

WROXTON & BALSCOTE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARISH MEETING AT

WROXTON VILLAGE HALL ON

8th January 2024 AT 7.30PM

Present: Temporary Clerk: Patricia Jesson

Cllr Harvey Marcovitch - Chairman

Members of the Public

Cllr Sarah Colbert Cllr George Reynolds

Cllr Duncan Collins Cllr Douglas Webb

Cllr Michael Robarts 3 members of the public

Cllr Fergus Garwood

Cllr Miranda Ker

1/24 Apologies:

Cllr Dominic Walshe

Cllr Colbert gave prior notice she would be unable to attend the next PC meeting.

2/24 Welcome

3/24 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Colbert declared an interest in 8/b 1 - Leaf Clearing, Wroxton

4/24 Minutes of Meeting on 6th November 2023

Minutes approved

5/24 Matters Arising

Action: Cllr Collins to check that a salt delivery has been made

Cllr Robarts to continue to seek information re 'Sanctuary Land'

6/24 Public Forum

Mr T Humphries wished it to be reported that life has improved on the A422 regarding safety and reduction in noise, due to the new speed restriction of 20mph. This view was endorsed by an email from Mrs Collinge. He also suggested that double white lines should be painted throughout the A422 through Wroxton. Data from the speed sensors indicate a reduction in the average speed of vehicles.

Cllr Marcovitch has not had a reply from OCC re a request for a traffic census on Gark Lane and Main Street.

Action: Cllr Marcovitch to contact OCC requesting a reply

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7/24 Finance

Bank Reconciliation: approved

Precept: It was approved unanimously that the Precept should remain at £10,000, which has been the same amount for the past 7 years.

Cllr Roberts presented an extremely comprehensive and detailed 2024/25 Budget which had been circulated to Councillors, and which included:

- Change in budget layout
- A comment that allocations were to be agreed at the March PC meeting
- Continuing uncertainty surrounding the future of the Cellnex telecoms mast lease
- Separation of the cost of grass and hedge cutting at the cemetery
- Modest budget surplus justifying Precept of £10,000
- Provisional Budget Proposal 2024/25

Action: Cllr Roberts to put a budget summary on both villages' notice boards and on the Wroxton website

8/24 Council Business

a) Decisions:

The Parish Council had received a request to help fund the Balscote Village Newsletter for £128 for 4 issues. This was granted for this year on the understanding that, as previously

requested by the PC, the editors are encouraged to take steps to seek some funding from other sources, for example from paid advertising by local tradespeople.

b) Discussions:

b1) Leaf Clearing in Wroxton:

Cllr. Colbert withdrew from the meeting while this item was discussed

Faye's Gardening Services had been contracted for this work. The exceptionally wet weather resulted in a need for additional time to be spent on the work than had been quoted for and the Chairman and RFO had agreed a further sum so that the work could be completed. Councillors approved this expenditure retrospectively.

Cllr Marcovitch to ask Clerk to seek tenders for autumn 2024 leaf clearing.

b2) Cemetery Burial Fee Review

In the past, the PC has used the Church of England fee structure for burials, but has found it inappropriate for civil use. Cllr Robarts proposed a number of fixed charges for burials and interment of ashes for residents, and a doubling of charges for non-residents with a connection to the Parish. Cllrs Ker and Collins had approved the proposals to cover costs, eligibility and periodic reviews.

Action: Cllr Robarts to propose a motion for decision at the next meeting

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b3) Ownership of Balscote Village Hall

A renewal of insurance of Balscote Village Hall has provoked a debate on ownership, producing the following information:

The Parish Council is a Custodian Trustee with the VH Trustees/Management Committee responsible for all costs of maintenance, utilities and insurance, as established by a Trust Deed signed by the Parish Council Chair in 2001. A copy of this deed is to be supplied by the Chairman of the Village Hall Trustees to the Parish Council who have no retained copy. It was suggested that a meeting would then be arranged between the Village Hall Trustees and representative Councillors to agree a way forward on the issue of ownership.

Cllr Robarts has suggested that the VH Trustees might form a company (at the expense of the PC) to which the Parish Council will transfer ownership of the land on which the Hall stands.

Cllr Marcovitch requested, through its Chairman, that the Trustees of the Village Hall discuss this suggestion.

Action: Once a copy of the 2001 document had been received, a meeting between Councillors and Trustees of the Village Hall will be arranged.

b4) Request from a resident for street lighting in Chapel Lane, Balscote

OCC is responsible for street lighting and has to agree to the provision of any lighting. This might entail new poles, light fittings and electricity supply to the installation, with most costs falling to the PC

Action: The Chairman will write to determine the feasibility and costs involved. If the proposition is reasonable, all residents of Chapel Lane will be consulted before any further action is taken.

