

## **Bix and Assendon Parish Council**

Clerk - Mrs. Jane Pryce, 56 Galsworthy Drive, Caversham Park Village, Reading, Berkshire RG4 6PP  
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### **The minutes of Bix and Assendon Parish Council meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

#### **Present:**

Ms. L. Thiesen (LT), Mr. R. Aitken (RA), Mr. W. Murdoch (WM), Mr. M. Beesley (MB) and Mrs. I. Chantry (IC)

Also present: Cllr. D. Bartholomew (DB) and Cllr. D. Nimmo-Smith (DNS) for part of the meeting

Mrs. J. Pryce (JOP - Clerk) and 5 members of the public.

#### **047/16 Apologies for absence**

Charles Bailey sent apologies

#### **048/16 Members declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None

#### **049/16 Confirmation of the minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

The minutes were declared true and accurate and signed by LT.

#### **050/16 Report from Cllr. D. Bartholomew**

##### **GENERAL OCC REPORT**

##### **PROPOSALS FOR UNITARY COUNCIL**

As previously reported, Oxfordshire's District Councils have appointed consultants PwC to prepare a report on the future of local government in Oxfordshire, and OCC has appointed consultants Grant Thornton to do the same. Ten workshops were held by OCC over the course of June to obtain input from parish councils about concerns they might have and opportunities they might relish with a change to Unitary local government. PwC were due to report for the Districts by the end of June, but are behind schedule. The Grant Thornton report for the County is still on schedule for July. All councils will then submit proposals to central government in the autumn, following a period of public consultation.

##### **COUNCIL CONTEMPLATES IDEA OF NEW PARK AND RIDES**

A study which could lead to up to five new park and ride sites being built to serve Oxfordshire has been published. OCC, through the Oxford Transport Strategy (OTS), part of Local Transport Plan 4, is proactively working to find solutions to the demands that are increasingly being placed on the road network by current and projected growth. In order to reduce congestion within the city and on the approaches to it, the OTS proposes a major expansion and reconfiguration of the Park & Ride system to intercept more car trips earlier in their journeys and further away from the city. In addition to new park and ride sites, the OTS proposes a network of "Rapid Transit" public transport routes to provide an uplift to transport connectivity in the city, including links between the proposed new sites and the city's "Eastern Arc" (broadly speaking the Headington/Cowley area). The report is the latest step in the process of

delivering solutions. The park and ride study has reviewed the locations proposed as part of the OTS, and made specific recommendations on where new park and ride sites should be located, following an assessment of the corridors. New sites are proposed at Eynsham, Cumnor, Lodge Hill, Sandford, and Oxford Airport, phased over the next 15 years.

### **INCREASING ADULT AND CHILD SOCIAL CARE COSTS**

Adult and child social care costs continue to increase as a proportion of OCC's expenditure, now accounting for nearly half the council's budget. OCC's obligation to assist with unaccompanied young asylum seekers has added further added pressure.

### **COUNCIL AMONG NATION'S BEST FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE**

Only a quarter of councils – including Oxfordshire – have passed Ofsted's new harder inspection test for children's social services, according to the watchdog's annual report. The remaining three-quarters were found to be 'inadequate' or 'requiring improvement'. The report ranks Oxfordshire among the best performing of 87 councils so far put to the test, with 64 of these failing to secure a 'good' rating. Oxfordshire is also one of just three areas where Ofsted and its partner inspectorates have completed the new Joint Target Area Inspection, which highly praised the council's work to tackle child sexual exploitation alongside its partner agencies.

### **GRASS VERGE CUTTING PROGRAMME 2016**

Financial pressures have forced OCC to reduce its overall verge mowing in recent years; just one general cut a year is now carried out across the whole of the road network. This includes cutting all visibility splays at junctions and cutting grass verges to a distance 1m back from the kerb. The general cut started on 20 June, although visibility splay issues have been dealt with earlier if they have been reported or observed by highway inspectors. More information can be found at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/grass-verge-cutting-programme-2016>

## **SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BIX & ASSENDON**

### **GRASS TRIANGLE AT THE A4130/B480 JUNCTION AT LOWER ASSENDON**

I chased Highways regarding the delayed sign repair and this was completed, but blocks of concrete were left in the grass. I chased Highways again regarding this and would be obliged if the PC could confirm the blocks have been removed.

A member of the public voiced concerns about the exits to the A4130 because the height of the verges now didn't allow for safe exit from Bix (north side). RA confirmed that the areas of concern had been identified to OCC. DB asked RA to inform him of any areas that were still not done by the end of the week. DB would put forward an earlier cutting schedule for next year.

