited to drop in during this time. The children at Abbey Woods Close Academy have been given seeds to germinate and the resulting plants will be planted in the community garden.

SOHA Housing propose to create a pocket park on the triangular shaped open space in Lodden Avenue, which will include seating, bins and fruit trees. QR codes will be included near to the trees to give advice on recipes for the fruit. Residents living near to the open space area will be consulted on the proposals.

Councillor Scott-Ely referred to site meetings that have taken place between the Parish Council and Officers from SOHA Housing to try and create additional parking areas in the village and asked if there had been any progress with identifying new parking areas.

The Parish Council was informed that the garages in Barrington Close would be demolished in April/May 2024 to create parking spaces and it was agreed that a copy of the plans would be forwarded to the Parish Council for information. The Parish Council generally wanted to see land in the ownership of SOHA Housing and South Oxfordshire District Council maintained before any new planting takes place.

The Chairman, Councillor Scott-Ely thanked Abigail Brown, Hendriette Knouwds, Craig Dransfield and Sarah Wilson for attending the meeting and for making their presentations.

2. **Apologies for absence** were received from Councillor Henry.
3. **Declarations of interest.** There were no declarations of interest on any items on the agenda.
4. **County Councillor's Report.** County Councillor Robin Bennett had prepared a written report, which was circulated to all members of the Parish Council. Members noted the information in the report and Members were pleased to read that there is extra funding for highways, including more gully maintenance, in the budget for 2024-25. County Councillor Bennett informed the meeting that he would ask the relevant officer from Oxfordshire County Council to speak to the Parish Council about the proposed cycle/walking route to Oxford.

County Councillor Bennett was also informed about comments made earlier in the meeting relating to the need for the area at the entrance to the village between the A4074 and Wimplestraw Road to be maintained and litter picked.

Councillor Bridge asked County Councillor Bennett if there was any further information with regard to the Minerals and Waste plan, particularly with regard to the possible site in Berinsfield. County Councillor Bennett did not have any information to report on this matter.

5. **District Councillor's Report.** District Councillor Robin Bennett had prepared a written report, which was circulated to all Members of the Parish Council. The contents of the report were noted.

Councillor Bunyan asked District Councillor Bennett if he was aware of the meetings that are being convened by a Member of Dorchester Parish Council with regard to the motor cycle activity at the H Café. Councillor Bunyan understood that the Member of Dorchester Parish Council was going to contact District Councillor Bennett to ask if he could assist with funding to prepare notices that could be given out to all of the bikers and also a banner that could be erected at the H Café to ask the bikers to show consideration to residents in the villages located alongside the A4074.

District Councillor Bennett was asked if he could liaise with the Enforcement Team at South Oxfordshire District Council with regard to the enforcement case relating to a property in Lodden Avenue, Berinsfield, to ensure that it is actioned.

6. **To receive the Minutes of the meeting of Berinsfield Parish Council held on 5th February, 2024** It was AGREED that the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 5th February, 2024 should be APPROVED.

7. **Casual Vacancy on Berinsfield Parish Council.** One application had been received for consideration for the casual vacancy on Berinsfield Parish Council. The applicant, Mrs. Ann Head, was present at the meeting and was invited to speak. The Parish Council asked Mrs. Head to withdraw from the room while her application was considered. It was AGREED that Mrs. Head should be invited to become a Member of Berinsfield Parish Council. She returned to the room, signed her declaration of acceptance of office and was welcomed as a Member of the Parish Council

8. **To consider planning applications and decisions received to date.**

a) **Planning application No. P24/S0453/FUL** Revised access track and entrance splay to building and hard standing permitted by P20/S4020/FUL. Field at Wally Corner, Dorchester Road, Berinsfield. It was AGREED that South Oxfordshire District Council should be informed that Berinsfield Parish Council consider this application should be approved.

b) **Planning application No. P24/SO483/FUL** Proposed community café, The Berin Centre, Wimplestraw Road, Berinsfield OX10 7LZ It was AGREED that South Oxfordshire District Council should be informed that Berinsfield Parish Council consider this application should be approved.

9. **Lease at the former Abbey School Site, Berinsfield between Oxfordshire County Council and Berinsfield Parish Council.** The Parish Council noted that the Lease had been completed and the Solicitor has applied to register the transaction with the Land Registry.

10. **Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan.** The Parish Council had been asked to review the revised Neighbourhood Development Plan and Consultation Statement. No further comments were made and it was AGREED that the Neighbourhood Development Plan, revised on 20th February, 2024 should be forwarded to Mr. Ricardo Rios and Ms. Cheryl Soppet at South Oxfordshire District Council and that a virtual meeting should be arranged with them to request their assistance with preparing the Policies Map.

