

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 & Assendon Parish Council meeting held on 4th November 2019.

Parish Councillors present:

Ms. Lisbeth Thiesen, Mrs. Ina Chantry, Mr. Robert Walmsley and Mr. William Murdoch.

Oxfordshire County Councillor David Bartholomew
South Oxfordshire District Councillors: Jo Robb

Also present: Mrs. Jane Pryce (Clerk) and 9 members of the public

Key: BAG – Bix & Assendon Grapevine alert email service to residents
CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy
OALC – Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
FMS – Fix My Street – website to report highway problems

079/19 Apologies for absence

None

080/19 Members declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None

081/19 Confirmation of the minutes on the 2nd September 2019

The minutes were declared true and accurate and signed by the chairman.

082/19 OCC Report from Cllr. D. Bartholomew

The full report can be found attached to the minutes and on the website.

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BIX & ASSENDON

THIRD READING BRIDGE

I successfully moved a motion in relation to this matter at OCC Full Council on Tuesday 10th September and SODC Full Council on Thursday 10th October. As a consequence, the Leaders of both councils have written to council leaders at Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell, plus MPs John Howell, John Redwood, Matt Rodda and Theresa May, stating that:

- a) In the context of the Climate Emergency a car-based solution to a car-based problem that would pour thousands of cars and HGVs into Oxfordshire is totally inappropriate and should a new bridge be built it should be restricted to public transport, cyclists and pedestrians;
- b) Notwithstanding the above, if a car-based solution is pursued, the bridge and necessary mitigation measures (i.e. improvements to the Oxfordshire road network) must not be considered as two separate projects, but as one project so that the benefits, disadvantages and costs of the scheme can be holistically assessed.

A 'Summit Meeting' of MPs, leaders, other key councillors (including me) and officers, met on Friday 18th October to review the project. It was revealed at the meeting that the Berkshire parties have submitted a bid to Government for £800,000 to fund the Outline Business Case.

Despite my best efforts, the project protagonists continue to deflect questions about mitigation measures saying this will be dealt with via 'traffic calming' and is for discussion at a later date. I have stated that such vague assertions are not acceptable from Oxfordshire's perspective.

There will be another 'Summit Meeting' in March, meanwhile officers from the various authorities will meet to suggest next steps.

VEHICLE ACTIVATED SPEED SIGNS

Having been assured by the clerk that there has been local consultation with favourable results, I have agreed to contribute 2 x £500 towards the cost of two VAS devices. The clerk needs to complete the application form and submit it to the Councillor Priority Fund email address for approval.

David Bartholomew was thanked for this.

BOX IN LOWER ASSENDON LAYBY

At the last meeting I was asked to identify a box at the above location. Highways officers later confirmed it was a traffic counting monitor.

DOBSONS LANE, LOWER ASSENDON

Stage I of the remedial work was completed at the end of February. Stage II of the works was completed in September. I have received emails from residents pleased with the improvements, although there remains an issue with some uncollected debris which I am investigating.

It was requested that the 'chips flying' signs should be removed. The clerk was requested to FMS this.

SPEED LIMITS ON FAIRMILE & BIX DUALS

I have received emails from residents in connection with this. I advised that the Fairmile speed limit changes are part of a Henley Town Council initiative and I have not been involved in the project. With regard for a reduction in speed limit on the Bix Duals, I advised this would be in conflict with national guidelines. Additionally, I mentioned that speeding bikers were a matter for the police and not the county council.

It was suggested that a BAG go out to encourage reporting of bikers on 101.

As this was Henley Town Council area, the parish council's representative on the 'Transport Strategy' meeting on 2nd December. And Jackie Walker will be asked.

White Lane issues. David Bartholomew asked for the FMS numbers for these problems to be emailed to him. The clerk would do so. The numbers are 1770645 (soil built up restricting road width) and 7740192 (missing give way sign and overgrown hedge near junction).

A member of the public asked for the policies that were going to be adopted in the Climate Emergency plan. Would David Bartholomew bring details next meeting? Most of the detail will be the OCC report and will be on the bixandassendon.org.uk website.

Questions were asked about the 3rd Reading Bridge traffic modelling.