9/24 Planning Applications

a) New Applications

23/03297/PIPTec Land adjacent to 5 Leys Close, Wroxton

Consent for the erection of a detached bungalow, with gardens to the front, side and rear, permission in principle application number

No PC comment

23/03311/F Land north of Pool Barn, Main Street, Wroxton

Alterations to approved drawings No PC comment

b) Awaiting decisions

23/03355/LB Barn Rear of Pool Farmhouse, Main Street, Wroxton

Alterations of approved drawings - variation on 21/02773/LB

No PC comment

23/03170/TPO Wroxton House Hotel

Ash tree can be felled when it dies. Yew trees have a TPO on them.

Updated TPO on request to prune back No new PC comment

23/03052/F Concrete Hovel, From Friars Hill to Rangel Bottom, Wroxton

Conversion of existing concrete hovel into single dwelling house

No PC comment

23/00212/LB Charian Cottage, Church Street, Wroxton

Privacy panels on gate for front garden No PC comment

23/01248/F Charian Cottage , Church Street, Wroxton

Retrospective planning re chimney No PC comment

MW/0091/23 Shutford Sewage Works (Thames Water)

Construction of temporary car park, formation of temporary topsoil bund and formation of two vehicle accesses, for a time-limited period in connection with upgrade works to Shutford Sewage Treatment Works. Restoration of the land to agriculture and other existing uses at the end of the permission period at land to the west and east of Shutford Road

Cllr Marcovitch has twice requested OCC via FixMyStreet re white

lines being reinstated at the junction of The Plain Road, Shutford and Shutford Road, Balscote, as it is considered to be a dangerous junction. The request has been refused. Councillors considered that this work offered an opportunity to deal with the white line problem.

Action: County Cllr Reynolds to follow up this request

23/02707/F Barn Rear of Pool Farmhouse, Main Street, Wroxton

Variation of Condition 2 (plans) of 21/02772/F - the following design changes - pitched roof over garage and kitchen, entrance doors to threshing barn, staircase position altered in threshing barn, bi-fold doors to dining room, conservation roof lights over kitchen and en-suite to bedroom 1 and bedroom 2 and flue positions.

No PC Comment

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23/021401/F

23/021616/LB Balscote Mill

Conversion of former mill to ancillary residential use to provide 1 No. 2 bed and 1 No. 1 bed self-contained holiday accommodation. New vehicle entrance. No PC Comment

23/00129/F Trinity College Grange Farm, Chapel Lane, Balscote

Erection of agricultural buildings, hardstanding and other associated works, located at the top of The Slad, off A422

MW.0058/23 Wroxton Quarry

Details pursuant to Condition 66 (working in close proximity to electricity pylons or cables) of Planning Permission no.MW.0020/19)

21/01258/F Wroxton Sports Club Old Ironstone Sports Field,

Installation of ISO shipping container on sports field for storage of field maintenance equipment, erect 6 ft screening panels on three sides

21/00517/F Land used for Motocross, Stratford Road A422, Wroxton
Creation of a motocross track and change of use of agricultural land o
hold motocross events CDC Enforcement Notice issued

10/24 Correspondence

Distributed as received

11/24 AOB

Cllr Robarts reported that the Council's insurance arrangements had been moved to new brokers from mid-December, resulting in a material saving in the premium being charged. The relationship with AJ Gallagher (formerly Came & Co) had been terminated following their rejection of the Council's complaint that the fact that they were tied to a single insurer meant that they were not seeking competitive quotes prior to policy renewal; in addition the fact that they were receiving 40% commission from the insurer was a strong indication that the premium being quoted was almost certainly uncompetitive. OALC had been unwilling to communicate this problem to their wider membership on the remarkable grounds that Gallagher are apparently a sponsor of NALC (National Association of Local Councils) events (i.e. contributing to their costs) and that NALC would be reluctant to

see them being criticised by a subsidiary organisation. CDC's legal department (who Cllr Robarts had approached at the suggestion of District Cllr Douglas Webb) had also been unwilling to intervene. The option of taking the matter to the Insurance Ombudsman is not available to government departments, a definition which is deemed to include Parish Councils.

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Cllr Marcovitch suggested that the matter involves important principles and should be raised with MP Victoria Prentis.

Action: Cllr Robarts to write to Victoria Prentis MP

Cllr Colbert had been approached by a resident regarding a delay with the installation of Voneus Broadband, having been told this was due to objections by the PC. The Chairman explained that the subject had not been discussed with the PC, which has no responsibility for the installation.

Action: Cllr Colbert to inform the resident of this response.

12/24 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 4th March 2024 at Balscote Village Hall at 7.30pm.