A member of the public asked RA which sections were identified. RA responded with the following areas: Bix crossing of A4130 and the triangles at Lower and Middle Assendon. Grass cutting was being offered as a task that the parish council might take on and RA asked for a response to the email requesting the grass cutting list and grant for that from Keith Stenning. DB asked for the email to be re-send and himself to be copied on it. The clerk also confirmed she had asked for the same information and had not received it.

A request will be put out on BAG (email information) for landowners and households to check their hedges for overhang/encroachment onto roads and pavements. And cut back when necessary.

RA promised to drive around the parish to check overhang of vegetation in minor roads.

Concrete blocks that were left after the road sign was fixed on the Lower Assendon triangle/junction were reported because any grass cutting machine would be damaged by these. It was unknown if they were still present as the grass was so long and probably could only be cut by a strimmer now.

A BAG of 'fix-my-street' and fly tipping procedures was requested – JOP confirmed she would do this.

### **PROPOSED THIRD READING BRIDGE OVER THE THAMES**

A third 'Summit Meeting' was convened by MPs John Howell and Rob Wilson in June to review progress on the preparation of the *Strategic Outline Business Case* (SOBC) to secure funding to move the proposal forward. In addition to the MPs, the meeting was attended by various Berkshire councils and enterprise groups. OCC was represented by Cabinet Member David Nimmo Smith and me, the councillor for the most affected Division. The scheme supporters want to take 55,000 cars a day out of the centre of Reading. OCC is anticipating in the process to ensure any solution doesn't simply move Reading's traffic problems into south Oxfordshire. Initial traffic modelling work should be completed this month, with the SOBC following in the autumn.

### **051/16 Report from the SODC councillor.**

Unitary of the county council and district councils may be side-lined by central government due to Brexit. This will need a large number of civil servants to be involved in that.

Further to DB report about asylum seekers, SODC will be taking two Syria families.

Electric cars are to be encouraged by providing charging points. This will be installed in one of the district council-controlled car parks by the autumn and will allow two cars to be charged at the same time. There will be another at Wallingford.

Townlands – RA had been asked to join the Townlands Stakeholder Reference Group. This has been running for 6 months and RA will be attending his first meeting later this month. There has been a problem with communications as these meetings were being held in private and now every other one will be in public. OCGG committed to be listen to concerns. The X-ray machines were now working. Rapid access care unit in conjunction with social care was not yet operational as a manager has not been recruited. The top floor was still vacant. The care home is to be opened in December.

The Smith Centre – had the SODC been satisfied that it did not require planning approval? This information was not known but DNS would let RA know.

**052/16 The Queen’s 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2016 – a review**

Numbers were perceived as being down from last year because of the weather. This was difficult to judge as the configuration of fete had changed and there was no entry fee. Achieved the aim of the parish council led royal theme. Dog show in middle worked well. Over £200 in cake sells. Which was the same as last year. There were a lot of fairs and fetes during the two weeks leading up to it. Slightly more than £4,000 taken by the church. It was suggested that the booking of the village hall early for next year. The new layout was approved and the fete was deemed a success.

**053/16 Broadband**

A meeting is needed with BT and Better Broadband through Lee Wallis’s contacts. This would be to get costs for a cabinet and then grant applications can be made.

The Bix Common Field Holders have a meeting shortly and any surplus funds would be considered to be donated to help with Broadband. JOP to keep Gary Hall informed of progress.

If Broadband speeds are not good at Middle Assendon then an engineer needs to be called in to check wiring and do an audit.

**054/16 Bix & Assendon website**

Changes need to be made to the Bix & Assendon Grapevine website to allow the minutes to be viewed/downloaded by the general public as part of the directive entitled the ‘Transparency Code’. There is a grant to enable this change to be made. The parish council approved this and Chris Chantry to make urgent changes for minutes. There were suggestions of adding a link to Bix Manor and updating information about the ruins of St. James Church after the work that been done. Also some information about the Bix Common Field Holders was requested and the minutes of the village hall committee meeting to be put on the village hall website.

Chris Chantry told the members that the website is cheap and simple. To add minutes on another page could be done with a rolling 12 months’ worth of minutes in PDF format. If the other additions were done there may be problems with the internal structure of the website. Copy for any additional information and pictures would have to be supplied.

Chris to provide invoice for changes made for the minutes and JOP confirmed she would then apply for the grant.

**055/16 Allotment Report**

The water butt project has started with 3 butts positioned and the fourth and fifth for the plot holders to position. Plot 3 will be bypassed. Rabbit proofing plot 1 was completed and a gate for plot 4 has been fitted.

**056/16 Planning**

a) Applications received

The following planning application has been received:

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Date Registered</b>
<b>Location/Description</b>	<b>Target Decision date</b>

P16/S2166/HH

28th June 2016

**BIX AND ASSENDON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 4<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2016**

**Beech House, White Lane, Middle Assendon RG9 6BD** 23rd August 2016  
 Two storey rear and side extensions and internal alterations to include  
 new basement and double garage

**P16/S1989/FUL** 13 June 2016  
 Fawleyfields, Fawley RG9 6HH 8 August 2016  
 Erection of a detached dwelling with associated access, parking and landscaping.  
 BAPC – NO STRONG VIEWS 27 June 2016

**P16/S0744/FUL (Amendment)** 9 March 2016  
 Old Police House Section of A4130 4 May 2016  
 Running between Bix and Lowe Assendon Bix RG9 6DE  
 Erection of a detached dwelling on land adjacent to the Old Police House,  
 Bix with associated access/parking.  
 BAPC – NO STRONG VIEWS 26 June 2016  
 SODC – under consideration

**P16/S1714/HH** 20 May 2016  
 Oak House, Section of B480 through Lower Assendon, RG9 6AW 15 July 2016  
 Revision to level of permitted garage building in compliance with Flood Risk Recommendations  
 BAPC - NO STRONG VIEWS 21 June 2016  
 SODC – under consideration

**P16/S0773/HH** 14 March 2016  
 Handywater Cottage, Lower Assendon Oxon RG9 6AH  
 Detached ancillary building in curtilage with existing house with garages, studio,  
 storage below and accommodation in roof space. 16 May 2016  
 BAPC - NO STRONG VIEWS 18 April 2016  
 SODC – under consideration 9 May 2016

Change of use from agricultural to equestrian in respect to land north of Old Bix Road, Henley-on-Thames. WM mentioned that the site conditions only allowed private use but horse numbers have increased. Nine horses being the limit, seven at present. The enforcement officer has noted the reports and has written to see he will follow it up.

**b) Decisions**

**P16/S0795/HH** 10 March 2016  
 Mulberry House Old Bix Road Bix RG9 6BY  
 Construct stables, menage and new access track along eastern boundary of site  
 (Amended description and plan received on 25 April 2016).  
 BAPC – SHOULD BE REFUSED 10 May 2016  
 SODC – GRANTED 3 June 2016

WM informed the meeting that he was questioning this decision and it is still on-going.

**P16/S0749/FUL** 8 April 2016  
 Walnut Cottage, Middle Assendon RG9 6AX 3 June 2016  
 Erection of new 4-bedroom dwelling with attached garage. Demolition of existing  
 garage & office and erection of replacement garage to existing dwelling.  
 BAPC – NO STRONG VIEWS 18 April 2016  
 SODC – GRANTED 3 June 2016

**P16/S0701/HH** 8 April 2016  
 Carughas Farm, Old Bix Road, Lower Assendon RG9 6AG 3 June 2016  
 Erection of 1st floor side extension & a replacement timber framed 3-bay garage/carport.  
 BAPC – NO STRONG VIEWS 18 April 2016  
 SODC – GRANTED 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016

P16/S0888/FUL

Grey Lodge, Old Bix Road, Bix, Henley on Thames RG9 6BY	21 March 2016
Demolition of existing dwelling and studio and replacement with a new house.	16 May 2016
BAPC – NO STRONG VIEWS	18 April 2016
SODC – GRANTED	16 <sup>th</sup> \May 2016

**057/16 Correspondence**

There was still no reply to the phone calls and letters to HMRC about the payment made for the outstanding PAYE liabilities. Still unknown benefactor.

**058/16 Finance.**

a) Cheques for payment

Wages and office rent for clerk – Wages £403.00 and office rent £41.68 for months June and July, total = £444.68. Expenses for the allotment site was £315.77 and personal payment of OALC subscription (£133.07) as invoice went to the wrong address and never received (date of invoice was February and needed to be paid urgently).

Cheque of £1,500 to the Bix Parochial Church Council for loss of gate receipts at the village fete. This was to allow the fete to be free to all.

Cheque to MB for expenses incurred for the Bix church fete:

Raffle tickets	£ 90.00 (awaiting confirmation of VAT charged – business on holiday till 11 <sup>th</sup> July)
Generator	£119.23 (VAT £19.28)
Bouncy castle	£160.00 (no VAT)
<b>Total</b>	<b>£369.23</b>

Payment of £342.00 for internal audit to Jefferies Accountancy Services Ltd.

b) Payments received

Allotment payment of £18 for plot 3 was the last of the rents due.