083/19 SODC Report

SODC councillor Jo Robb

Emerging Local Plan 2034

Following the Secretary of State's intervention on 9 October, Council was unable to take a decision on the Local Plan 2034 at the Full Council meeting on 10 October. Accordingly, the Local Plan 2034 is now in abeyance and carries no weight in planning decisions.

Officers from SODC will be meeting with officers from MHCLG tomorrow (Wednesday 23 October) to discuss next steps.

Last week, OCC signed off on the £218m Housing Infrastructure Fund money, funds that are earmarked for road upgrades in the Didcot area. The decision on whether to release the funds is now with Homes England.

Climate Emergency

The previous Council administration declared a climate emergency in April. Following this, the new administration established a cross-party Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, chaired by Cllr Sue Roberts, with the aim of devising and implementing an ambitious and wide-ranging response to this crisis.

Council unanimously approved a motion to aim to reduce the Council's own carbon emissions to net zero by 2025 and the District's emissions to net zero by 2030.

Officers, working alongside members of the CEAC, are in the process of compiling a comprehensive and ambitious work programme detailing areas for change in seven broad categories:

- Council business
- Partnership
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Transport
- Biodiversity
- Behaviour change

A key area of focus in point 7 is engaging with community groups and engaging stakeholders in the decision-making process. Parish Councils will be a central part of this consultative process.

Grants - update

The Councillor Grant Scheme has opened again. Under the scheme, each Councillor has a budget of £5,000 to award to projects or services that will benefit our communities.

Councillors can award between £250 and £5000 to a project - examples might include new play equipment, installation of solar panels or accessibility improvements for a community facility.

Unfortunately, funding allocation is now gone. Capital Grants scheme are starting. This would closing on 2nd December but may change due to the election. However, if you have a project you would like help with financing, the Grants officers can advise on alternative sources of money.

Apply through the website: www.southoxon.gov.uk/grants

Bicycle track project, that the clerk has been looking into, was mentioned. The clerk informed council and Jo Robb that work on cutting back foliage on this track/path had started.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping consultation.

The District council is gearing up to build its own social housing. There is a chronic shortage of the social housing. The social housing register has 2,500 families and individuals on it.

A discussion about the old dump site where a portion has allotments. The clerk has been phoned that day to clarify the ownership of this land. The clerk confirmed there was no agreement between SODC and the parish council. The allotment holders and their tenancy agreements were discussed and the current situation with weed control (eg. Japanese Knotweed and Ragwort).

SODC now confirm it is theirs and would like to a site visit in future and firm up use of the land with the parish council. The clerk would wait for more information and a date for this visit.

084/19 Clerk's Report

The fire brigade gave a talk on the 16th October at Bix village hall. Four people turned up and one was the clerk. The talk was well received and had useful tips about how fires can start and advice on putting them out. One to one home visits were also available and one was made at the talk. It was suggested that another talk be given and stress the talk was free and maybe include a police talk.

Armistice tree (a silver birch) is missing and the sign. I have asked around but nothing had been seen. The clerk was asked to continue to pursue this as it is likely it was mowed over.

I had a meeting with PCSO Janice Smith and I asked for speed data for Bix as OCC Highways are asking for this for the flashing speed sign. This data was already available for Lower and Middle Assendon. I decided that it would be quicker to obtain the data from the police than wait (and pay) for speed/volume devices to be installed and for the data report after.

The new bus shelter at Bix had been vandalised and is scheduled to be mended by the manufacturer. They are kindly doing the old bus shelter with the same damage (Perspex panels pushed out). The quote was £132 (VAT £22.00) cheaper than the insurance excess payment of £250. This was agreed.

A new bin has been requested for the new bus shelter. On 31st October. The clerk had no reply to the request. Phone call made and seems unless we can prove a need this will not be done. This proof will be gathered.

Homelessness survey. Unfortunately this is only the clerk allowed to submit responses. The Homeless and Rough Sleeping consultation was completed by accident.

085/19 Speed Awareness measures

It was decided by council to purchase 3 flashing speed signs (this shows the speed limit). One would be installed in each village. Bix village has no current speed data (please see

above) so this may delay installation. Exact locations are still to be considered by OCC Highways. Once a complete quote is obtained for 3 locations then the OCC grant of £1,000 can be applied for/paperwork filled out.

