

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 Annual (Electors) Bix and Assendon Parish Council meeting held on 9th May 2016

Present:

Ms. L. Thiesen (LT), Mr. R. Aitken (RA) and Mrs. I. Chantry (IC)
Also present: Cllr. D. Bartholomew and Cllr. D. Nimmo-Smith for part of the meeting
Mrs. J. Pryce (JOP - Clerk), Chris Chantry and 2 members of the public.

032/16 Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman

LT was proposed as chairman by IC and seconded by RA, RA was proposed as vice-chairman by LT and seconded by IC.

033/16 Apologies for absence

Mr. M. Beesley (MB) and Mr. W. Murdoch (WM) sent apologies

034/16 Members declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None

035/16 Confirmation of the minutes of 7th March 2016

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

036/16 Report from Cllr. D. Bartholomew

PROPOSALS FOR UNITARY COUNCIL

Without consulting the public or OCC, on Thursday 25th February a surprise announcement was made by Oxfordshire's District Councils and Oxford City Council. It called for the abolition of OCC and the establishment of four district quasi-unitary councils. In addition, the announcement called for the creation of an unelected quango to be known as a 'Combined Authority' to take on difficult areas of responsibility currently with OCC, such as social care and major road projects. The Districts put out a tender to consultants to produce a report to support their proposals. Their brief to consultants initially stated: "The District Councils' view is that a single county-wide unitary authority is not the right solution for Oxfordshire". It went on to say that any finding suggesting a single county-wide unitary is best would not be approved. The OCC view was that a single county-wide unitary authority was an option that should be considered, and stated that it would therefore be forced to commission a separate report. As a result of OCC and public pressure, District Council leaders eventually agreed to commission a report covering all the options. However, the protocol relating to the commissioning and management of the report could not be agreed between OCC and Districts, so the net result is that two separate reports costing in excess of £100,000 each will proceed. Initial findings will be available June/July with public consultations to follow. It is likely the Secretary of State will rule on the reports in the autumn.

RA had read the letter that the districts had send with their view on Unitary. Why had OCC not issued a statement about their view on the Unitary bid? A statement will be issued when the position is clearer.

OXFORDSHIRE TOGETHER - HIGHWAY SERVICES NEXT STEPS

Since the launch of the Oxfordshire Together proposals in September 2015, around 140 town and parish councils have expressed an interest in taking on delivery of some local highway services that the council will no longer be able to deliver in the future, or will only deliver to the statutory minimum standard. OCC is now inviting all interested town and parish councils to sign the necessary agreements that will allow the council to formally transfer the undertaking of highway services under the Oxfordshire Together proposals to town and parish councils that wish to take them on. More information on Oxfordshire Together and the approach and services which can be taken on by Towns and Parishes can be found at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshiretogether and any questions or comments should be sent to localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk

COUNTY'S ADOPTION WAITING TIMES AMONG NATION'S SHORTEST

Children are waiting less time to be adopted in Oxfordshire than almost anywhere else in the country, latest Government figures show. The council is rated among the best performing authorities on three key measures linked to the time taken for children in care to move in with adoptive families. Between 2012 and 2015, 73 per cent of Oxfordshire children waited less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family - the third highest figure out of 149 authorities across the country. The council was sixth best for the average time taken between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, and recorded the 15th shortest average time between receiving court authority to place a child and matching them with a family.

PIONEERING PROJECT BRINGS SERVICES CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE WHO USE THEM

People in Oxfordshire with learning disabilities have taken a lead role in the commissioning of services that will provide them with care and support. The project run by OCC involved about 60 people with learning disabilities and members of their families in the appointment of five new service providers to run contracts worth a total £15million. Service users and/or a member of their families sat on the evaluation panels which examined all the bids to provide 18 supported living services before deciding on the five successful providers. This means that on April 1,2016 when the contracts came into force the appointment of the new providers will have been heavily influenced by some of the people who will use them.

TAXI SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

All taxi drivers and passenger assistants transporting children and vulnerable adults as part of OCC contracts are now required to have completed safeguarding training. This training also covers bus and coach drivers. The aim of the training is to raise the bar for the safety of all passengers – and empower drivers to play a key role in protecting those in their care. Like other professionals who come into regular contact with children – including those with complex care needs – OCC wants to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge they need to feel confident in that environment and to ensure the safety of all passengers in their care.

