

## **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 5<sup>th</sup> September 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 10 members of the public.

#### **062/16 Apologies for absence**

Charles Bailey sent an email to say he would come but must have been delayed.

#### **063/16 Members declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None

#### **064/16 Confirmation of the minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

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

#### **065/16 Report from Cllr. D. Bartholomew (Oxfordshire County Council)**

#### **GENERAL OCC REPORT**

##### **UNITARY DEBATE**

There have been reports suggesting that proposals for reform are off the table due to the lack of agreement between the City and District Councils, and the County. While it is true that Government wishes to proceed by consensus where possible, OCC hopes that the debate is not over – particularly when Grant Thornton has put forward a new compromise proposal, which has yet to be fully discussed. With £200,000 spent on independent advice, and with both reports showing that savings in excess of £100m are possible over a five-year time period through a single strategic authority for Oxfordshire, it is everybody's interest that the debate continues. The OCC Leader has asked officers to bring a paper to Council on 13<sup>th</sup> September, and Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> September, to ensure that Councillors have been able to express a view on this debate, and how OCC should move forward.

##### **RESIDENTS CAN GET THEIR ELECTRIC BLANKETS CHECKED FREE**

Now is the time for residents to book their blanket in for a free check in October. Oxfordshire County Council's Fire & Rescue Service and Trading Standards are urging electric blanket owners to get their blankets tested free of charge ahead of the approaching colder months. Testing electric blankets annually is important as all electrical systems have the potential to go wrong. In 2015 a total of 22 per cent of the electric blankets failed the safety test and were declared unsafe to use. They can be perfectly safe to use provided they are in good condition and have the necessary overheating safeguards incorporated into the design. Station Manager

Chris Barber of Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service said: "Like any other piece of electrical equipment, it is vitally important that electric blankets remain in safe working order, last year nearly a quarter." Testing is by pre-booked appointment only, strictly on a first come, first served basis. Residents should call Trading Standards on 01865 815 000 option 4 to arrange an appointment or email [communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

### **SUPPORT FOR YOUNGSTERS MAKING NEXT STEPS AFTER EXAMS**

Help is at hand for young people considering their next steps after receiving exam results this month. Oxfordshire County Council is giving advice and support for 16 to 19-year-olds about staying in learning, finding a job or starting an apprenticeship. Throughout the results period and beyond, staff will be available via the web chat service on the Oxme website or over the phone (01865 328460) to talk to young people and parents about the wide range of learning and employment opportunities available in Oxfordshire, and to help with applications.

### **OXFORDSHIRE COMET: A BOOKABLE TRANSPORT SERVICE**

The Oxfordshire Comet is a not for profit, bookable transport service for those who can't access suitable public transport. It can be booked for any type of trip, whether it's to meet friends in town, travel across the county, attend an appointment or pop to the shops. The service is available 10.15am - 2.30pm Monday to Friday (not Bank Holidays). It uses vehicles that normally take children to school and adults to day care centres. (OCC identified the times of the day when they weren't being used and are making them available so that residents can make the journeys they want.) Because OCC already owns these vehicles, the Council only has to cover running costs, meaning charges are low for passengers. More information can be found here:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-comet>

### **CARERS' STRATEGY AND CARERS' PERSONAL BUDGETS CONSULTATION**

OCC and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group work in partnership with other organisations to identify and support many of the 61,000 family, informal or unpaid carers in Oxfordshire. Both organisations do this because they recognise and value the important role that carers have in the lives of the more vulnerable members of our communities. A joint consultation is taking place in two parts: Part 1 of this consultation is about the Oxfordshire Carers' Strategy. This is a document about priorities for carers' support and the outcomes desired for carers of all ages. It also gives an overview of how carers are supported in Oxfordshire. Part 2 of this consultation is about the proposed options for carers' personal budgets. There is no longer enough money for OCC to carry on doing things in the existing way, so OCC wants to find the best way of spending the funding available to meet the needs of as many carers as possible. Please take part by completing the online questionnaire here

<https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Carers/answerQuestionnaire?gid=4183363> or by attending one of three workshops. Please first read the

strategy and supporting documents available as part of this consultation. If you require a paper copy of these documents, please contact OCC by email on [carerssupportreview@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:carerssupportreview@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or phone 01865 323410.

