

# **Overthorpe Parish Council**

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Overthorpe Parish Council held at  
**Room 72, Chenderit School, Archery Road, Middleton Cheney**  
on **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 7:30pm**

Present: Cllr S Baylis, Cllr R Randall, Cllr P Cavanagh, Cllr G Hughes, Clerk.

In attendance: 3 members of the public, District Cllr Rosie Herring.

- 1) **Election of Chairman** – It was proposed and agreed to elect Cllr Baylis as the Chairman. Cllr Baylis completed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was countersigned by the Clerk.
- 2) **Apologies** – None.
- 3) **Declaration of any changes to pecuniary interests and interests on items on the agenda** – None.
- 4) **Public Participation session** – One of the parishioners raised a number of questions as follows:

**Why can't this meeting be held in the village?** There isn't a venue in the Village.

**What about the Church as we used to get lot of people attending when the meetings were in the Church?**

In 2021, we held the APM via Zoom, and 13 members of public took part. We met at the Church in May 2022, and 2 members of the public attended. The feedback regarding the church is (a) difficult to get to except by car, (b) cold and (c) dirty. Minute 22/23:17(d) refers to looking for venues within Overthorpe.

**Why has the precept gone up by around 50% this year?** The precept went down by around 30% the last year as we received grants for various items so we didn't need to request as much funding from parishioners that year but this year grants were not received therefore the precept needed to go back up towards the original amount prior to the 30% drop hence the increase. Information about these decisions was minuted at the time under 22/23:32(d) and 23/24:26(g).

**Why are there reserves of almost £20k?** The Parish Council (PC) is advised to keep around 12 months general expenditure in general reserves (currently £7k) plus any specific reserves that are ringfenced for specific projects. Currently the reserves allocation is – General Reserves - £7k, Election Costs - £1.3k, Legal Expenses re TRO (to defend the TRO should WNC try to remove it again) - £3,150, Traffic Calming - £1,6k, Traffic Calming Consultancy - £2.5k, Amenity Land (preparing for the potential need for OPC to purchase land for burials when the Churchyard is closed due to no more space available) - £3,720, Defibrillator Consumables - £50. Total - £19,320.

**What has happened to the S106 money for road safety improvements and how much is it?** The funds available are £30k but they will not be sent to the PC as they are held by West Northants Council (WNC) and can only be spent on specific projects.

**There needs to be a footpath down the hill to Banbury as it is very dangerous. What are you doing about this?** The PC agree that a footpath is needed and as you will see in the minutes over the last few meetings the PC has met with a representative of WNC and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) as the road is in both counties and they agree it would be a great safety improvement to put in a footpath but the quote received to do this was £250k which is not something that we can afford to fund so considerable support and funding is required from both county councils. They advised that the feasibility study for this project will cost around £25k so the PC has agreed that WNC can spend the £30k S106 on whatever is required to help move this project forward but due to the overall costs there is nothing more the PC can do and we must wait for WNC and OCC to we can get the study done but cannot then afford for the work to get done. The PC has given WNC approval to spend the £30k towards getting this project done but due to the large overall cost there is nothing more that we can do and we just have to wait for this project to become a priority for WNC and OCC. They are trying to link it in to their greener transport initiatives trying to encourage people to walk and cycle more so this would be a very useful link between Middleton Cheney and Banbury. Information about

these discussions have been minuted on numerous occasions but in particular can be found in minutes 22/23:9 and 22/23:32(a).

**Parking on pavements is causing a problem and the police said they were going to contact the council to meet with them but the council haven't done anything about it. Why not?** The PC were contacted by Francesca Smith from Northants police and we accepted her offer of a meeting and were in the process of trying to arrange a suitable date but she then responded advising that she had been promoted to a different position within Northants Police therefore the meeting was no longer an option. The PC remain willing to meet with someone from Northants Police to discuss the issues.

**Can you push Highways to get the speed limit on Warkworth Road reduced?** In 2020 the PC submitted a formal request for the speed limit to be reduced. This was refused by WNC as per the following e-mail from Highways – 'The Speed Limit Review Panel has now had the opportunity to consider your submission for a section of 40mph from the A422 roundabout at the top of Blacklocks Hill down to Warkworth. As you may be aware reviews involve a panel of relevant officers including myself as your Community Liaison Officer for the area and the Safer Roads Team Leader for Northamptonshire Police. He has delegated authority from the Chief Constable in speed limit consultations. This is therefore a consensus response from both organisations.

In terms of the review of this speed limit we have taken into consideration a number of factors, including the general road layout and geography of the area, and the collision history over the previous 3 years, and I can confirm that our collision records indicate that in the past three years there have been no 'reported' collisions along this length of road.

In terms of setting appropriate speed limits we take the pragmatic view that if they do not command driver understanding or respect they will be frequently contravened. In other words the road environment should provide a clear illustration as to why a particular speed limit has been imposed and encourage self-compliance.

We receive regular submissions for speed limit amendments where there is no realistic prospect of compliance and are usually based upon the mistaken notion that the installation of signs alone will be sufficient to ensure that motorists observe the posted speed limit. This often translates into a legacy speeding issue and results in a community expectation for the local authority to retrospectively install physical measures to highlight and encourage compliance with the new limit or the police to carry out enforcement activity. The rural 'look and feel', environment and characteristics of the road are at odds with a 40mph restriction. A careful and competent motorist may not therefore fully appreciate why a lower limit is in force resulting in widespread non-compliance in either direction of travel.

