

Minutes of the Benson Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 26th July 2007 at 7:30pm in Benson Parish Hall Committee Room

Present:
Cllr W Pattison (Chairman)
Cllr J Fowler (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr N Bailey
Cllr D Fletcher
Cllr J Lant
Cllr E Leppard
Cllr I Leppard
Cllr D Olley
Cllr D Rushton
Cllr Stevenson

Proper Officer: Mrs. Sue Cooper
Members of the public 6

NB Before the meeting, Mrs Helen Scullard, Head of Housing at SODC spoke and answered questions about affordable housing in Benson.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Keogh (holiday)
2. **Declaration of Interest** – In accordance with 54 & 55 of the Standing Orders, Councillors E&I Leppard and T Stevenson declared interests in the Benson Research and Archive Centre (agenda items 5(ii) and 7(ii)) and signed the book.
3. The **minutes** of the meeting held on July 12th 2007 were approved and signed
4. Two members of the public wished to speak on the planning applications.

5. Planning Applications:

i)P07/W0804 Bensington Society Provision of a wooden building for the Benson Research and Archive Centre. Mr. George Verdon addressed the Council and explained the rationale for the building. No objections but members would have preferred a brick building rather than wood because of the fire risk.

ii)P07/W0730 1 The Moorlands Benson OX10 6PT Demolition of flat-roofed single storey. Erection of single storey side and back extension. (plans delayed in the postal strike)

The meeting was addressed by a neighbour, Mr Shanks.

Although this was a revised application and was a slightly shorter extension than that proposed last time other objections still stood.

Benson Parish Council still considers that this application should be refused because the scale and bulk of the extension would reduce light to the neighbour and will constitute over development of the site.

6. Planning Decisions:

P07/W0550 Mansfield Cottage 60 Preston Crowmarsh. Two storey rear extension. Permission granted.

P07/W0496/RET Land adjacent to 135 St Helens Avenue. Erection of conservatories. Permission granted. NB Condition 5 states that the roof lights in the NW elevation shall be inserted at 1700mm above first floor level within 3 months and kept there.

7. To receive a report from the Chairman:

The chairman reported that he had inspected the Youth Hall and there were currently no cracks needing attention.

i) Council received the auditor's letter. With regard to the 2 issues raised, councillors believe that the Fidelity Guarantee Insurance cover of £10, 000 is sufficient this year. Larger amounts of money were handled by the Council last year because they bought and sold the property next to the Scout Hut in Littleworth Road to adjust the curtilage of the two properties but this would not apply this year and the Finance Officer had explained the assets included in the reserves (see note attached to these minutes)

ii) Council considered the Bensington Society document on the background to Benson Research & Archive Centre on the Library site. The Council were generally supportive of the project although concern was expressed over the fire risk in a wooden building. Asked whether alternative premises had been explored, Mr Verdon said they had although the owner of the former telephone exchange who was also present said that nobody had asked him. Jon Fowler said that BRAC could possibly be accommodated in the proposed extension to the Parish Hall. Further discussions on this would be necessary.

8. To receive a report from the following:

a. **Cllr Crabbe, County Council** member gave an update on gravel extraction. OCC had approved its core strategy but this was not supported by GOSE who have sent it back for further discussion and modification. This is unlikely to be before Christmas but work continues on looking at individual sites. OCC's stance on the price they have set for the land for phase 2 at the Meer was justified by West Oxfordshire's more flexible formula on the price of land for affordable housing. Attention was drawn to the Youth Music Festival. In answer to questions: about pot holes which had been marked out but not repaired, Cllr Crabbe said that the repair team was working its way round and Hazell and Jeffries traffic movements are being investigated.

b. Cllr Cooper – SODC Member reported that the Scrutiny meeting, due to look at the new housing strategy, scheduled for Monday 23rd July had been cancelled because of the floods. Cllr Cooper thought it was unfortunate that the District and County Councils could not reconcile their differences over the sale of land for the Meer stage 2 and hoped that a compromise could be agreed so that the County could achieve the value of the land it wanted but it would be partly as cash for the land and partly in terms of works done in the area which the County would otherwise have to finance.

9. The following proposals were agreed:

a. Proposal 24/07 from Cllr Fletcher: That, in response to a request from the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind for a financial contribution towards expenditure incurred in providing a service for the twenty two clients living in the Benson area, this Parish Council does make a grant of 75 pounds as authorised and recorded in Benson Parish Council Financial Statement dated 31 March 2007 page 5, Item – Grants, line 7 (precept)

b. Proposal 25/07 There being no charge for doing so, the Council agreed to join Speedwatch. Parish can nominate 3 sites for speed checks – High Street, Oxford Road and Brook Street were suggested. Enquiries should be made on how data from speed checks near the chicane on the B4009 could be accessed. Other measures to control speed on the B4009 will be brought forward by Cllrs Rushton and I Leppard:

10. Correspondence:

Post Received	Action
Monday 16 th July 1. Chilterns Woodland Project – magazine and info	Circulated to Parish Councillors
2. OPFA - magazine and info	Circulated.
3. Michael Shanly Homes – letter saying that they could do nothing about visibility issues on the footpath and that OCC were responsible for re-routing the power supply for street lighting!	Scanned and forwarded to OCC who have written to put their case to MS Homes
4. Chiltern Piano Services – Quote for new piano cover £285	Buy a piano cover
18 July 5. e-mail on Climate Change activities in Oxfordshire	Circulated to members
6. The Renewable Energy Centre – email – details of website info.	Circulated
Monday 23 rd July 7. Steven Tabbitt, OCC Environment & Economy – email about realigning the Thames Path	Clarified by Cllrs Stevenson & Pattison
8. Tom Stevenson - Plan of car park additional spaces at Parish Hall	Circulated. More surfacing quotes to be obtained
9. Martin Clark - Parish Hall Heating and Ventilation Project update	Circulated Parish office to draft letter to Martin Clark
10. SODC - Free Tree Scheme 2007	Referred to Lands