Consultation workshops

All taking place from 10.30am - 1:00pm on the following dates:

- 13th September at Didcot Civic Hall
- 15th September in Banbury Town Hall

- 29th September in Oxford Town Hall
- To attend, please phone 01865 323410 or email  
carerssupportreview@oxfordshire.gov.uk

### **SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BIX & ASSENDON** **PROPOSED THIRD READING BRIDGE OVER THE THAMES**

This scheme is gaining momentum and with the appointment of Theresa May, an ardent bridge supporter, as PM, the momentum is likely to increase further. My view, supported by the OCC Leader and Cabinet Member, is that bridge plans should only move ahead if coupled with a new link road to the A4074, otherwise the B481 from Emmer Green to Nettlebed will become the obvious route for traffic travelling from the M4 to Oxford or the M40 via Watlington.

### **OAKLEY WOOD HWRC**

Last year the consultation focused rationalising the number of centres. This year the consultation that has just ended was not about any closure, but about what can be taken free (domestic), what the operators will charge for and amending opening hours etc. I am advised that since Oxfordshire residents were banned from the Reading HWRC, visits to Oakley Wood have increased by 10%.

RA informed the meeting about the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) consultation is being extended (Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> between 10am – 2pm for Henley). The Care home is scheduled to open, with provision of beds, in November.

### **066/16 Report from Cllr. David Nimmo-Smith (South Oxfordshire District Council)**

#### **General SODC report**

**Electric blankets** can be checked for free by the fire service at Henley Town Hall on 19 November in the morning.

**Comet buses**, which were only being using in the morning and evening, are now being pressed into service during the day for people with limited access to public transport. Swyncombe parish council have booked this service for Thursday mornings and maybe able to give feedback about this service. Please see the OCC report for a link and more information.

RA asked about the Smiths Centre in regard to change of use. DNS said he would get back to the council about that.

### **067/16 Broadband**

Report from MB

The Parish Council remains very focused on the need for all parishioners to have access to SuperFast Broadband (SFBB). Since the installation and switching on of the new fibre cabinet outside The Smiths Centre earlier in the year, much of Lower Assendon has been enjoying significantly faster download and upload speeds when signed up to SFBB packages provided by network operators such as BT, for example via their Infinity package.

However, aware that much of Middle Assendon and all of Bix has seen no material enhancement in the speed of their internet connection, the Parish Council - with the help of a dedicated number of local residents - has been liaising with BT and lobbying for further action.

Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), which is part of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport - and committed to provide SFBB coverage to 90% of the UK by early 2016

and 95% by December 2017 - has recently suggested that Bix will likely be receiving a brand new fibre cabinet, possibly by the end of the year. In liaising with BDUK, while it seems they are still at the planning stage and as of yet unable to confirm actual delivery details, we are told that the deployment of this new fibre cabinet has been approved. Openreach, who are part of BT and responsible for the installation, are currently undertaking this necessary planning work to confirm the logistics involved. Absent this very welcome news, it had been our intention as a Parish Council to apply to BDUK's Community Fibre Partnership scheme to possibly obtain funding that would then allow us to part purchase the equipment needed to bring SFBB to the whole Parish. This of course remains an option should BDUK's planned infrastructure investment fail to materialise or if a significant part of the Parish remains without access to SFBB. For now however, it is our intention to wait for the deployment of the planned new SFBB cabinet in Bix and then assess our additional needs as a Parish after that.

#### **068/16 Bix & Assendon website – regulation update**

After the minutes have been displayed publically on the website, JOP checked the 'Transparency Code' for length of time they were supposed to be displayed. After clarification from NALC (National Association of Local Councils):

**The agenda** should be displayed minimum 3 days before the meeting and ideally 7 days before. This can be removed after the meeting.

**The minutes** have to be for public viewing on the website for 3 years.

**Notice of Conclusion of External Audit** for 14 days per annum after being issued.

**Annual Governance Statement** - Section 1 BDO external audit for 6 years with explanation of any negative responses to statements.

**End of Year Accounts** – section 2 of audit for the last 6 years.

**Internal Audit Report** – page 5 of audit for 6 years – publication no later than 1 July JOP can supply this as one document with all six years and then attach to minutes every year after.

There are some additional documents required for **EOY accounts** - copy of bank reconciliation, explanation of significant variances and explanation of differences between 'balances carried forward'.

All the documents above need to be put on a website as a legal requirement.

Chris Chantry needs to discuss the requirements with the clerk and more work is required on the website. JOP to provide scanned copies of the above.

