

Minutes of the Annual Electors' Meeting for the Parish of Sutton Courtenay held at the Village Hall, on Tuesday 4th April 2023, commencing at 7.15pm.

Present: Councillor Rita Atkinson (Chairman of the Parish Council) and 8 members of the public. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for Absence

County & District Councillor Richard Webber; Parish Councillors David Butler, Eileen Daw, Teresa Field, Father Morkos and Antony Willott had sent their apologies.

Minutes

The Minutes of the last Annual Electors' Meeting held on 5th April 2022 had been circulated and read by those attending. These were confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman had provided printed copies of her report at the meeting:

For the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

This report presents the highlights of the Parish Council's activities over the year.

Planning and Consultations

Responding to planning applications, for which the Parish Council is a statutory consultee, has formed a major part of the Parish Council's work. Over the year, the Parish Council has responded to over 50 planning applications. Some of these were substantial developments or approval of reserved matters on previously approved outline applications.

Responding to the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) on its ongoing HIF1 (new river crossing) application has formed a major part of work of the Parish Council's planning working party. The collaborative work with Appleford, Culham, Burcot and Clifton Hampden and Nuneham Courtenay Parish Councils continues to address the several issues raised by the proposed project.

The District Council's approach to successive planning applications, over a seven-year period, for the site north of Hobbyhorse Lane was challenged as, in the Parish Council's view, successive applications had not addressed key objections raised by the previous refusals by the District Council of planning applications for this site.

There have also been consultations on Local Development Orders submitted by Milton Park and the enterprise zone at Hill Farm and others.

Hanson and FCC operations continue to generate many requests to OCC for variation/suspension of planning conditions (e.g. to extend working hours, increase vehicle movements, extension of plant life etc.). These are particularly difficult applications to address as they tend to be variations on variations approved over several years with a changing referencing system, so trying to trace back the history of the variations to demonstrate potential inconsistency is not straightforward.

Attendance at Liaison Committees

The Parish Council appoints representatives to many local liaison committees – notable of which are:

- Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- Sutton Courtenay Village Hall Management Committee
- FCC - Appleford / Sutton Courtenay Liaison
- RWE nPower Liaison Committee
- Milton Park Liaison Committee

- Harwell Chilton Stakeholder Group
- Culham Stakeholder Group
- Millennium Common Committee

Community Activities and Recreational Amenities

This has been a major focus in this reporting year. It is with huge pleasure and grateful thanks to everyone involved, that I report that the bulk of the upgrade of the recreation facilities at the Recreation Ground was completed this year. It is hoped that the installation of football/rugby posts and cricket strips will be also completed early in the new council's year. There is still work to be done for the wider amenities across the parish (particularly the southern end). The council has been quite determined to use its allocation of s106 to improve the facilities as our village grows in population.

Art Trail – this is now well underway and it is hoped that the project will be completed within this calendar year.

Litter Pick – it was wonderful to see over 40 parishioners (including many children and young people) take part in the litter pick organized by the Parish Council for the Great British Spring Clean 2023. By popular demand it may well turn out to be a regular bi-annual event. It is also noted that there are many others who, as they walk around the village, also help in picking up litter.

Cemetery

The Parish Council's cemetery on Old Wallingford Way is available for residents and non-residents. It is a lawn cemetery where individual graves are not enclosed and it is always open to visitors. Due to the amount of plastic waste being added to the compost bin, the bin was removed in February 2023 and the litter bin is now emptied weekly.

Neighbourhood Plan

This project has been ongoing for some time for perfectly valid reasons, and it is with great relief that the Parish Council was able to submit the draft Plan to the District Council last month. We now await the next steps in the process.

Acknowledgments

We are very fortunate to have residents supporting the work of the Sutton Courtenay Parish Council through its working groups. In particular, the planning working party could not have drafted the Council's responses to several ongoing major planning applications without the expertise of residents Robin Draper and David Hignell. Their historical knowledge of the evolution of FCC and Hanson operations has helped tremendously in the Parish Council being able to respond robustly to the many applications for variations of the conditions stipulated in the original planning permissions for the two operators.

Special mention should also be made of Joanna O'Callaghan, Sarah Eccles, Kathy Whittaker and others on the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group who have steadfastly worked to ensure the production of the draft Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the District Council.

The District Council's Officers have been tremendously supportive in progressing the Art Trail project as well as with drawing down s106 funds allocated to Sutton Courtenay.

Acknowledgment must be made to ASA Landscapes and Kompan without whom the Parish Council would not have been able to achieve its stated vision to make the amenities at the recreation ground safe, user-friendly, fun, attractive for all village residents while ensuring environmental sustainability.

A huge thank you to fellow Councillors – and it was very uplifting to see that at its March meeting, the council had its full complement of 11 Councillors. There are of course many more who quietly provide support behind the scenes. Finally, and not least, perhaps the most significant achievement of the council has been its appointment of Jennie Currie as Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer to the Parish Council in July 2022. We have made huge progress on the many actions on the Parish Council’s to-do list since Jennie’s appointment. Thank you Jennie.

Matters raised by Electors

There were no matters raised by electors.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.30pm.

Signed

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