



Acting Clerk to The Parish Council: Louisa Freeman

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Cllrs Present:

Cllr. Piers Storey

Cllr. Louisa Freeman Chair

Cllr Tony Coard

Cllr Miranda Armstrong

Cllr. Eunice Tweedie

Parish Clerk: Louisa Freeman

Members of the public: 7

The Clerk announced that the meeting will be recorded, and the recording will be deleted once the minutes are approved in the next meeting.

1. CODE OF CONDUCT

Cllr Tweedie gave an introduction to the Council's Code of Conduct which has been recently published on the website for reference. The Code of Conduct covers attendance of both virtual and in person meetings, as well as correspondence to and from the Parish Council, and to and from any member of the public. Cllr Tweedie advised that the Code of Conduct provides guidance to all attended of Parish Council meetings to ensure they are held in an orderly, dignified and effective manner. It also provides to ensure that members of the public have opportunity to have their views and opinions heard. The Code of Conduct also determines that anyone in breach of guidelines could be asked to leave a Parish Council meeting. Full and further details of the Code of Conduct can be found on the website.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Copcutt, Cllr Turner and from Ward Councillor Clive Hooker.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Armstrong declared an interest in item 6 (planning applications)

4. MINUTES ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

There were no matter arising from the previous meeting and the minutes from 4 March 2024 were approved and signed.

5. OPEN FORUM

The Chair asked those members of the public who were in attendance if they wished to raise any issue. The floor unanimously informed the meeting that they wished to discuss item 7 on the agenda, the recommendation to make an application for an ACV for the village pub. The Chair requested that the item be brought forward for discussion immediately and this was agreed.

6. THE GREAT SHEFFORD

The Chair asked those members of the public who were in attendance if they wished to raise any issue. The floor unanimously informed the meeting that they wished to discuss item 8 on the

agenda, the recommendation to make an application for an ACV for the village pub. The Chair requested that the item be brought forward for discussion immediately and this was agreed.

Proposals were discussed around registration of the Great Shefford (formerly known as the Swan) as an ACV (Asset of Community Value). It was not known by members of the Council when the pub was last listed as an ACV. Linda Bowden believed it was via Glen Parsons in the region of 10 years previously. The following is needed for documentation - Evidence to show how the asset furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the community. This does not apply if the pub is sold as a continuing business (a going concern): the legislation only applies to sales which would deprive the community of an asset. There is no obligation on the seller to accept the community's bid but it does prevent quick sales to property speculators of which the community would often be unaware. Under the Localism Act 2011, once a pub is listed as an ACV it cannot be sold quickly and without the knowledge of the local community. If a pub is put up for sale then the local community is given a statutory opportunity to make a bid to purchase the pub on behalf of the community — and time to raise the funds to do so. Whether there is appetite in the village to raise funds will be seen, if that opportunity presents itself.

Nevertheless, essential to the success of any campaign is the ability to demonstrate widespread local community support and identify who will run that campaign and there was clearly much support from residents to keep the pub as a going concern. It would appear that there are individuals who would be willing to run such a campaign should the need arise and indeed Roy Bailey was present at the meeting and had sent in some information to the Council to support an application. Indeed there were members of the public who would like to approach Stonegate Group and seek permission to tidy up what is fast becoming a derelict sight, which can project a negative image for visitors to the village. (The outside awnings have fallen into disrepair, and there are numerous tiles falling from the roof). The Chair committed to issuing paperwork to WBC in order to list the Great Shefford (formerly The Swan) as an ACV. The Chair advised that it would not be possible for a name change to be dictated by the Parish Council at this stage, and that the former tenants/owners changed the name of the pub.

Action: Cllr Coard and Cllr Armstrong to meet and discuss contacting Stonegate regarding potential clear up.

7. PLANNING

The following applications and decision notices were listed. The Chair advised that Cllr Copcutt takes responsibility for all submissions of planning applications.

Applications

- 16th February 2024 24/00321/AGRIC

Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Replacement Barn
Approximately 350 Metres North East Of Great Shefford House, Church Street,

- 15 March 2024 24/00458/HOUSE The Bungalow Hillside Stud Great Shefford Hungerford RG17 7DL
Single storey extensions.

- 26th February 2024 24/00408/LBC Henley Farm, Wantage Road, Great Shefford, Hungerford RG17 7DH The conversion of a carport outbuilding (former cartshed) to ancillary studio space . Re-submission to renew previous consent.

- 29th April 2024 24/00892/LBC Shefford House, Newbury Road, Great Shefford, Hungerford RG17 7EF New internal lined opening, to first floor, between Bedrooms 2 and 3.

Decision Notices

• APPLICATION NUMBER: 23/02886/FUL PROPOSAL - Refused The extension and alteration of Unit 6 and its use for storage and offices SITE: Unit 6, Northfield Farm Industrial Estate, Wantage Road, Great Shefford • Application Number: 23/02933/HOUSE - Granted The installation of an air source heat pump at the rear of the property, 4 Spring Meadows, Great Shefford, Hungerford, RG17 7EN

• Application Number 24/00321/AGRIC Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Replacement Barn - Decision as follows: The proposed replacement barn would be used for the accommodation of livestock in winter months and would be within 400 metres of the curtilage of occupied dwellings to the east and southeast. Therefore, the proposed barn is not permitted development in accordance with clause (i) under Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A, Paragraph A.1 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, and a full application is required.