11. **Correspondence and Items for information.**

a) **Public Transport Representatives Meeting.** The Parish Council noted that the next meeting would be held on 19th March, 2024 via Microsoft Teams.

b) **CIL Grant Fund Pilot Scheme for local infrastructure.** The Parish Council noted that South Oxfordshire District Council has launched a new grant scheme called the CIL Grant Fund. Having read the criteria, the Parish Council AGREED that the Clerk should be asked to submit an expression of interest for funding to assist with the drainage of the area of the recreation ground leased from Oxfordshire County Council.

c) **Flooding in the Burial Ground.** The Parish Council was informed that due to the amount of rainfall in February, areas of the Burial Ground, particularly where the cremated remains are located, had flooded and this had caused distress to the families of people interred there. The Parish Council has asked South Oxfordshire District Council and the land promoters to ensure that the proposals for the Mount Farm site will contain measures to alleviate the surface water draining from the site into the Burial Ground. As it could be some time before development takes place on the Mount Farm site, the Parish Council considered that it would be appropriate to investigate methods of alleviating the flooding.

It was AGREED to investigate whether a shallow ditch could be constructed on the boundary between the Burial Ground and the Mount Farm site and that advice should be sought from a drainage contractor in the first instance.

d) **Rugby Pitch.** The Parish Council was informed that the Chairman had met with the contractor who will be carrying out the annual maintenance on the football pitches, in order to establish whether he could recommend any treatment for the area where the rugby pitch will be located to improve the playing surface. His initial advice was to carry out a site survey with a view to having drainage installed. It was AGREED that the Parish Council should contact a Civil Engineer to obtain a quotation for taking core samples to assess the ground in the first instance.

e) **Berinsfield Fete 2024.** A request had been received from the organisers of the Berinsfield Fete to use the recreation ground on 13th July, 2024. The Parish Council AGREED that the fete could be held on the recreation ground on 13th July, subject to the organisers completing the booking form and complying with the conditions of hire, specifically with regard to insurance, and clearing the litter following the event. The organisers should also advise participants who bring gazebos that they should also have their own insurance cover.

f) **Oxfordshire County Council Traffic Regulation Notice Road Traffic Regulation Act.** The Parish Council was asked to note that notice had been given pursuant to Section 14(2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, that Oxfordshire County Council temporarily prohibits the use of and waiting on the highway by all motor vehicles

Location : Berinsfield, Wimblestraw Road and Burcot Lane.
Reason : To facilitate surface dressing works
Duration: Starting on 15th April – 18th April, 2024 05.00 until 18.00
Access : Limited access will be maintained for emergency service vehicles and for Frontages within the closed section of road, subject to the progress of the works.

The Parish Council has asked Oxfordshire County Council for assurance that access will be maintained and has been assured it will, although there might be short delays.

g) **Parking at the pavilion on match days.** There have been complaints from residents living in properties overlooking the recreation ground that visitors are parking on the access road to their properties. It was AGREED that the Chairman of the Football Club should be asked to arrange for Marshalls to be located at the pavilion to advise visitors that they can park in the pavilion car park or the car park by the Library and Sports Centre.

h) **Berinsfield Village Park football tournament.** It was AGREED that the tournament could be held on 10th August, 2024 and that the fee for use of the pavilion would be £50.00 for the day.

i) **Berry Youth Centre Firework Display** The Parish Council considered a request from Berry Youth Centre to hold a firework display on the recreation ground on 3rd November, 2024. It was AGREED that Berry Youth Centre could hold a firework display on the recreation ground subject to completing a booking form and agreeing to comply with the conditions of hire, specifically with regard to insurance and clearing the litter following the event.

j) **Drainage chamber on recreation ground.** The Parish Council noted that the Senior Officer, Highway Schemes, from Oxfordshire County Council had inspected the large drainage chamber that they installed on the recreation ground located in line with the path leading to Colwell Road. He said there are some tree roots in it, which will be removed during week commencing 11th March, 2024. The chamber will be jetted to ensure that there is no silt restricting the flow and if there is, they will arrange for a tanker to come to the site to remove the silt.

12. **Statement of Accounts for payment in March 2024.** It was AGREED that the statement of accounts for payment in March 2024 in the sum of £10,387.82 should be approved.

13. **Bank statements.** The bank statements for February were circulated at the meeting and the balances were noted by the Parish Council.

14. **Items for report to Chairman.**

a) **Report of fumes from Williams Jet Tenders.** Following the report of fumes coming from the Williams Jet Tenders premises earlier in the year, the Chairman read out a letter from the company stating that they had their heating units full serviced and one unit required a complete clean of the flue which may have caused the fumes. The company have been monitoring the situation since then and had not detected any un-burnt fuel smells.

15. **Date of next meeting – 8th April, 2024**