

**GREAT COXWELL PARISH COUNCIL**

Reading Room, Great Coxwell, Oxfordshire, SN7 7NG

Clerk: Joanna Farrant (clerk@greatcoxwell.com)

**Minutes of Great Coxwell Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023, 6:30pm.**

<b>Present</b>	Cllr Jacqui Russell (Chairman) (JR) Cllr Richard Hankinson (RH) Cllr Rory Gilmour (RG) Cllr Kym MacDonald (KM) Joanna Farrant, Parish Clerk (JF)
<b>In Attendance</b>	County Cllr Bethia Thomas (BT) District Cllr Kat Foxhall (KF) 1 member of the public

Item	Minute	
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies had been received from District Cllr Viral Patel.	
2.	<b>Approval and Signing of Minutes of Last Meeting</b> Minutes of 11.09.2023 were approved and signed by the Chairman.	
3.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda.	
4.	<b>Representations by Members of the Public on Agenda Items or Matters to be Added to the Next Agenda</b> A member of the public spoke in relation to correspondence regarding the height of hedges on the Eastern boundary of the Park. It was requested the hedges in those areas should be left to grow to their full height to aide noise reduction over the summer and hide the Park from view. This would replicate the height of hedges on the majority of the Southern boundary, which have been left to grow tall. The Chair explained that the contractor currently cuts the North hedge along the road and boarding the properties that abut the park to about 4-5ft, as requested by adjacent householders and to improve visibility of the park from the road. The Eastern hedge and the Southern hedge lying adjacent to the basketball court and benches is requested to be cut higher to about 8ft. This is a compromise to prevent overhang over the equipment and court and because the hedge has to be cut narrowly in those areas to allow the mowing equipment to pass. It was agreed that the Parish Council would reiterate the request to leave the Eastern hedge higher and ask the contractor what is the maximum height the hedge can be, while still retaining the ability to be managed with the contractors' standard cutting equipment in future.	JF
5.	<b>County Councillor's Report</b> BT had circulated an October report and sent an individualised November update. BT confirmed the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– The 20mph is now in place in the village;</li><li>– The official re-routing of a section of Footpath 6 via the boardwalk has been adopted.</li><li>– BT provided the following summary of the history of the traffic lights to be placed on the A420: The requirement for an improvement scheme at the A420/Coxwell Road junction was identified through the transport assessments</li></ul>	

	<p>associated with three residential developments in the vicinity: Fernham Fields (planning ref: P13/V0139/O); The Steeds (P15/V1934/O); and South of Steeds (P18/V0259/O). A roundabout scheme was originally considered (predating 2013) but was identified as not being deliverable within highway land. Traffic signals were shown to be achievable within highway land (probably in about 2015). Contributions were made from Fernham Fields and The Steeds. The S106 legal agreement with the South of Steeds stipulates that they are responsible for delivering the traffic lights scheme prior to occupation of dwellings on site. The monies from the other developments will be transferred to them and they are required to meet any funding shortfall. This programme has been delayed, at least in part, by the refusal at Planning Committee of the reserved matters application (for non-highways related reasons), which is now the subject of an appeal, currently scheduled to be heard in January 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– There will be a traffic island to cross the A420 off the Fernham Road.</li> <li>– JR asked for assurance there will be a suitable alternative pedestrian route while construction of The Steeds South goes ahead to ensure safe passage for pedestrians.</li> <li>– A new application for The Steeds South has been submitted. If that is accepted, the appeal on the previous application will be withdrawn.</li> <li>– The Chair confirmed that it is the insufficiency of the planned planting of the green buffer between the Steeds South and Great Coxwell that remains an issue from a GCPC perspective in line with the NP.</li> <li>– A query regarding hedge intruding into the road had been raised with BT on the section of road on the bend into the village opposite Bay Tree Cottage. BT will forward the query to the PC to look into.</li> <li>– Speed survey on B419: nothing further to report at present. Speed signage has been improved to reduce speed approaching the junction, which may be sufficient. PC to consider further.</li> </ul>	<p>PC</p> <p>PC</p>
6.	<p><b>District Councillor's Report</b></p> <p>VP and KF had circulated a September and October report since the last meeting. KF highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The Wicklesham Quarry application (MW.0151/23) has now gone to OCC generating significant correspondence. DCllrs encouraged residents to resubmit comments from the withdrawn previous application, so that the Vale knows what residents' views are. The application is all matters reserved, save for access. JF to submit PC response on basis of access only.</li> <li>– Joint Local Plan Consultation – there will be a reduction in the number of new houses needed each year - a step change from the last local plan. Councils are encouraged to contribute to the consultation.</li> <li>– Elm Tree Surgery – the integrated care board is coming to the next scrutiny meeting on 05.12.23, at The Beacon, Wantage, 7pm. Parish Councils and parishioners are encouraged to attend.</li> <li>– Churchyard wall in Coleshill – a section of wall has collapsed. The Vale has adopted 7 churchyards including Great Coxwell. If there are any concerns please raise with the Vale. A survey is being carried out of all 7 churchyards.</li> </ul>	JF
7.	<b>Correspondence:</b>	