LATEST INFORMATION ON CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IN OXFORDSHIRE

An updated version of the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership's Strategic Intelligence Assessment has been published. The Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA) provides the latest information on crime and community safety in Oxfordshire. It aids understanding of emerging trends and patterns in crime and disorder, and it explores future threats and opportunities. The SIA is part of the evidence base which supports community safety partners to plan and target their work. It is a good first port of call for anyone wanting to know about crime and community safety in Oxfordshire. The headline long-term trend shows that crime in Oxfordshire has fallen by 33% over the past eight years. The full report and an executive summary can be seen via this link:

<http://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/community-safety-0>

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BIX & ASSENDON

BIX DUALS KERBING

I am advised the loose setts will be repaired/replaced this week over a three-day period.

BIX DUALS HEDGING

The County team has visited the site and said it cannot find the dead hedging and I have requested more details from the PC.

PLANNING APPLICATION P16/S0795/HH - MULBERRY HOUSE, OLD BIX ROAD, BIX

I asked the Highways officer to revisit the site. He deemed the access to be 'existing' and said that Highways had therefore to deal with the application from this perspective.

A member of the public raised concerns about the access being used to join the dual carriageway. As this entrance is historic there is little that can be done.

037/16 Report from the SODC councillor.

Unitary councils. The district view of this is that there will be change. County and districts might disappear and a single unitary authority will take over or smaller unitary entities. Services will still be provided as present. When the Unitary report is complete it will go to Secretary of State in the autumn after a short period of consultation.

Congratulations were given to the election of the chairman and vice-chairman.

Housing delivery in the Local Plan has risen from 12,000 to 15,000 for the county. The districts to take additional housing not Oxford City brownfield sites as they may still be needed for businesses. Henley has done its Neighbourhood Plan and will need 450 additional houses. The Smith Centre - change of use from commercial to residential – if any changes to the exterior structure or additions then this will be subject to planning law.

A Corporate Plan has been completed and this gives the next 3 years to be judged on performance. If the district is still there.

038/16 The Queen's 90th Birthday celebrations Saturday 18th June 2016

Costing for the Queen's birthday celebration were provided by MB which is an estimated cost of £430. There is an SODC grant of £322 for this to be applied for. JOP had filled out the grant application which was approved by the parish council and signed by LB and RA.

039/16 Broadband

MB emailed a report (see below) on developments in Broadband for Bix and Middle Assendon.

“With the approval of the Parish Council, a working party has been convened to push for progress in providing Super Fast Broadband (SFBB) for the parts of the Parish unable to benefit from the recently installed SFBB box just outside the Smiths Centre.

Comprised of Matthew Beesley (representing the Parish Council), Lee Wallis, Chris Chantry, Steve Wray and Gary Leach, this working party met (with apologies from Gary Leach) on Wednesday 6th April.

Building on the substantive work already undertaken by both Chris Chantry and Lee Wallis, Steve Wray also provided the group with some very detailed research that detailed the scope of the current situation. In short, as we know, Lower Assendon has seen a substantial pick up in available download speeds as a result of the switch-on of the new SFBB box by the Smiths Centre (for those that sign up for higher speeds with their chosen provider), but it has made no difference at all to parts of Middle Assendon or Bix, in its entirety.

From a technological perspective, a number of options were discussed, were we as a Parish to choose to “go it alone”. These included Cellular, Radio (repeaters), Satellite, ISP (FTTP), BT (FTTC) and BiQuad Antenna. In terms of cost, practicality and an understanding of the proven technology, it was concluded that the only real answer is to pursue the BT (FTTC or Fibre To The Cabinet) solution. This is what we have come all to know as SFBB.

The estimated cost of this solution would be c. £60-70,000 as we would require two additional “boxes” for Middle Assendon and Bix respectively. We have been advised

that the fully installed cost of each box is about £30,000. There would be a monthly cost per subscriber of £25-30 as is currently the case for SFBB customers in Lower Assendon. The clear advantage of this solution as opposed to some of the others discussed and considered above is that the boxes would utilise the existing BT Openreach infrastructure and once installed, be managed by them. It is also the only solution that would be eligible for funding from Better Broadband for Oxfordshire.