Also the quote for a SID machine was decided on from MessageMaker and a SODC grant request of £2,400 (the full amount is unlikely to be given) was applied for.

Permission to purchase all the above? And apply for OCC grant – this was agreed.

The speed data summary was disagreed with but it was compared with 2012 data and clarity of the speed limit then was needed.

The clerk was asked to contact a Highways officer to get advice of the best ways to calm/flow traffic.

A flashing deer sign was requested for the deer track crossing between Bix and Nettlebed. The clerk would look into this and maybe joint funding with Nettlebed parish council.

It was suggested to have a speed/volume device put in Bix on a summer bank holiday weekend for monitoring of motorbike speeds.

086/19 Planning

a) Applications Received

P19/S3355/HH

Hamilton House Middle Assendon, Henley-On-Thames RG9 6AS

Extension and remodelling of existing house. Demolition of existing two storey flat roof rear extension and conservatory, construction of new two storey and single storey rear extensions. BAPC response required by 21st November 2019

P19/S3204/HH

Greenmarsh Cottage, Road running South West From Junction With Track Leading To Bix RG9 4RY

Erection of 2-storey side and rear extensions.

BAPC response required by 8th November 2019

b) BAPC Recommendations

P19/S2047/HH

Lambridge Wood Farm, Bix RG9 4RZ

Roof conversion and extension to the Old Stables. Rear extension to existing garage to provide additional storage.

BAPC – NO OBJECTIONS

SODC Target Decision Date: 22nd August 2019

P19/S1548/FUL

Grey Lodge, Old Bix Road, Bix RG9 6BY

Demolition of existing dwelling and studio and replacement with a new house.

BAPC - NO OBJECTIONS

SODC Target Decision Date: 24th July 2019

c) SODC Decisions

P19/S2662/FUL

The Smith Centre, Fairmile, Henley RG9 6AB

Proposed creation of new openings and external alterations to Duke of York building, Smith building, Gundersen building, Bix building, Holdsworth building and Skipper building. Demolition of existing link building between Holdsworth and Skipper buildings and demolition of external stair case and rear platform at ground floor level at Gundersen building.

BAPC response required by 1.10.19

SODC GRANTED

The clerk apologises as this application was first for information only and then not and the response deadline was missed.

William Murdoch apologised to SODC planning but he was in ill health.

P19/S1539/HH

Oak House, Section of B480 through Lower Assendon, LA RG9 6AW

Erection of single storey side extension.

BAPC - NO OBJECTIONS

SODC GRANTED

P19/S2379/HH

Crossleys, Old Bix Road, Bix RG9 6BY

Single-storey extension to existing garage with roof terrace over

BAPC - NO OBJECTIONS

SODC GRANTED

P19/S1117/HH

Lower Assendon Farm, Old Bix Road, Lower Assendon RG9 6AG

Proposed demolition of existing outbuildings and stabling, proposed construction of new stabling

BAPC - NO OBJECTIONS

SODC GRANTED

P19/S1774/FUL

Handywater Cottage, LA RG9 6AH

Erection of two outbuildings and change of use of the land from a dwelling to a mixed use of dwelling house and bed and breakfast establishment (retrospective).

BAPC - NO OBJECTIONS

SODC GRANTED

Registration of an existing (but unnamed) address: The Dairy Unit, Merrimoles Farm, Bix RG9 4RT

087/19 Allotment Report

The site was inspected on 18th September with SODC councillor Jo Robb. Another site visit on 29th October. Ina had just put in a row of onions.

Some fly tipping was discovered with a great deal of personal information. It was reported to SODC. An officer phoned to obtain gate code to inspect this. The pile has now been set alight and nothing remains. The clerk has retained one file and SODC officer has also taken down details from the files. This is mentioned as a warning. A small amount of research would show who this rubbish belongs to and the fine is large.

088/19 Footpath Report

Jane Aitken – Chiltern Society representative for the parish has no report for this meeting.