	<p>7.1. Drains – correspondence received in relation to ongoing floods after heavy rain. This remains an ongoing action from OCC, who have now carried out an inspection and a survey. OCC have advised that gullies remain subject to the standard clearance schedule, unless the floods present a danger to property, or a nuisance in the sense it might cause a traffic accident. Grips are due to be inserted behind drains, following OCC’s survey and further advice awaited.</p> <p>7.2. Great Barn roof – a concern was raised about holes in the roof exposing beams to rainwater. The PC notified the National Trust, who passed the concern to its Facilities Manager and Building Surveyor.</p> <p>7.3. Christmas Eve procession – PC to note an application has been made to close the road.</p> <p>7.4. Hedges on Cherry Orchard and dead elms – PC had contacted OCC previously, who contacted the landowner in relation to removal of the dead elms, but this has not been actioned. There have been complaints that the hedges have not been cut back sufficiently at eye level on the pavement side. JR to speak to landowner.</p> <p>7.5. Hedges on Eastern boundary of Park – see item 4.</p> <p>7.6. Hedges to side of Footpath 6 – PC believes it is sufficiently cut back at present, but will double-check if any action required by landowners.</p>	<p>JR</p> <p>PC</p>
8.	<p><b>New Business:</b></p> <p>8.1. OCC Footpath 6 formal diversion – this formalises a diversion route on the boardwalk in use for some time. PC had posted this to the village newsletter and no comments had been received. The informal consultation had closed on 15<sup>th</sup> November.</p> <p>8.2. OCC amendment to s.101 grass cutting agreement – this was to reduce the annual cutting obligation of the verges by the PC from 2 to 1 cut per year, at the request of OCC. It was proposed and resolved for the amended agreement and schedule thereto to be signed by JR.</p>	<p>JF</p>
9.	<p><b>Ongoing Business:</b></p> <p>9.1. Traffic Management: speed survey B4019 at junction with Holloway; 20mph zone complete: addressed at item 5 above. Visibility and vegetation on corner of the Holloway: the vegetation has now been cut. Correspondence with Annabelle’s Nursery regarding pedestrians: Annabelle had agreed with the Parish Council suggestion to install a sign to encourage parents/carers to use the Ranch back gate for access rather than walk on the road.</p> <p>9.2. Verges &amp; footpaths: large verge management for next year. It was agreed that the Parish Council would budget for a 2 weekly strim of the same area again next summer to eradicate the nettles. Thereafter, it can be managed as part of the standard grass verge cuts. It had been confirmed by BGG that they had weeded the cobbled path/cut the verges as part of the standard cutting schedule. It was noted that when the next deep-clean takes place, the Vale should be asked to carry on where they finished last time.</p> <p>9.3. Welcome information for new villagers. JR to action, as certain data needs to be removed.</p> <p>9.4. Dog-mess signs and litter bin update – KM to forward sign details to JF to place an order. Litter bin update awaited from VP.</p> <p>9.5. Neighbourhood Plan(NP) Update 2025: questionnaire. KM to action. KM reported that the Joint Local Plan initial phase consultation is Jan/Feb 2024. The Vale Plan will be based on existing NPs, but as the Vale Plan evolves, Great Coxwell Plan needs to</p>	<p>JR</p> <p>KM/JF</p> <p>KM</p>

