

**Minutes of the meeting of the Lower Heyford Annual Parish Meeting held on
Thursday 19th May 2016 at 7.00 pm in the Church**

Present: - Mr Macnamara (JJ) (Chair), Mrs. Ball (DB) (Vice Chair), Mr Mortimore (CM), Mr Dare (DD) , Mrs Turner (PT), Mr. Thompson (LT)

Members of the public: Cllr Mrs Fulljames, Roger Bowen, Alan Humberstone, Jenny Tamblyn, Peter Stoddart, Eric Ball

In attendance: Cathy Fleet (Clerk)

Apologies: Apologies had been received from Bruce Eggeling, Cllr Barry Wood and Cllr Ian Corkin

Declarations of Interest : There were no declarations of interest

1 **Minutes** of the last meeting held on 14th May 2015 were read and it was **RESOLVED** to accept these as a true record of the meeting and they were signed by the Chair.

2. **Public Participation**

Members of the public were invited to participate at any time.

3. **Chairman's Report**

Introduction. As Chairman of the Parish Council for the past year, it's my duty to account to you for both our activities over that time and the money we spent on your behalf, after which there will be time for questions and comments. We are all unpaid volunteers working for the community in our own time and your encouragement and offers of help are always appreciated.

Clerkship. Almost everything we achieve is through the hard work of our Learned Clerk, Cathy Fleet, the PC's sole, part time, officer, to whom the Parish owes a great debt of thanks. In addition to the matters I will report, we must not forget all the vital but invisible work she does behind the scenes that keeps us legal, solvent, audited and law-compliant, with up to date Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct to comply with best practice. This year, we have added best practice Safeguarding Policies and a Risk Register to this list.

Councillors. In all this, the parish should once again thank Denise Ball for serving as Deputy Chairman and Petra Turner, David Dare, Carl Mortimore, Bruce Eggeling and Leigh Thompson for serving as councillors throughout the year. Their wide ranging expertise and enthusiasm in everything from risk assessment and stone masonry to leafleting and speed monitoring and much more contributes far more behind the scenes than our minutes could ever record.

Planning has to come top of my list this year. This time last year, we awaited the Inspector's decision on the:

- **Caulcott Gypsy Site** appeal, which went against the Cherwell decision and granted permission. However, a year later, there is no sign of development so perhaps the flooding and other issues we raised have proved as serious as residents thought they would.
- **The Lane** came in for controversy with two successive designs for large houses in the field, both of which were refused by Cherwell. We await the appeal decision.
- **“Great Heyford”** proposal by a developer for a 5,000 house new town caused a huge and justified level of anxiety. The PC was grateful for the massive support shown by residents both at its meeting with the developers and in subsequent offers of practical help. Corpus Christi College, the landowner, has since withdrawn their consent but the proposal remains to be considered by the District Council. Although we believe that it has minimal chance of success, the PC will stay on the alert and ensure the village’s views are relayed to planning officers.

This emphasises the importance of pushing forward the **Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan** to control development in all the parishes surrounding Heyford Park, which the PC has supported from its inception. All residents will have a vote on the final Plan, so it is important we retain their support and involvement – hence the stall manned by volunteers on May Day and future public events, probably in conjunction with other parishes.

Highway safety remains our next highest priority. The second Lower Heyford SID has been installed and, once we have a suitable pole to mount it on, there will be one to cover the Caulcott dip as well. We had speeds here monitored during the year, which proved them to be, as we suspected, unacceptably high: we continue to press for enforcement here as well as in Station Road.

In that location, we are also considering engaging consultants to help us gain County Council permission for traffic calming – which we would probably have to fund. Meanwhile, within both settlements, we are encouraging slower driving with unofficial speed signs.

Highway maintenance continues to feature with regular reporting of potholes and other defects. The largest works last year were to fix prolonged and serious flooding at the Portway crossroads. In the coming year we are trialling a local contractor for grass cutting, taking a grant from OCC in lieu of their decreasing service to give us control of its frequency and timing.

We are extremely grateful to Peter Stoddart for volunteering to organise a very successful Spring litter blitz: all those who took part contributed to a huge improvement in our environment.

