

LANGFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2010 held on Tuesday 11th May at 7 pm at the Langford Village Hall

PRESENT:

Rachel Range	Jenny Pitkin
Mark Harris	Dr Andrew Bushell

IN ATTENDANCE

Neil Ray	Cllr Don Seale (County Council)
David Range	David Carden
Rod Stewart	Chrissy Tinson
Andrew Clements	PC Petra Summers

APOLOGIES

Rosie Spence	Cllr David McFarlane (District Council)
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Richard Kirby

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MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

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Minutes of the previous Parish Meetings on the 12th May 2009 were read and approved as being correct

REPORT OF THE LOCAL POLICE OFFICER PC PETRA SUMMERS

PC Summers reported that crime figures in the village had gone down, though there were reports of visiting groups targeting and stealing high performance vehicles, people were requested to report anything suspicious and take details without putting themselves at risk. She also said that vigilance needed to be taken with agricultural machinery.

PC Summers also reported that she was trained as a First Responder and was hoping to be on call in this role from 12th May 2010.

The Chair thanked Petra for her report.

REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL – RACHEL RANGE, CHAIRMAN

The Chairman, Rachel Range, welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting. She began by an item still outstanding from her report last year, Affordable Housing. As many are aware, the site for the building works has been fenced off for over a

year – building work should commence this autumn, but no definite date has been given. The Parish Council is as distressed at this delay as those wishing to occupy one of the properties.

The biggest nuisance to our lives, she reported, must be the state of repair of the roads in and out of Langford, currently the reply from WODC is that the potholes throughout Oxfordshire make it impossible for them to be filled quickly but “our” potholes are on a long list. The PC will continue to pester the Highways until roads improve. The repair to Badger Bridge seems to have withstood the winter frosts with no major subsidence. New signposts have been erected in the village.

Oxfordshire Highways have undertaken the promised internal inspection of the village drains. It appears that when Thames Water put in new water pipes they destroyed the main drain section outside the village hall and also at No.1 The Elms – so far there has been no notification of any major repair work. The section of drains in the centre of the village has been freed of blockages; these blockages caused the water in the drains to stagnate, leading to smell. The blockage on the bad bends on the road to Broadwell has yet to be rectified.

The Chair has had several more meetings with the RAF at Brize Norton, to get an update of their expansion plans. This expansion will make Brize Norton the biggest station in the RAF – holding 15% of the total RAF personnel. Absolutely no second runway is proposed however big Brize gets. At present 3,400 people are employed at Brize (service personnel and civil servants) this will rise to 6,000 by 31st December 2012, when Lyneham closes. There will be more house demolition in Carterton this year and 800 new houses will be built with the remaining 600 houses refurbished. The large new hanger for Air Tanker is now being fitted out. The Airbus A330's will be coming to Brize where they will be modified for their military role.

There has been no village notice board during most of this year. Mr. Simpson asked the PC to remove the notice board to enable him to re-point. He later asked if we would find another site for the notice board. The Village Hall committee has kindly agreed to allow the PC to put the board up in the bus shelter. During the time the board was not in use Mr. John Dudley had kindly completely refurbished it, the Chair proposed a big thank you to Mr. Dudley.

The Parish Council was pleased to donate £250 towards the cost of a new mower for Langford Cricket Club. The cricket club has gone from strength to strength last year. The men fielded two sides last season, both with a full fixture list. The cricket nets have been the “focal point” for youngsters in the village on summer evenings. Congratulations to the club and the PC wishes them every success this year.

Mrs. Rosie Spence organised a meeting to see if there was interest in running a Community Responders Scheme. This would require a group of residents giving up their time to train to act in case of emergencies in the village, to cover the gap between 999 calls and the time it takes for NHS response teams to reach the village. There was a good response and several people showed willingness to take this further.

The threat of local gravel extraction has just become a possibility once again. Mr. Andrew Bushell has been attending meetings on the PC's behalf. There are three proposals on the table at this time.

- Option 1 – to continue to expand existing gravels workings.
- Option 2 – To extract gravel around the Windrush valley.
- Option 3 – to extract gravel around this area, after existing sites are exhausted.

The parishes that would be affected would be Alvescot, Aston, Bampton, Black Bourton, Brize Norton, Broadwell, Clanfield, Grafton/Radcot, Kelmscott, Kencot and Langford.

The Langford gravel site would cover the fields on either side of the road to Grafton, coming up to the back of The Elms, going round the school site and up to the Little Faringdon road. This gravel is a shallow seam, and the workings would possibly be to remove the topsoil, take out the gravel, and then return the topsoil. A letter has been sent to Oxfordshire opposing this Option (3) from all the parishes concerned, giving concrete reasons why it is not a good idea. Mr. Bushell is actively collecting material to make a strong case against gravel extraction around Langford.