Parish Office notes 26th July 2007

1. Shelves in the bar store have been replaced
2. Paving outside the Parish Hall should start during week beginning 6 August
3. Details of car registration numbers for those councillors who intend driving to RAF Benson on August 8 th are required

Post received for meeting 26th July 2007 – after agenda

Post Received	Action
Wednesday 25 th July 11. RAF Benson – VIP invitations to Families Day	Cllrs Pattison & Stevenson to reply
12. Fieldguard – price list & sample rubber matting	Obtain others
13. SODC planning – for info, revised plans for 1 Brook Street showing retained railings	Noted; railings to be retained
14. Mr. Peter Shanks – objecting to revised plans at 1 The Moorlands P07/W0730	noted
15. News from OCC	
Thursday 26 th July 16. G.F.Hobbs - Invoice for £1844.75 for work carried out at the allotments	Paid
17. EA Customer Contact Thames West – email re care of trees bordering the Ewelme Stream	Landowner should deal with

11. To receive a report from the following:

a. Report by the Chairman Halls Committee

Council accepted the recommendations of Halls Committee meeting held on 11 July 2007. The search for a Youth Hall Cleaner continues. Replacement shelves for the hot cupboard still to be sourced. The clerk would discuss recruitment of his successor with Trevor Jackson.

b. Report by the Chairman Lands & Recreation Committee

With two minor amendments the minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2007 were approved, signed and adopted.

12. Finance:

a. The reconciled bank statement for the current account as at 30th June 2007 was signed off.

b. Cheques as follows were approved and signed (and the clerk was reminded to list them on the agenda):

Chq. No.	Payee	total	VAT
503692	Adkin Rural & Commercial (advice on properties)	639.13	
503693	BDO Stoy Haywood LLP (Internal audit)	646.25	
503694	Benson Catering Equipment	333.29	
503695	Bouchier Fencing Ltd (posts & Millbrook walkway)	448.29	
503696	Chiltern Piano Services (tune piano)	45.00	
503697	C&S Catering Supplies (toilet rolls & cleaner etc)	53.71	
503698	Choices (dish/glass washer liquids)	63.53	
503699	International Tree foundation membership renewal	25.00	
503700	Lyreco UK Ltd (A4 paper & ink cartridges)	70.61	
503701	Millbrook Property Services (window cleaning)	76.38	
503702	Performing Rights Society (PH music licence)	455.79	
503703	Society of Local Council Clerks (books)	131.20	
503704	T.Jackson		
503705	C.Brown		
503706	E.Lemaire		
503707	G.Stock		
503708	L.Pike		
503709	T.Ellis		
503710	S.Cooper		
503711	A.Cooper		
503712	Oxfordshire County Council Pension Scheme	646.84	
503713	HM Revenue & Customs (PAYE & Nat.Ins.)	715.53	
503714	MH Reed (shelf fitting)	150.00	
503715	SODC (Personal Licence)	37.00	
503716	E.Lemaire for Criminal Records bureau checks	20.00	
503717	G.F.Hobbs (Allotment clearance)	1844.75	

13. Questions to the Chairman:

a. No questions but one offer to be a parish councillor had been received and another was thought to be on its way.

b. Items for Councillors to note:

- Cllr Stevenson had produced another version of the village map ready to be printed when the new notice board was available.
- Footpath no.5 to the riverbank needs to have nettles cut back
- A dog bin is needed at Preston Crowmarsh (Put on Lands agenda).
- Thanks to the person who cleared the fallen branch from the diseased horse chestnut tree on Sunnyside so promptly.
- The horse chestnuts on the Aldridge Triangle need inspecting and possibly replacing (Put on Lands agenda).
- A gap for bikes to get through the car park is needed (Put on Lands agenda).
- Can someone take a photo of footpath no. 5 being used for small boat access?
- DF will prepare a note about non-attendance by parish councillors at meetings.
- Sandbags are available in St Helens Avenue – hopefully won't be needed!
- Are there any specific flood arrangements we ought to know about?
- Do we have flood insurance?

14. Dates of next meetings - August 16th, September 13th

Mrs Sue Cooper
Proper Officer

Notes

Before the meeting, Mrs Helen Scullard, Head of Housing at SODC spoke and answered questions about affordable housing in Benson.

3 shared ownership properties are currently under construction at the former Infants School site.

An environmental assessment is looking at flood risk and drainage at the potential Brook Street site.

191 applicants on the housing register have Benson in their top 3 locations. Most require 1 bed properties, several 2 bed, fewer 3 bed and 2 people require 4 bed properties. About a third of those who have Benson as their first choice live locally.

OCC have closed their file and Soha withdrawn their planning application for phase 2 at the Meer. For phase 1 plots, OCC charged £2000. For phase 2 plots, OCC have been offered £3000 each but want £18000 which makes the scheme non-viable with Housing Corporation funding. Soha have control of access to the site so cooperation with another housing association is unlikely.