Defibrillators are a new community safety concern, following a campaign by our Ambulance Service, and, using very generous grants from the LHRINC and the Village Hall trust, we installed public access AEDs in Lower Heyford and Caulcott so any parishioner with a heart attack is only minutes from lifesaving help. The Bell and the Horse & Groom are owed all our thanks for hosting them in prominent central locations – and giving us the electricity. The large number of residents who gave up their Saturday mornings for training showed that this decision was well supported.

The Millennium Seat round the oak tree in Market Square has finally succumbed to constant upheaval from its roots exacerbated by occasional vehicle impacts. Strong volunteers have removed it, giving us two problems for the coming year. What, if anything, can we replace it with around the tree? And what, if anything, can we do to give a useful life to the stone seat somewhere else?

Friends of Lower Heyford Station also continue to greatly enhance our environment – particularly the all important first impression on arrival by train. We are always happy for them to apply to the PC for support when they need it.

The boat yard deserves our thanks on multiple fronts: I'll pick just two. Although this winter was too mild to see our snow plough called out, they stored tons of salt for our grit bins. A few degrees colder and we would have been very much in need of this. Parishioners also benefit from their hosting Lower Heyford's recycling bins. We are very grateful to David Dare for all he does.

Financially, we have again reduced the precept, this year down to £7,692. Our main outlays are staff costs and insurance, as you'd expect when we operate principally by volunteer labour and by getting larger authorities to do what the parish wants. Full details have been minuted and all our expenditure is audited and publicly available to everyone.

Communications: those minutes are summarised in Valley News, which we continue to support, and posted on village notice boards. We are particularly grateful to Graham Wilson this year for his work on the parish website, putting in a huge amount of extra time when it was hit by the web equivalent of mindless vandalism.

A beneficial effect of the "Great Heyford" furore was in collecting many more residents' email addresses, which will greatly enhance our communications. As more people move to modern media, we decided against a paper "welcome pack" and instead Bruce Eggeling drafted a welcome letter pointing new arrivals to us and our information.

In summary, we continue to make progress in many fields, thanks to the unsung efforts of many residents. I've mentioned a lot of areas where work continues and we are

always on the look out to hear from residents what they would like to happen – and where they could help to achieve it.

4. Matters arising

Jenny Tamblyn asked about the traffic calming measures on Station Road and wondered if this would apply to the area around the Freehold Street crossroads. Mr. Macnamara supported by David Dare explained that a consultant will be employed by the PC to make recommendations which will be put to OCC Highways. This will prove to be costly and will have to be funded by the PC. A weight limit on the bridge would be desirable but is unlikely to be achievable.

5. Reports from Village organisations

- **WI**

The Heyfords WI had a fantastic 2015 and all events were reported in Valley News. We have lost a long serving member who has moved to Derbyshire, but have gained Jenny From Heyford Park. We had a National Chairman speak at our Oxfordshire AGM in March, who told stories of meeting the Queen and other royals at the Albert Hall. the chairman's granddaughter Ellie presented the Queen with some flowers, which Her Majesty thanked her for and said "I like your frock", granddaughter replied "I like yours too", Ellie was delighted that when the Queen left she still had the flowers. We are a friendly diverse group of ladies and are always very pleased to see new faces at our monthly meetings. Our get togethers are geared up to be informal and entertaining with the programme hopefully providing something of interest for everyone.

- **Village Hall Trust**

It was reported that the Village Hall Trust was able to help fund the defibrillators which are now important and potentially life-saving assets within the village. The deposit account stands at £98,008.25 and the current account £143.74 with interest of £97.64 being earned in the last financial year. The money will be held securely until further requests are received and it is hoped that suitable projects will emerge in the near future.

- **LHRINC**

The Annual Statement and Accounts had been received by the Clerk from LHRINC and circulated and are available for viewing on request. In summary :

There have been no change to the Trustees during 2015/16. The Charity's income continues to be derived from rental of the **Reading Room** and the **Poor's Land**

The **income** of the Charity for the year ending 31 March 2014 was approx. **£12k**. **Outgoings** were approx. **£2.5k**. Available funds at this date are in the region of **£25k**.

The main ongoing costs of the Charity are maintenance and running costs of the **Reading Room**.