	<p>evolve. KM to action creating a questionnaire for villagers and to read draft Vale Plan. JR noted that the last GC NP amendment was non-material, so the village has not been consulted for some time. JR anticipated there would now be scope for adding in environmental issues and to note land of significance. KM to consider if membership of the Neighbourhood Planning Alliance would assist.</p> <p>9.6. Reading Room: railings painting and front bushes. The Community Fund has agreed to take over and fund repainting of the Reading Room railings. The painting contractor has indicated work could be carried out end of March/early April. In relation to taking out the dead bushes and replanting, RH reported that he is waiting on a gardener to price the work. A decision will then be made as to whether the Community Fund will take over that project in the same way.</p> <p>9.7. Electricity wires touching tree – Hollway Road. JF reported speaking to SSE and SSE had attended the site for some cutting back.</p>																																														
10.	<p><b>The Park:</b></p> <p>10.1. Repairs/maintenance: JR to inspect bounce equipment and web-net and large pole for possible repair work during this financial year. Consider asking BGG to quote for removal of benches.</p> <p>10.2. Repairs 2024/5 – to be discussed on completion of item 10.1.</p>	JR																																													
11.	<p>11.1. JF reported current balances of Parish Council accounts: £23,000; £1,562 and Reading Room account: £1110. A budget variance report had been provided and no questions raised.</p> <p>11.2. It was proposed, seconded and resolved to approve payments since 11.09.2023 (shown inclusive of VAT):</p> <p><i>Parish Council</i></p> <table><tr><td>31/08/2023</td><td>BGG Garden &amp; Tree Care</td><td>60.00</td><td>15,934.98</td><td>Verge and Path Grass Cutting</td></tr><tr><td>31/08/2023</td><td>Payroll</td><td>697.80</td><td>15,237.18</td><td>60 hours 1 Jun 23 to 31 Aug 23</td></tr><tr><td>05/09/2023</td><td>Biel Consultancy Ltd re Blake Consultancy Ltd</td><td>24.00</td><td>15,213.18</td><td>Happie Payroll Services</td></tr><tr><td>06/09/2023</td><td>VWDC 2nd Precept INCOME</td><td>-8,356.50</td><td>23,569.68</td><td>INCOME</td></tr><tr><td>19/09/2023</td><td>Moore</td><td>378.00</td><td>23,191.68</td><td>External Auditor Services</td></tr><tr><td>28/09/2023</td><td>Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils</td><td>66.00</td><td>23,125.68</td><td>Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils re Planning Training</td></tr><tr><td>30/09/2023</td><td>BGG Garden and Tree Care Ltd</td><td>60.00</td><td>23,065.68</td><td>Church Lane cutting area</td></tr><tr><td>09/10/2023</td><td>Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils</td><td>66.00</td><td>22,999.68</td><td>Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils re Planning Training</td></tr></table> <p><i>Park</i></p> <table><tr><td>31/08/2023</td><td>BGG Garden &amp; Tree Care Ltd</td><td>£114.00</td><td>£1,675.48</td><td>Park Grass Cutting</td></tr></table>	31/08/2023	BGG Garden & Tree Care	60.00	15,934.98	Verge and Path Grass Cutting	31/08/2023	Payroll	697.80	15,237.18	60 hours 1 Jun 23 to 31 Aug 23	05/09/2023	Biel Consultancy Ltd re Blake Consultancy Ltd	24.00	15,213.18	Happie Payroll Services	06/09/2023	VWDC 2nd Precept INCOME	-8,356.50	23,569.68	INCOME	19/09/2023	Moore	378.00	23,191.68	External Auditor Services	28/09/2023	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	66.00	23,125.68	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils re Planning Training	30/09/2023	BGG Garden and Tree Care Ltd	60.00	23,065.68	Church Lane cutting area	09/10/2023	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	66.00	22,999.68	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils re Planning Training	31/08/2023	BGG Garden & Tree Care Ltd	£114.00	£1,675.48	Park Grass Cutting	
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<i>Reading Room</i>				
30/08/2023	EDF – Gas	17.69	£1,101.66	Gas Supply 29 July - 29 Aug
01/09/2023	British Gas – Electricity	23.73	<b>£1,077.93</b>	Electricity Supply 29 Jul - 29 Aug
31/08/2023	BGG Garden and Tree Care Ltd	72.00	£1,005.93	Grass Cut on 11.08 and 25.08
12/09/2023	Everflow Limited	5.88	<b>£1,000.05</b>	Water supply £10.89 less credit -£4.89
15/09/2023	RJ Harrison Plumbing & Heating Ltd	102.00	£898.05	Gas Boiler Service and Safety Test
11/10/2023	Coffee Morning Donation	-300.00	<b>£1,198.05</b>	Coffee Mornings - INCOME DONATION
01/10/2023	Room Hire Income	-31.50	£1,229.55	Room Hire - INCOME
01/10/2023	British Gas - Electricity	22.64	<b>£1,206.91</b>	Electricity Supply 29 Aug - 28 Sep
30/09/2023	BGG Garden and Tree Care Ltd	72.00	£1,134.91	Reading Room Grass Cut 13/09 & 28/09
12/10/2023	Everflow Limited	10.52	<b>£1,124.39</b>	Water supply
28/09/2023	EDF - Gas	14.31	£1,110.08	Gas Supply 30 Aug to 27 Sep
<p>11.6. The following income received to the Reading Room charity was noted: Reading Room rental £31.50(16.08.2023) and donation from Coffee Morning Group (£300).</p> <p>11.7. It was <b>proposed, seconded and resolved</b> to accept the draft budget for 2024/5 in the sum of <u>£19,006</u>. It was further <b>proposed, seconded and resolved</b> to request a precept of <u>£16,413</u>.</p> <p>It was <b>proposed, seconded and resolved</b> to apply £3,307 of forecast unallocated funds at financial year end 2023/4 towards the 2024/5 budget.</p> <p>For 2024/5 reserves it was noted that the sum of £12,000 would be held as general reserves and £2,800 for earmarked reserves: of which £1000 is allocated to future playground repairs or equipment replacement; £1300 for unanticipated repairs to other assets and £500 to build a fund for future professional advice.</p> <p>The tax base for this year had not yet been notified. It was <b>proposed, seconded and resolved</b> that the Chair would have authority to sign the precept request form in accordance with the resolved precept request upon receipt of the form.</p> <p>11.8. It was proposed, seconded and resolved to appoint Lisa Wilkinson as Parish Council's internal auditor for the year end 2023/4. Further it was proposed, seconded and resolved to appoint Lisa Wilkinson to examine the accounts of the Reading Room Trust for year end 2023/4, with approval of the Trustee.</p> <p>11.9. It was <b>proposed</b> to approve the transfer of the balance of the Park bank account into the Treasurer's (Parish Council) account, as there was no need to maintain a separate account. KM queried whether this would mean the Park was not regarded as an important village asset. JR confirmed there was an obligation to maintain it as</p>				