There remains some prospect of persuading the authorities of our pressing needs as a Parish, but in reality given the current scope of the planning/consultation work, we are at best several years away from any conclusion/implementation of this work.

“Going it alone”, could involve us building a consortium to part fund the work detailed above with possible support from one or more of the local bodies set up to roll out broadband both nationally and across Oxfordshire. As a body of investors comprised of perhaps local residents, local businesses and potentially including the Parish Council, we would then partially own the infrastructure that was installed with BT Openreach. Beyond the covering of a minimum level of costs associated with managing this infrastructure, this consortium of investors would then be liable to receive regular income from those paying to access SFBB. In short, if a sufficient number of residents sign up for SFBB once the new boxes are in place, beyond a to-be-determined threshold, there is every prospect of earning an attractive return on any investment made. In addition of course, there would be the benefit of SFBB speeds of towards 76mps for the technologically stranded Middle Assendon and Bix residents.

Next steps are for the working party to make further representations to the local BT Openreach representatives and Better Broadband for Oxfordshire to more fully firm-up costs and better assess therefore both how much up-front investment would be needed by any consortium and how attractive the return profile would be to (attract non-philanthropic local resident) investors.”

Matthew Beesley
May 2016

Chris Chantry gave a full report of the current status. Lee Wallis sent his apologies that he could not attend. There had been a group meeting with BT and Better Broadband for Oxfordshire. After many options had been considered, it was deemed the initial implementation, and for future proofing, was to replicate the BT cabinet/connections made for Lower Assendon to Bix and Lower Assendon. The figures of £60,000 – £70,000 is only an estimate. Grants from Better Broadband for Oxfordshire could be given if the community and the parish council also contribute and maybe an investment group. The conclusion of the parish council was that costing needs to be firmed up after the survey before a decision on funding could be made.

040/16 Allotment Report

Plot 6 has been vacated and has been taken on by a parishioner on the waiting list.

041/16 Planning

a) Applications received

P16/S0795/HH Mulberry House. This application is due for a response by 12 noon 10th May (tomorrow). The clerk was asked to submit a REFUSED with comments response.

The following planning application has been received:

Reference Location/Description	Date Registered Target Decision date
<p>P16/S0795/HH 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 now due 10 May 2016 See above.</p>	<p>10 March 2016 date not updated for amended app</p>
<p>P16/S1197/PDO The Smith Centre, Fairmile, Henely Change of use from office to residential Plans are available from the clerk for residents directly affected only</p>	
<p>P16/S0749/FUL Walnut Cottage, Middle Assendon RG9 6AX 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 SODC – under consideration</p>	<p>8 April 2016 3 June 2016 18 April 2016</p>
<p>P16/S0701/HH Carughas Farm, Old Bix Road, Lower Assendon RG9 6AG Erection of 1st floor side extension & a replacement timber framed 3-bay garage/carport. BAPC – NO STRONG VIEWS</p>	<p>8 April 2016 3 June 2016 18 April 2016</p>
<p>P16/S0888/FUL Grey Lodge, Old Bix Road, Bix, Henley on Thames RG9 6BY Demolition of existing dwelling and studio and replacement with a new house. BAPC – NO STRONG VIEWS SODC – under consideration</p>	<p>21 March 2016 16 May 2016 18 April 2016</p>
<p>P16/S0773/HH 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. BAPC - NO STRONG VIEWS SODC – Under consideration</p>	<p>14 March 2016 16 May 2016 18 April 2016</p>
<p>P16/S0744/FUL Old Police House Section of A4130 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 SODC – under consideration</p>	<p>9 March 2016 4 May 2016 31 May 2016</p>
<p>b) Decisions</p> <p>P16/S0472/HH Cob Cottage, Old Bix Road, LA</p>	<p>25 February 2016</p>