Grant for the Queen’s birthday celebrations received £322.

VAT refund received £1,225.23

c) Insurance - JOP confirmed that the parish council has paid the first year premium on a 3 year deal with Zurich.

d) External Audit notices for the “elector’s right to view accounts” have been displayed on all noticeboards.

**059/16 Village Hall Report**

LT read a summary of the minutes (please find attached)

The Montessori contract had been renewed for 5 years and the rent would be reviewed in May 2017. The school had received an ‘Outstanding’ OFSTED report.

Two new members – Marjorie Hay and Lyn Stallworthy.

The Children’s Christmas party had small turnout but was a success. The event will not to be repeated this year. The committee had funded the purchase of a defibrillator and 8 pop-up gazeboes for the church fete. Possible new funding for Henley handi-bus.

Closing balance was £29,586.00. On-line booking system working well with an increase in bookings.

New handyman – Lewis Every.

Solar panels for the roof had been looked at but the condition of the roof is not good. It has been patched up. There is no insulation in the building so applying for a grant to have panels was not seen as cost effective. The renewing of the roof and insulation were deemed more important. It was agreed that it was inappropriate to take up the TOE2 grant towards an energy audit.

Next meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> September.

### **060/16 Footpath Report**

Maggie Templeman provide a report which was read out by JOP.

## **BIX & ASSENDON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – FOOTPATH REPORT JULY 2016**

### **Chiltern Society Walk Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August**

The next Chiltern Society walk in the parish is on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August, starting at 10 a.m. from the Rainbow pub in Middle Assendon. The route climbs up the ridge towards Stonor, descending into the village, up the other side to the edge of Maidensgrove Common, down through the Warburg Nature Reserve and back along the Oxfordshire Way to Middle Assendon. Hilly with some wonderful views. Allow 2.5 hours. All welcome, including dogs.

Please only park in the pub car park if you are staying for lunch – and please reserve your table in advance with Curly & Jean. Otherwise there is plenty of parking along The Green in Middle Assendon.

Further information from Maggie Templeman 01491 637942 or

[Maggie@swimmingwithlabradors.com](mailto:Maggie@swimmingwithlabradors.com)

### **Lambridge Woods**

After considerable clearance and work by Oxfordshire County Council, landowners and the Chiltern Society, a number of paths in Lambridge Wood have been put back on their definitive line – which in some cases is a long way from where we used to walk – and provides a completely new view of the woodland.

The Gingerbread gate on path B20 was suggested as urgently needing a stile as this had several months ago disappeared. JOP to action.

### **061/16 Any other business**

The Jubilee tree by the bench in front of the Bix village hall was added to the fixed asset register (this is an asset but of £0 value and on the inspection form it was assigned to MB with his agreement). JOP has contacted a gardener/landscape architect to assess the tree as there seems to be wind damage.

The completed Asset inspection form (for May 2016) was handed to JOP on 18<sup>th</sup> June. The clerk thanked the councillors.

An update to the Risk Assessment was proposed by JOP regarding checking of bank signatories were up-to-date and the bank would be made aware of changes in the positions held by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Also the internal auditor (Keith Jefferies) had suggested that the Risk Assessment updates be recorded not just in the minutes but on the document with a minute reference and date. This was agreed.

JOP informed the councillors that the Middle Assendon village gate was renovated and painted. The Lower Assendon village gates had been started.

Deer sign knocked over. JOP photographed the fallen sign for 'Fix my Street' and posted it on the OCC website. Email received to say it would be done but not when. IC to check.

Cllr. John Hill (Rotherfield Greys PC) asked that the use of HGVs delivering goods to Green March Farm and Bix Manor to inform their delivery drivers not to use the single track lane from Broad Platt, as this is completely unsuitable. JOP to action.

Parking of a trailer at Lower Assendon after delivering to the Orchard Dene Nursery left just before the junction to the A4130 and deemed a hazard. A letter was suggested to be sent to the nursery to ask them to inform their delivery vehicles not to do this. JOP to action

Mrs. S. Tomlins reported that hedges from the Fox to the junction of Rectory Lane are making the pavement impassable. JOP to action. The verges of Bix and Broad Platt are also too high to safely enter the dual-carriageway. This had been brought up earlier in the meeting.

### **Time set aside for the Public**

**Next Meeting – Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at 7.30pm**

**The meeting ended at 9.07 pm**