089/19 Correspondence

Christmas trees – area for residents to leave their trees for recycling. No area could be thought of at present. This is for composting for the trees. The usual recycling by leaving the tree (cut to less than 6ft) was still valid but not for composting. The council would decide on an area when more information about dates of pickup was obtained for next year.

Bix Parochial Church Council thanks for £500.

SSAFA – the Armed Forces charity. Announcement of 75 years VE day on 8-10th May 2020. And request for donation. The information will be looked into.

Thames Valley Air Ambulance – thank you for donation of £100.

Sue Ryder – thank you for donation of £100.

Riparian owners etc should be reminded to ensure their sections of the Assendon Spring ditch is cleared ready for the winter. Permission of put out on BAG was granted.

A BAG for notification of firework displays was put out and well received by residents.

090/19 Finance

a) Cheques for payment

Clerk's wages and office rent for October/November £635.91 and pc expenses Doteasy website domain renewal £12.82.and £151.20 for Constant Contact (BAG).

Nettlebed & District Good Neighbour scheme – COMET bus annual payment £494.00.

Henley Town Council – grass cutting at Lower Assendon triangle £360 (VAT £60).

Paul Wyatt – grass cutting and bollard at Dobson's Lane – total £60.

Donations/Subscriptions

None

b) Payments received

Interest: £0

Second half of precept £3,590.50

But the first half of precept was £159 less than asked for and no reply to request for reason for this – emailed again 27.10.2109.

SODC grant of £1,000 for bus shelter.

Bank balance £ 21,241.97

091/19 Community Infrastructure Levy

Total CIL 2019/20 payments = £9,246.86

Please see the Speed Awareness agenda item on the purchase of 3 flashing speed signs and a SID device.

092/19 Village Hall Report

Possible purchase of new gazebos (for village fete and use by the village hall) was missed off the last agenda but will be included in the next meeting 12th November.

The Montessori school and bookings for the hall are going well. More work on the potholes in the car park has been carried out. Mail box has been fitted and now the village hall has a post code which is RG9 6BS.

Funds built up were discussed – roof survey to check its condition and solar panels has been planned.

093/19 Casual vacancy for a councillor

A member of the public was interested in becoming a councillor and would make the decision at the next parish council meeting.

Lisbeth Thiesen made the council aware that she would be stepping down as chairman and a councillor from May 2020.

Training Available - parish council code of conduct training sessions

Vale of White Horse

Tuesday 19th November 2019 2.00pm-3.30pm

The Beacon, Portway, Wantage, Oxon OX12 9BX

Thursday 21st November 2019 5.00pm-6.30pm

The Beacon, Portway, Wantage, Oxon OX12 9BX

South Oxfordshire

Thursday 7th November 2019 5.00pm-6.30pm

South and Vale District Council, 135 Eastern Drive, Milton Park, Milton, Oxon OX14 4SB

And .. all councillors:

New courses 2020

Planning - West Oxfordshire DC 24th February.

NEW Website Accessibility – 22nd January am, Oxford

Parish Meetings - 30th January am 2020, West Oxfordshire DC

Preparing for Audit – 5th February am 2020, Begbroke Science Park

Understanding Internal Audit – 5th February pm 2020, Begbroke Science Park

Charity law – 12th February 2020, full day, Didcot

094/19 Any other business

As the flashing speed sign questionnaire had just come out, it was decided to wait to put out the BAG questionnaire to raise awareness of the parish council and may interest someone to become a councillor. An insert into the Link was decided for non-computer involvement. This questionnaire/survey would be issued a week before the end of February. The clerk would get 190 copies copied at Higgs.

An updated USB stick backup of council business was given to the chairman and swapped for the previous update. This forms an offsite backup.

January 13th 2020 meeting is to request precept amount which is decided via the budget 2020/21. Any costings need to be considered before this meeting. Please submit suggestions to council.

095/19 Meeting dates 2020

Please note that the January meeting is the 13th as the first Monday (6th) in the month, the village hall was already booked.

13th January 2020
2nd March 2020
4th May 2020
6th July 2020
7th September 2020
2nd November 2020

All meetings at 7.30pm on a Monday

096/19 Public Comments

None

All on Monday at 7.30pm

Next Meeting – Monday 6th January 2020 at 7.30pm.
The meeting ended at 9.25 pm