Front porch and single storey side and rear extension	22 March 2016
BAPC NO STRONG VIEWS	21 March 2016
SODC GRANTED	21 April 2016
P16/S0313/LB & P16/S0312/HH	8 February 2016
The Manor House, Bix	8 March 2016
Alternation and extension at ground floor level on the north side of the house.	
BAPC response 'NO STRONG VIEWS'	6 March 2016
SODC GRANTED	4 April 2016
P15/S4021/HH & P15/S4020/HH	
Campions, Henley Park RG9 6HY	13 January 2016
New Timber frame double garage and workshop loft room over	9 March 2016
BAPC response 'NO STRONG VIEWS'	21 February 2016
SODC GRANTED	10 March 2016
P15/S4357/FUL	
Orchard House, Bix, HENLEY-ON-THAMES RG9 6DB	23 December 2015
Existing detached residential house to be converted to two semi-detached residential houses	17 February 2016
BAPC response 'NO STRONG VIEWS'	21 March 2016
SODC decision GRANTED	21 April 2016

042/16 Correspondence

HMRC telephoned the clerk to confirm a payment had been made earlier in the year and the total outstanding amounts due now was £57.42 down from £490. JOP requested who had made this payment and also wrote to ask for this information with the payment above. No response has been received. JOP was asked to pursue this, as clarify was required as whom had made the payment that had reduced the claim.

Letter of thanks from The Chilterns Conservation Board for the donation of £50.00.

043/16 Finance.

a) Cheques for payment

Wages and office rent – Wages £402.00 and office rent £41.68 for months April and May, total = £444.68.

Cheque of £18 for A. Hay refund for duplicate payment of allotment rental.

b) Payments received

The first half of the Precept from SODC for £3,500 was paid on 7th April 2016.

Allotment payments – most had been made – only 2 remaining – JOP to pursue the remaining payments.

c) **Insurance quotes.**

JOP confirmed that all current information of wages and assets had been passed to the insurance companies. The quotes had been checked and amended when necessary. The parish council insurance is due on the 1st June 2016.

Zurich £289.19 (3 year deal). The village hall insurance may be incorporated at a later date.

AON £507.40

Zurich 3 year deal was chosen and agreed by the parish council members.

d) End of Year (2015/16) approved and signed. External Audit section 1 (the financial statements were read out and agreed) and Section 2 accounts were approved and signed. The Internal Audit end of year accounts were approved to start the process.

044/16 Village Hall Report

Stephanie Tomlins had given a full report at the APM in March. There was not much to add at present. The village hall committee meeting is tomorrow. Montesseri School is going well with 19 children and the renewal of the lease for that is due in August. The funds are £33,000 surplus. Discussions about using the funds for the parish are on-going with legal considerations to be addressed.

Support for the Henley Handi-bus with a donation was suggested.

045/16 Footpath Report

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

Footpath report May 2016

Lambridge Woods

In March and April Chiltern Society volunteers spent nearly 150 volunteer hours in Lambridge Woods realigning the paths on their correct routes and waymarking them with posts and white arrows. The new owners at the west end of the wood are doing great work replanting and preserving the wildlife but continue to have problems with cyclists and horse riders using the footpaths.

Richard Fortey who owns a section of the wood is publishing a book (The Wood for the Trees) which covers the history and wild life of the wood. This comes out in May.

Footpath problems

To report any problems relating to rights of way in Bix & Assendon (broken stiles, fallen trees, overgrown etc) please contact Maggie Templeman (Maggie@swimmingwithlabradors.com) or 01491 637942.

A footpath hazard (was reported by Chris Chantry) of a large section of tree that had broken off and was being supported by foliage above a path. JOP resolved to email Chris the Chiltern Society map detailing path references to pin-point the problem so JOP could report it.

When Richard Fortey's book is for sale, announce this through BAG (Grapevine).

Deer sign knocked over. JOP resolved to find and photograph sign for 'Fix my Street' on the OCC website.

046/16 Any other business

Asset inspection form handed to IC who will check the assets assigned to her and pass it on to the next councillor. Risk assessment had previously been handed round for checking. No updates were deemed necessary at present.

Time set aside for the Public

Next Meeting – Monday 4th July 2016 at 7.30pm

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm