



## Sutton Courtenay Parish Council

### Minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at the Village Hall Sutton Courtenay, commencing at 7.15pm.

Present: Councillors Rita Atkinson (chairman), Lyn Hodder, Joanna O'Callaghan, Hugo Raworth and Jason Warwick.

In attendance: Jennie Currie, Clerk; County & District Councillor Richard Webber; 1 member of the public.

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2023/001 Public Participation  
No matters were raised.

2023/002 Apologies for absence  
Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Butler, Daw and Willott.

2023/003 Declarations of Interest  
No declarations of interest were received.

2023/004 Minutes for the meetings held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022  
**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022 were a true and accurate record and would be signed by the Chairman.

2023/005 Parish Councillor Vacancy  
Members noted that the Council had one vacancy which can be filled by co-option and asked anyone interested in the role to contact the Clerk.

2023/006 Planning applications  
(a) Planning applications to be considered  
**RESOLVED** that the following observations would be submitted:  
P22/V2867/HH 14 Tullis Close, SC – Support

Cllr Raworth joined the meeting at 7.23pm.

(b) Additional planning correspondence  
MW.0099/18 Sutton Wick Plant Site - Details pursuant to condition 4 (Ecology survey) of planning permission no MW.0099/18. – Support if there is no increase in traffic on the B4016.

MW.0048/19, MW.0004/20, MW.0008/20 & MW.0067/2 Bridge Farm Quarry – An extraordinary meeting would be held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January to consider these applications.

Members noted the decisions on previous applications  
P22/V2501/HH 2 High Street, SC – Granted  
P22/V2600/HH 100 Milton Road, SC – Granted  
P22/V2592/HH 16 Appelford Road, SC – Granted

- 2023/007 Neighbourhood Plan  
The final documents had not yet been received from the consultants, therefore the submission to the District Council would be delayed.
- 2023/008 Reports  
(a) County & District Councillor  
Cllr Webber had advised he would be late.
- (b) Parish Councillors  
Cllrs O'Callaghan and Warwick had attended a meeting regarding the Didcot Travel Plan. At the meeting they highlighted that: the cyclepath to Didcot (SUTRANS 5) was poorly lit and uneven; cycles were frequently stolen from Didcot station; on road cycle lanes were narrow; there is a minimal bus service to the parish when compared with other villages.  
The new transport hub had no connection from Sutton Courtenay and whilst the business/science parks at Culham, Harwell and Milton were on the maps the villages had not previously been included. Members noted the need to ensure that the connecting routes were fully considered to ensure villages were not missed out.
- Cllr Warwick reported a burnt out domestic wheeled bin had been abandoned near 44 High Street. The Clerk would report the issue. **Clerk**
- Cllr Raworth reported bagged dog waste and litter being left on the footpaths around Sutton Pools. (Routes 373/1/10 & 183/2/30.) The Clerk would report the issue. Members asked for the matter of dog waste bins to be added to the next agenda. **Clerk**
- Cllr Warwick provided an update regarding The Abbey. New trustees are in post and have confirmed that The Abbey is not being marketed for sale. A short-term recovery plan is being put in place.
- Cllr O'Callaghan advised Members that Thames Water provide a website [www.thameswater.co.uk/edm-map](http://www.thameswater.co.uk/edm-map) which shows when storm overflow is being discharged into the Ginge Brook, which means there could be sewage in this section of the watercourse.  
Cllr O'Callaghan agreed to monitor the discharge into the Brook. **JO**  
Members asked the Clerk to include the information in the newsletter. **Clerk**
- (c) Clerk – no items to be reported.
- 2023/009 Consultations  
(a) HIF1 (R3.0138/21)  
**RESOLVED** that an objection would be raised against the HIF1 (R3.0138/21) application. The full objection is included at the end of these minutes.  
(b) Thames Water Resources Management Plan 2024  
**RESOLVED** that the matter would be deferred to the February meeting.
- 2023/010 Village Hall Allotments  
The signing of the tenancy agreement would be deferred to the next meeting. Members noted that the squatter had left and the plot needed to be cleared.

- 2023/011 Welcome to Sutton Courtenay signage  
A resident had made the Council aware that there is no Welcome sign on the approach to the village from Culham.  
Members requested the Clerk to ask that Oxfordshire County Council to install a sign. **Clerk**
- 2023/012 Recreation Ground (Recreational Amenities working party)  
(a) Opening events  
The new equipment had been officially opened on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022. Over 100 people attended the event and excellent feedback had been received.  
(b) New combined football / rugby goal posts  
The S106 funds had been received. The posts should be installed in late January or February.  
(c) Additional request  
Members asked that an item is added to the next agenda to consider a plaque to be created to thank all those involved in the project. **Clerk**

County & District Cllr Webber joined the meeting at 8.20pm.

**RESOLVED** that the meeting would return to item 2023/008(a) Reports - County & District Councillor

- 2023/008 Reports  
(a) County & District Councillor  
The County's budget for 2023-24 would include additional funding for buses, cycle ways and road improvements. Cllr Webber acknowledged the recent traffic issues and advised that the Drayton Road build out would be completed soon. Cllr Webber provided an update on the HIF 1 project. The District's budget was reasonably secure, it was now based in the Abingdon office.

**RESOLVED** that the meeting would continue with the agenda as published.

- 2023/013 Art Trail working party  
A detailed list of locations for benches and noticeboards had been circulated.  
**RESOLVED** that the preferred bench locations would be:  
Corner after the footbridge from Church St  
The Green by The Abbey  
Millennium Common x2  
Cemetery  
High Street or Lady Place  
Rear of church (PC land) x2  
Ginge Brook next to footbridge  
Brackstocks Way / Tyrrells Way x2  
Kelaart's Field

2023/013 Art Trail working party continued

**RESOLVED** that the preferred noticeboard locations would be:

- Kelaart's Field
- Corner by gates to Mill House
- Village green (map only)
- Village Hall (wall mounted)
- Bradstocks Way, near Cost Cutters bus stop
- Heritage Park
- Hari and Esha Newsagents (no map, one for community, one for council)
- Junction of Peep O'Day Lane and Drayton Road

Cllr O'Callaghan would update the list with the style of the benches. **JO**

2023/014 Finance

(a) Sutton Courtenay Village Hall's S106 application

**RESOLVED** that the Council would support the Sutton Courtenay Village Hall's S106 funding application to drawdown funds under P14/V1906/O (15V55).

(b) Internal auditor for 2022-23

**RESOLVED** that April Skies accounting would be appointed as the internal auditor for 2022-23.

(c) Cemetery fees for 2023-24 & Cemetery dog ban

Members reviewed the fees which were set in November 2020. The cost of maintaining the cemetery had increased, with regular inspections now taking place. The fees set in other Oxfordshire parishes had been taken into consideration when agreeing the new fees.

**RESOLVED** that the cemetery fees from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 would be:

Exclusive rights of burial – grave (single depth + 3 ashes) (40 years)	£250* #
Exclusive rights of burial – cremation plot (double space) (40 years)	£125* #
Interments (both burial and ashes)	£150* #
Permission to install a monument (to a max of 3ft including vase)	£125 #
Permission to install a memorial ashes plaque	£80 #
Additional inscriptions on monument or plaque	£70
Transfer of exclusive rights of burial	£70
Search in the register of burials (discretionary fee based on time taken, a simple search will be free of charge)	£50
Maintenance by Burial Authority of purchased plot	actual cost plus 10% admin fee
*The above charges are trebled for non-residents. A resident is classed as a person who has been on the electoral role for 15 years at any time during their lifetime.	
# These charges are free when the child who died was under the age of 18 or stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy. The Parish Council can reclaim the charge from the Children's Funeral Fund for England.	

**RESOLVED** that the regulation banning dogs from the cemetery would be amended to allow dogs on leads.

(d) Quarter 3 Bank reconciliation

**RESOLVED** that the quarter 3 bank reconciliation would be approved with balances of Unity £74,823.42, Santander 1 £56,591.88, Santander 2 £19,147.17 and Equals prepayment card/vouchers £100.

2023/014 Finance continued

(e) Santander account transfer

**RESOLVED** that £51,591.88 would be transferred from the Santander current account to the Santander savings account.

(f) Receipts and Payments report

**RESOLVED** that the following payments would be authorised:

<b>Receipts for December 2022</b>				
Interest on Santander savings account			interest	£8.10
Sutton Courtenay (National Power) Trust			Grant	£30,000.00
S106 P22/V2444/106 Goal posts			Grant	£5,931.00
Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment Grant for gates (invoiced in 21-22)			Grant	£2,228.00
<b>Total receipts</b>				<b>£38,167.10</b>
<b>Direct Debits and pre agreed payments for January 2023</b>				
Unity	Quarterly bank charge	M09	84	£18.00
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>£18.00</b>
<b>Cheque &amp; BACS Payments to be agreed in January 2023</b>				
ST Grounds Maintenance	Grounds maintenance - Nov	303850	71	£212.96
ASA Landscape Architects Ltd	Stage 5 construction	2763	72	£984.00
Oxfordshire Pension Fund	final contribution for H. Savery	Month 04	73	£31.74
Vision ICT	Web hosting & support Feb23 - Jan24	15792	74	£354.76
Gallagher Insurance	extra for new equipment	520116792	75	£524.16
Kompan Ltd	Play area part 3 (final) extras to follow	244160	76	£4,560.51
ASA Landscape Architects Ltd	Stage 5 construction (final) + Stage 6-7 50%	2769	77	£726.00
J Currie	Salary + Month 8 NI overpayment	Month 10	78	£907.96
J Currie	Mileage claim	Dec	80	£50.96
Shield Maintenance Ltd	Dog waste bins - December	6196	81	£20.80
Charlton Abbotts Forestry Ltd	Play area hedging (AFA grant)	19912	82	£5,346.00
Fair Fax PLC Equals card	Stationery & Phone	p1-14	83	£51.21
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>£13,771.06</b>
<b>Standing orders for January 2023</b>				
Oxfordshire Pension Fund	J Currie Pension	Month 10	79	£332.93
J Currie	Office Allowance	Month 10	mins	£26.00
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>£358.93</b>
<b>Total payments</b>				<b>£14,147.99</b>

(g) Councillors to authorise payments

**RESOLVED** that Cllrs Atkinson and Raworth would authorise payments via the online banking software.

**RA & HR**

(h) Reserves and budget reports

Members noted the reports.

Close of meeting

It was noted that an extraordinary meeting of the Council would be held at 7.15pm, on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and the next ordinary meeting of the Council would be held at 7.15pm, on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February. There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....

2023/009 (a) HIF1 (R3.0138/21) objection:

## **SUTTON COURTENAY PARISH COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO APPLICATION R3.0138/21**

Comment on the Notice of Submission of Further Information in relation to Application for Planning Permission Accompanied by an Environmental Statement (Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 as Amended)

Sutton Courtenay Parish Council (SCPC) is also represented in the submission<sup>1</sup> by the Neighbouring Parish Councils' Joint Committee (NPC-JC)<sup>2</sup> which has been produced by its consultant Mr Hopkins. This response seeks to reinforce aspects of that submission with particular reference to SCPC's concerns.

### **Inadequate Consultation**

There is a long history of Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) consultation with Sutton Courtenay Parish Council (SCPC) on the HIF1 project. To date key questions asked by SCPC have not received substantive responses.

A presentation was made to SCPC in July 2019 by Oxfordshire County Council's

Principal Infrastructure Planner. Subsequently, we welcomed the offer by OCC's HIF1 Transport Planning Team, in July 2020, to hold more detailed discussions. We feel extremely frustrated by the lack of substantive responses to queries raised by Sutton Courtenay Parish Council since 2019. This frustration has been heightened by the failure to address our issues in the additional information provided by OCC and its consultant pursuant to the Regulation 25 request.

We appreciate that it is important that local planning authorities identify and consider all relevant planning issues associated with a proposed development. Consultation is a requirement and part of the planning process. However, in this case the consultation feels like a box-ticking exercise. It ignores the fact that consultees may be able to offer particular insights or detailed information which is relevant to the consideration of the application and hence issues raised should be meaningfully addressed. In essence, therefore, SCPC does not feel that its concerns/comments/questions have been adequately addressed during the consultation process, including in the Regulation 25 Response.

### **Traffic Modelling**

A key issue for Sutton Courtenay, raised repeatedly over the last five years, remains a lack of modelling data in the public domain with no sight of validated traffic modelling assessments, that clearly demonstrate that having a junction between the B4016 (Appleford Road) with the proposed 'Didcot to Culham' Road, will reduce or indeed increase, the traffic impact through Sutton Courtenay.

Despite repeating this in Query B in the Regulation 25 request, it remains unanswered. Instead, the Regulation 25 response merely repeats the data originally provided in the application and

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<sup>1</sup> NPC-Joint Committee - Further objection 20.1.23 emailed to Emily Catcheside by Gregory O'Broin on 20/11/2023 at 2:10 PM

<sup>2</sup> Neighbouring Parish Council Joint Committee (NPC-JC) which represents five Parish Councils along the route, namely Appleford, Sutton Courtenay, Culham, Burcot and Clifton Hampden and Nuneham Courtenay.

makes no allowance for the induced traffic that this junction and the scheme as a whole will attract.

The Regulation 25 Traffic Assessment response is also notable for the number of times AECOM (on behalf of OCC) seeks refuge in an 'out of scope' response to our queries.

We are told that the scheme aims to 'future-proof the local infrastructure' provision and reduce congestion around, and through, the villages, whilst providing value for money. SCPC has been seeking clarification around many issues, including the efficacy of the transport data underpinning the scheme for several years. However, to date the evidence provided, has failed to demonstrate:

- that traffic (both through and local) in Sutton Courtenay and Appleford will be eased by the HIF1 improvements.
- the resilience and robustness of the proposed new road network against gridlock in Sutton Courtenay due to untoward traffic incidents and future (planned and unplanned) growth. Traffic incidents are not unknown on the A34 around the Harwell to Milton Interchange to Abingdon sections and result in grid lock of Sutton Courtenay. The inclusion of a junction on the B4016 will most certainly exacerbate the grid lock through Sutton Courtenay during A34 accident conditions. No test of reassignment has been conducted.
- that the proposed junction on the Appleford Road (B4016) will ease traffic flow through Sutton Courtenay even with the cumulative impact of 15,500 new homes (3,300 already built), that the HIF1 is supposed to support.

Despite frequent requests, OCC has ignored SCPC's recommendations on traffic mitigation measures, including: derating of the B4016 through Sutton Courtenay; termination of the Hanson and FCC routing agreements and traffic calming through the village. OCC has stated that traffic mitigation measures through the village are 'out of scope' of the current HF1 proposals.

The application fails also to demonstrate that increasing the road network connectivity, including the junction, will **not** result in Induced Traffic Demand (ITD) and "create" further congestion or create a rat run through Sutton Courtenay under anomalous conditions.

Alarming, the application acknowledges the congestion will return to current levels in eight to ten years. However, estimates, which include 'Induced Traffic', indicate that it could be as short as two years. Either timeframe raises questions over the scheme's benefits and value for money and whether the funds could not be better used with a more modern approach to sustainable traffic, which could be more effective in meeting the HIF1 aim of 'future proofing local infrastructure provision'. All that is not to mention the upheaval the construction of the current scheme will involve.

It should also be noted that the HIF1 road is an arterial development from the A34 to the B4025 close to Nuneham Courtenay and a few miles from M40. It will, therefore, bring significant commercial traffic to the area.

In addition to the above, we are concerned with the lack of comparative assessment of alternative options. Most have been arbitrarily dismissed with no proper assessment of alternatives carried out.

## **Conflict with Policies and other Issues**

As NPC-JC's comprehensive response<sup>3</sup> has been fully endorsed by Sutton Courtenay Parish Council, for the sake of brevity, we do not repeat the details here but note that the planning application conflicts with a significant number of planning and internal policies and despite the additional Regulation 25 information still remains deficient in that regard. In particular:

- Part-2 of OCC's newly adopted Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), contrary to the guidance set out in para 49 of the NPPF.
- Legally binding national targets for significant reductions in carbon emissions and carbon neutrality.
- Financial constraints may compromise Didcot Garden Town's emerging Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) as the design is pruned to meet budgetary constraints.

Other points of note are:

No Health Impact Assessment (HIA) has been submitted, despite the specific policy requirements of LTCP Policy 9.

Although a Climate Change Position Statement has now been submitted it fails to meet the requirements of LTCP Policy 27.

The HIF 1 scheme fails to comply with the Department for Transport's Transport Analysis Guidance (WebTAG) in its assessment of alternatives to a new road.

Air Quality – SCPC consider the claim of benign impact of the HIF1 road on local communities is unrealistic and has not been demonstrated. Levels of NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> in the Environmental Statement are based on computer predicted values and no evidence is provided that the values reflect the expected local distribution of pollutants for local communities. The area borders an active landfill and gravel works, with specific environmental conditions which have not been assessed.

The Noise Assessment has been arbitrary with no measurement of traffic noise on the Drayton Road in Sutton Courtenay. This a busy road with heavy volumes of traffic and failure to measure noise impact is a major omission.

## **Financial Viability**

Post-Covid, the original HIF1 budget is acknowledged to be a considerable underestimation and potentially any further costs largely falling on local taxpayers, which raises very serious doubts on whether the project can be delivered, particularly given current levels of inflation. Whether a scheme is viable and deliverable within the given budget is a material planning consideration and should lead to this project being withdrawn.

The County Council is already alert to this and concerned about the associated risks to its finances. However, it hopes to prevent escalating costs by reviewing the scheme and applying 'value engineering', which is likely to reduce support for more sustainable transport provisions such as cycleways, walkways and links to footpaths. The demand for increased funding is also likely to mean that only part of the scheme would be completed. Given that Sections B (Science Bridge), C

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<sup>3</sup> NPC-Joint Committee - Further objection 20.1.23 emailed to Emily Catcheside by Gregory O'Broin on 20/11/2023 at 2:10 PM



(Didcot to Culham) & D (Clifton Hamden bypass) are interrelated, the objectives claimed cannot be achieved.

## **Summary**

It is clear that the proposed scheme is unaffordable (poor value for money for an A road that will cost £33m per mile or £64m per mile for Section C) and fails to meet its basic aims of reducing congestion and future proofing the local infrastructure provision. SCPC therefore urges OCC to withdraw the current application and adopt a more modern approach to sustainable traffic, which would be more effective in meeting the HIF1 aims.

Finally, the Parish Council contends strongly, that any modifications, including belated attempts at 'value engineering' to a major planning application such as this, must be treated as a new application and the consultation process started afresh. It also reserves the right to comment further should more documents be submitted by the applicant before the planning committee consideration.