The **12 month Assured Tenancy Lease for the Reading Room** was renewed in October 2015. The property is in good order and being well looked after by the tenants. A few minor maintenance works have been carried out by N Brock.

The **Young Persons Educational Grants** scheme is ongoing and three local school leavers were helped during this period. The annual award has been extended to the first two years of further education and training and the amount to £250.

Requests for assistance continue to be scarce despite a number of articles in Valley News and on local notice boards. One grant of £350 was agreed and awarded.

The financial records of LHRNC for 2015-16 have been **audited by TDAS** and found to be a true and accurate account.

- **Bowls Club**

Roger Bowen reported that the Bowls Club is still short of members and currently has only 17, as a result of which no fixtures are currently planned. The green is in poor condition and needs to be re-laid at an estimated cost of £20K. An Open Day to attract new members is being planned for the near future and the club is open on Wednesdays from 6pm and everyone is welcome.

- **Events Committee**

The events committee holds two major events a year, the fireworks and the May Day Fete. The Fete is the major fundraiser, this year being held on 7th May and although attendance was down on previous years still realised a profit of some £700. A loss was made on the Firework event last year, but will be held again this year on 5th November and is a wonderful display and an inexpensive social event for the whole village. It has been agreed that the surplus money from the Fete is to be used to subsidise the fireworks event.

- **FoLHS**

Roger Bowen reported that First Great Western has now changed its name to Great Western Railway and that as a result of this changes have taken place within the organisation including staff changes which is resulting in little co-operation. Car parking at the station is inadequate but Great Western Railway have assured FoLHS that this will be rectified but as yet

no action has been taken. However, overnight parking has been prohibited but this causes problems with boat owners who regularly use the car park. The gardens continue to be well looked after and changes are planned with future planting

- **Bellringers**

Eric Ball reported that although the ringers still manage to hold practice nights and ring for Sunday services, the band is very small with no newcomers and are reliant on ringers from other bands for ringing for weddings etc. They are still able to welcome visitors and are looking forward to a visiting team from Hong Kong in November. He added that anyone is welcome to join the band and learn to ring.

- **Church**

Services are held every Sunday - sometimes with different formats and services at Christmas and Easter are very well attended. The new configuration of the Church allows a capacity of 170 people and has proved very successful for holding different events, including the regular Thursday morning pop-up café. The provision of a kitchen and toilets enhances the various functions. The font has been moved and has received approval from the diocese and the church has held many Christenings recently. Further plans for improvements include changing the lighting to make it lower in the building and more efficient; the clockface will be re-painted which will necessitate the erection of scaffolding around the clock tower. The clock is now functioning well and chimes in time. There has been scaffolding in the churchyard recently because the large cedar tree required pruning and so scaffolding was erected in order to protect headstones below.

6. **Report from Cllr Mrs Fulljames**

Cllr Mrs Fulljames reported that :

- she had been instrumental in getting work done to alleviate flooding on Portway
- She is on the County Planning Committee and has secured a routing agreement for aggregate lorries travelling to Bicester thereby avoiding travelling through villages
- has acquired traffic counts for Middleton Stoney and Rousham Bridge
- OCC has increased Council Tax by 3.99%, 2% of which is because of the new Living Wage requirements.
- OCC has cut senior management by 40%
- OCC is now sharing Finance and HR services with Hants CC
- The local bus service will cease at the end of the school year, but the 25A service will continue as it is supported by the Dorchester Group using S106 monies

- Ardley re-cycling Centre will continue to function until next year, but OCC are looking for alternative sites.

7. Questions from the public

Peter Stoddard wondered if information regarding the availability of funding from LHRINC could be published by way of a flyer within Valley News distributed round the village. This was thought to be a good idea and will be actioned.

Mr. Macnamara asked Cllr Fulljames for information on the Rousham Bridge Traffic Count but was told this information is not available.

Leigh Thompson asked Cllr Fulljames for details of routing agreements but was told that this information is available via the minutes of the OCC meeting. Cllr Fulljames to provide Clerk with details.

Mr. Humberstone asked for more details on the services to be provided by the 25A bus and Cllr Fulljames explained that the service will remain, but possibly not in its current form and will be tailored to meet the needs of the community.