	<p>an asset of the PC and this was to simplify accounts. In addition, the Park could be identified in an updated Neighbourhood Plan as an important site for the village. The proposal was <b>seconded and resolved</b>. Further it was proposed, seconded and resolved that, if possible, the account should be renamed Earmarked Reserves and should be used for earmarked reserves so that they are separately identifiable.</p> <p>11.10. It was agreed that, when it resolves to do so, the Parish Council would pay future repair and maintenance invoices for the Reading Room from the Parish Council account. This donation would enable VAT to be reclaimed as a non-business activity. Utility bills would continue to be paid from income received into the Reading Room account and VAT could not be reclaimed by the <i>Trustee</i> on those bills, as a cost associated with room hire, for which a PC can claim exemption, but not a Trustee.</p> <p>11.11. It was proposed, seconded and resolved to agree the NALC recommended salary increase from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 for SCP 7 for the clerk/RFO's contracted and overtime hours and further that there should be a move to SCP 8 from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.</p>	
12.	<p><b>Planning</b></p> <p>12.1. <b>New matters:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>P22/V0996/RM:</b> Appeal to Secretary of State against refusal of an application for reserved matters (comments/modification/withdrawal of previous representation by 21.11.23). No further representation required from PC as previous objection (12.11.2022) included as part of the appeal papers.</li> <li>- <b>P23/V2162/RM:</b> for development work at Land South of Steeds Farm, application for reserved matters (objection submitted 13.10.23)</li> <li>- <b>P23/V1853/S73:</b> application to omit island from highway authority approved scheme on application P18/V2396/FUL (response by 30.11.23). No comment to be submitted, subject to confirmation from PC.</li> <li>- <b>P23/V2515/HH:</b> Roseland porch, side and rear extension and roof coverings (response by 07.12.23). PC to review comments from February 2023 and confirm response.</li> </ul> <p>12.2. <b>Decided:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>P23/V1579/HH:</b> Fletcher's Cottage, single storey extension work (no comments submitted 04.08.2023): Decision approved</li> <li>- <b>P23/V1839/LB &amp; P23/V1838/HH:</b> Green's Farmhouse – airsource heat pump, tank and plumbing (no comments submitted 31.08.2023): Decision approved</li> <li>- <b>P23/V2238/AG:</b> Wood House Farm, Faringdon, new general purpose agricultural building. (no application necessary as agricultural development 30/10/23)</li> </ul> <p>12.3. <b>No further developments since last meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>P23/VO284/FUL:</b> land to south of Steeds Farm: drainage. (comments submitted 27.02.23).</li> <li>- Amendments to landscaping/layout/scale. Discharge of conditions 28.02.23: objection submitted (23.03.23). Decision: discharge of conditions refused.</li> <li>- <b>P23/V1809/DIS:</b> discharge of condition 8 on P20/V0658/RM reserved matters planning application 190 residential dwellings land south of Highworth Road, Faringdon. Not for public consultation.</li> </ul> <p>12.4. Any further outstanding applications arising at the time of meeting:</p>	<p>JF</p> <p>JR/JF</p>

	- <b>Wicklesham Quarry</b> – PC to circulate draft objection response for comment. Objection is limited to access only at this stage, the PC being concerned with how traffic would be managed at peak times, the unsuitability of traffic lights for the location and insufficient space on the existing roundabout.	
<b>13.</b>	<b>Policies/Administration:</b> <b>13.1 Councillor Vacancy/Co-Option:</b> no further updates.	
<b>14.</b>	<b>Any other business to be added to the next Agenda:</b> there was none.	
<b>15.</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting:</b> Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> February 2024, 6:30pm	

Meeting Closed: 8:40