A Transport Survey was delivered to many households in Langford with the Pump and Parish Notes. Those that did receive the Survey were strongly recommended to complete as much as possible. The Chair added that she would hate to lose our bus service, which is so useful.

The Chair reported that it was normal to have a report from St. Christopher's School during this meeting. Unfortunately there is no longer a representative from the Parish on the governing body of the school, so will no longer be receiving a report of the school activities.

The Chair then offered thanks to Mrs Nicky Marshall for keeping the "Hay Basket" that has been put up over the old water fountain in the centre of the village, full of flowers, making a welcome addition to the Village centre. She also expressed thanks to Dr. Catling who keeps the grass mowed around the war memorial.

Finally the Chair expressed thanks to all the present Councillors for their support and hard work during the year.

DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Don Seale presented his report on behalf the Oxfordshire County Council. He explained that he was Chair of the Adult Services Scrutiny Committee. The budget for the OCC was over £1.1 billion and most of it was already pre-allocated. Problems may occur with a lower rate of support grant despite the budget for 2010/2011 having been set. There was also less income from the tax base due to a slow down in building activity. A further issue being considered by the OCC was the funding for free domiciliary care which was due to cost £2.5 million for eligible people and likely to increase to up to £10 million. There had been a 40% increase in Child referrals costing a further £2.25 million. There was also now a need to start providing housing to 16 year olds. With the Capital Fund being reduced, the OCC had achieved savings of £27.8 million of which only £2.5 million had resulted in a cut to services.

Cllr Seale confirmed that he is a member of the Mineral Extraction Committee but was unable to answer questions on this at the meeting.

He went on to mention the proposal to site and build 1,000 new houses in the Carterton area, which, whilst the Carterton Parish Council was keen to attract new housing, was less favourably viewed by the District Council. He explained that this may be reviewed by the incoming government and be reduced.

Cllr Seale discussed the plans for future social care where individuals are to be given more responsibility over their own spending and that their own budget would be for them to decide how best it be spent. The pilot scheme in Banbury had been working well. He went on to predict that the NHS would be squeezed in the coming cuts and

that the rationalisation would have to reduce costs and duplications.

Cllr Seale was asked about the plan to build the 1,000 homes in Carterton in addition to the planned 800 homes in Brize Norton for the RAF and whether there were plans to improve the infrastructure and roads to the A40. He replied that as far as he was aware there were no plans.

He was also asked about the plans for an incinerator in Oxfordshire and several sites were discussed, didcot and Ardley. He said that Ardley had been turned down but had gone to appeal and that it would have to go somewhere in Oxfordshire since land fill was not available and the costs of disposal were getting higher.

The Chair thanked Cllr Seale for his report.

REPORT OF THE VILLAGE HALL

Jenny Pitkin reported that all was running well with the Village Hall. The Chairman thanked her for her report.

THE LANGFORD CHARITY

Richard Kirby sent his apologies for not being able to attend and sent a report of the income and expenditure of the Langford Charity for the year. The income was £275 from interest and allotment rent, and one payment of £100 had been made during the year. The accumulated fund at the end of December stood at £889 and Mr Kirby asked that if anyone knows of anyone in the Village in real need and who could be eligible for a grant, to let him know. The Trustees of the Charity are Messrs Richard Kirby, Jenny Pitkin and Derek Lafford.

THE VILLAGE AND THE PARISH, ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Nicky Marshall had sent a question to be raised at the meeting concerning the state of the pathway opposite the Old Crown, saying that the footpath was now impassable with plants overgrowing the pathway and cars parking on the verges.. Rod Stewart volunteered to cut down the plants opposite the Old Crown. The Clerk was requested to ask the Highways Department about parking on verges and kerbs.
- Dr Andrew Bushell explained that he had attended a meeting in March on behalf of the Parish Council at Standlake whereby the OCC had outlined their proposals for gravel extraction within Oxfordshire after 2011, when the current plan comes to an end. Oxfordshire needs 2 million tonnes and the three options had already been outlined in the Chairman's report. All the affected villages under option 3 had come together on April 29th to send a letter to the OCC planning committee, ahead of a May 26th planning meeting, to try to have Option 3 removed. If Option 3 were not to be removed, it would be the plan to appoint a lobbyist and specialist help to oppose this option. Dr Bushell explained that we needed as many people as possible to write to the OCC and that Dr Bushell had written on behalf of the PC already.
- The matter of Highways and drains was discussed and Andy Clements raised the problem of a blocked drain outside his house opposite Church Lane. The Clerk agreed to report the matter to the Highways agency.

- The use of the Telephone Kiosk was raised and the Clerk confirmed that the PC had agreed to purchase it for £1 from British Telecom and that it was planned to be used as a village noticeboard for the use of Parishioners

The Chairman then thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.25pm.

The next Annual Meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday May 10th 2011 at 7pm..