8. FINANCE

Cllr Armstrong advised that she has been in contact with SSE and she now has access to our account and all paper bills are being sent to her home address. Cllr Coard had previously enquired as to whether SSE have implemented the newly contracted prices and he provided the RFO with estimates of what he believes our charges should be. These represent a considerable reduction on the prices that we are currently being charged, even though we signed the new contract a year ago. Cllr Coard believes that we are being overcharged to the tune of £1400 per annum.

Action: RFO to contact SSE to discuss

The Chair advised that it has come to the time when we need to submit accounts for the Financial year.

Action: Clerk to contact internal auditor (Jackie Clack) from last year's audit

Action: RFO to return VAT return for financial year ending 2023.

The Chair signed the VAT return

Following lengthy conversations with Barclays to chase the transfer of the dormant funds, the Clerk advised that Barclays claim they have never received the original request. The Clerk explained that these funds have now been 'missing' for over a year. Return of the funds should be actioned within the next two weeks on receipt of a registered letter. All in all, it has been a sorry saga with Barclays.

Action: Clerk to re-issue letter to Barclays Dormancy team.

Cllr Armstrong wished to check the Tactical invoices against the quotation /contract that we had been supplied and which had been discussed with Henry Smith at the last meeting, in order to be confident that the invoices represent what we had agreed.

Action: Clerk to re-issue details of contract to RFO.

9. VILLAGE ISSUES

a. Cllr Armstrong advised that she would like to ask Tactical for a quotation to complete work on playground equipment so that we could decide who to award the repair work to. We had previously received a quotation from Mark Charman. Further to discussions held at the previous meeting, it had been agreed to purchase a new bench for the playground to replace the vandalised bench. The clerk confirmed that this can be purchased with CIL funds as it represents an infrastructure purchase.

Action: Clerk to gather some quotations

b. Speed Awareness Scheme and traffic update. Cllr Tweedie advised that everything is now in place for sessions to begin. Cllr Coard suggested that he knew of a number of residents who would still like to be involved and that it might be helpful for the dates of the proposed sessions to be advertised.

Cllr Tweedie explained that the sessions are somewhat dictated by the number of volunteers who are available, and new volunteers are most welcome in the group.

c. SAGLUV The Chair advised that she continues to be involved with the SAGLUV committee. To date SAGLUV have met a few times with Thames Water to try and alleviate acute sewage problems which occurred in the village, as well as to understand the steps that TW are taking to assess the problems and plan for the future. The past month or so has definitely seen an improvement in 24/7 tanker presence on Wantage Road.

d. Flood Alleviation Scheme Update.

The Chair confirmed that notification has been received from Dr Servais (Partnerships and Strategic Overview, Environment Agency) that plans are in the process of being made to remove the temporary pump in the Great Shefford stream on the Wantage Road. Further details in terms of dates for construction will be issued very shortly, although it is likely that contractors will be mobilised during the last week of May. The Chair also advised that once dates have been issued, it is quite certain that portions of the Wantage Road through the village will be closed to passing traffic. It is not known at this stage when and where this might start or finish.

e. EMT Matters – Please refer to EMT update given in the Annual Parish meeting.

f. Hickson Hedgerows. The Chair advised that several residents had raised concerns at the manner in which heavy duty machinery had been operated by a building contractor within the Platinum Jubilee orchard area, which had also caused some damage to the Hickson Hedgerow planting. Although this land is owned by West Berks, the contractor – when challenged – apparently advised that he had been given permission to carry out works by ‘a man on the Parish Council’. The Chair wished to state for the record that no such approach was ever made to the Parish Council, and neither had any such authorisation been given. The Clerk has communicated this to Hickson Hedgerows. It is understood that the Ground Works Team Leader has since offered to sprinkle seed on the wildflower border once works are completed, in order to replace what planting may have been damaged.

10. COUNCILLORS BUSINESS

Further to an application process and following interviews, the Chair had hoped to bring good news to the Council of the appointment of a new clerk. Unfortunately, the candidate had decided that – due to a change in personal circumstances – that she could no longer fulfil this role. This means that the Council is still actively looking for a Parish Clerk.

Action: Clerk to advertise once again through BALC, and any other publications deemed relevant. Cllr Tweedie suggested that we ask East Garston Parish Clerk if they might be interested.

Cllr Tweedie advised that she has arranged a date for erection and decoration of the village Christmas tree (Saturday 23 November). All finer details will be issued in due course. Cllr Storey confirmed that he is in possession of the lights which were handed down from the previous Chair, Steve Ackrill.

Action: Cllr Tweedie to liaise with the village hall over the potential siting of the tree within the Village Hall grounds. It was deemed that this would be an optimal location due to a number of factors including safety and access to electricity.

Cllr Turner suggested a village Litter Picking Event. More details to follow.

11. . DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

The clerk advised that the next meeting will be Monday 1 July 2024. The Clerk also notified the meeting that she is unable to attend this date. Cllr Tweedie agreed to chair the meeting on 1 July. Rotation of the Chair position does need to be addressed, and this will be voted on at the meeting in September.