Therefore, by consensus agreement it was determined that there is no compelling evidence to support a reduction in speed limit along this section of road.'

*2 members of the public and Cllr Rosie Herring left the meeting at 8:21pm.*

**5) To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18.03.24** – The minutes were proposed, agreed, and duly signed.

**6) Proposal to co-opt James Frayne onto the Parish Council** – It was proposed and agreed to co-opt James onto the Parish Council. James completed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was countersigned by the Clerk.

## **7) Matters arising**

- a) Update re concerns raised by parishioner re parking on the footpaths in the village and the possibility of reducing the speed limit in the village to 20mph – It was agreed at the last meeting to survey the villagers to get their view to support any application but it appears that survey monkey now charges for its surveys so the PC needs to look into other ways to do this.
- b) Local Plan consultation: The draft excludes definition of settlement hierarchy or supporting maps, therefore the Parish Council (PC) cannot make informed response. The next version of the plan will be final and no

further amendment allowed prior to adoption. This seems to be an abuse of process and not the 'consultative' approach as promised – Cllr Baylis explained the situation to Cllr Herring and asked her to follow this up with WNC as how can they expect the PC to give a view on something that hasn't had a final version provided for consultation yet? **Cllr Herring agreed to contact Cllr Breese about this.**

## 8) Finance

- a) Approval of the bank statement balances as at 08.05.24 of £3,689.95 and £19,221.30 – Cllr Cavanagh confirmed the balances stated are correct.
- b) To consider purchasing a security certificate for the website at a cost of £75 for 1 year – Proposed and agreed.
- c) To confirm completion of the final (Jan to Mar) quarterly financial check for the 2023-24 financial year – Cllr Hughes confirmed the check has taken place and all was found to be in order.
- d) To note payments made since last meeting under delegated powers: Proposed and agreed.

19.03.24	Sheerclass Computing	Website update	£400.00
30.04.24	NCALC	Annual membership and Data Protection Officer	£170.91
30.04.24	Npower	Streetlighting March 2024	£35.57
30.04.24	Chenderit School	Room hire March meeting	£37.50
07.05.24	E-on	Annual streetlighting maintenance contract	£105.60
30.04.24	Kirsty Buttle	Salary and office Apr 24	£184.24
30.04.24	HMRC	Tax Apr 24	£45.20
30.04.24	NEST	Pension Apr 24	£19.91
30.04.24	Nick Chadwick	Internal Audit 2023-24	£75.00

- e) To note receipts received since the last meeting: Noted.

09.04.24	HMRC	VAT refund	£1,301.10
09.04.24	Lloyds	Interest	£20.00
26.04.24	WNC	Precept	£2,988.00
09.04.24	Lloyds	Interest	£20.00

- f) To approve the following payments: Proposed and agreed.

Npower	Streetlighting April 2024	£32.35
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## 9) AGAR documentation for the 2023-24 financial year

- a) To receive the Internal Auditor's Report for 23/24 - The report was received with no issues raised.
- b) To appoint an Internal Auditor for the 24/25 financial year – It was agreed to appoint Nick Chadwick as the internal auditor for 24/25.
- c) To complete and approve for signature the AGAR Annual Governance Statement for 23/24 – It was proposed and agreed to tick yes to all statements except 9 which is N/A.
- d) To approve for signing the AGAR Accounting Statements for 23/24 – It was proposed and agreed to approve the Accounting Statements.
- e) To approve completion and signing of the AGAR Certificate of Exemption for 23/24 – Proposed and agreed.
- f) To confirm the dates for the Notice of Public Rights for the 23/24 Financial Year – Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June to Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024 – Proposed and agreed.

## 10) To re adopt the following policies with no changes made: Proposed and agreed.

- a) Code of Conduct
- b) Complaints Procedure
- c) Data Breach Policy
- d) Data Protection Policy

- e) Disciplinary Policy
- f) Financial Regulations
- g) Freedom of Information Policy
- h) General Privacy Notice
- i) Grievance Policy
- j) Internal Financial Controls
- k) Publication Scheme
- l) Records Retention Policy
- m) Risk Assessment
- n) Role Holder Privacy Notice
- o) Scheme of Delegation
- p) Standing Orders
- q) Subject Access Request Procedure

**11) Proposal to adopt the following new policies:** Proposed and agreed.

- a) Biodiversity Policy (in order to comply with the new Biodiversity Duty)
- b) Internal Financial Controls Policy – Not required due to being covered under Item 10.

**12) Planning applications received by West Northants Council - None**

**Planning decisions received from West Northants Council**

**2023/6196/RM - Land between Hill House and Chetwode, Overthorpe.** Reserved Matters Application pursuant to S/2020/1694/OUT (single Custom/Self-Build dwelling). **Approved.**

**2024/1034/FULL - Land east of Warkworth Road, Overthorpe.** Solar panels to garage and house roof. Roof lights to garage. **Approved.**

Meeting closed @ 8:42pm

**Date of next meeting – 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

Signed..... Date.....