MB suggested a budget addition for this in the future of a suggested amount of £400. There has been no copy from Bix Manor or the Old Bix Church.

#### **069/16 Allotment Report**

The water butt project has started with all butts positioned and then JOP ran out of hose. Gates for plot 2 and 6 have been fitted.

The Ragwort has provided fields of yellow flowers and nightmares for the clerk. Just when it was seeding on the 14<sup>th</sup>, it was dealt with on the 15<sup>th</sup>. No reply to email asking about method of disposal. It was requested that next spring JOP observe the weed spraying for the Ragwort and Japanese Knotweed.

**070/16 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>

<p><a href="#">P16/S2876/HH</a>                      Poplars, Middle Assendon RG9 6AX                      Changes to planning permission P11/E1062/EX for the extension of a garage extension and out-building.                      Reduction of the footprint and addition of a pitched roof to the outbuilding.</p>	<p>22 August 2016                       17 Oct 2016</p>
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<p><a href="#">P16/S2778/HH</a>                      Hill View, Middle Assendon RG9 6AX                      Erection of dormer windows to front and rear roof slopes.                      BAPC – NO STRONG VIEWS 26 August 2016</p>	<p>15 August 2016                       10 Oct 2016</p>
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WM reported that the works being carried out now are related to a previous planning application (2 years ago that was granted approval) but he had asked a planning officer to come and view the building works to see if it complied. Unfortunately, due to ill health, he was unable to come soon. There has been strong objections by the immediate neighbours to the scale of the extensions

<p><a href="#">P16/S2549/FUL</a>                      Spring Cottage, Lower Assendon Oxon RG9 6AH                      Demolition of existing house and replacement with new house                      BAPC – NO STRONG VIEWS 25 August 2016</p>	<p>3 August 2016                       28 Sept 2016</p>
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The planning application for this house has reduced in size from last application.

<p><a href="#">P16/S2166/HH</a>                      Beech House, White Lane, Middle Assendon RG9 6BD                      Two storey rear and side extensions and internal alterations to include new basement and double garage                      BAPC – NO STRONG VIEWS 23rd July 2016                      SODC – under consideration</p>	<p>28th June 2016                      23 August 2016</p>
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WM - Large extension to existing house - raising objections - increase from 900 to 2,000 sq.ft.

b) Decisions

<p><a href="#">P16/S1989/FUL</a>                      Fawleyfields, Fawley RG9 6HH                      Erection of a detached dwelling with associated access, parking and landscaping.                      BAPC – NO STRONG VIEWS                      SODC – GRANTED 22 July</p>	<p>13 June 2016                      8 August 2016                       27 June 2016</p>
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<p><a href="#">P16/S0744/FUL</a> (Amendment)                      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.</p>	<p>9 March 2016</p>
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BAPC – NO STRONG VIEWS 26 June 2016  
 SODC – GRANTED 15 July 2016

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

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**P16/S0773/HH**  
 Handywater Cottage, Lower Assendon Oxon RG9 6AH 14 March 2016  
 Detached ancillary building in curtilage with existing house with garages, studio,  
 storage below and accommodation in roof space.  
 BAPC - NO STRONG VIEWS 18 April 2016  
 SODC – GRANTED 7 July 2016 9 May 2016

WM - Other planning matters

P16/S4357 - Orchard House, Bix  
 Still no decision - dispute with Highways over access

Enforcement

Land to east side of Old Bix Road changed from agricultural to equestrian use of same  
 with SODC enforcement

Land to west of Chiltern Cottage, Lower Assendon: The neighbours still not satisfied  
 with the appearance of 2 access points in new fence.

**071/16 Correspondence**

There was still no reply to the phone calls and letters to HMRC about the payment made  
 for the outstanding PAYE liabilities. JOP has completed the Pensions Regulator form  
 to say Bix & Assendon Parish Council is no longer liable for pension contributions as  
 the PAYE code has ceased.

Mrs. S. Tomlins informed the clerk that she will be taking over the bookings for the  
 village hall at present. The village hall website has been updated.

Kevin Duthie emailed his thanks for the donation of £1,500 to the Bix Parochial Church  
 Council.

On the Old Bix Road there is now a pile of blocks and building materials that can be  
 collected for free. Please ring Claire on 07899 6964095.

**072/16 Finance.**

a) Annual subscription to CPRE £36  
 Donations to Open Spaces £100, Sue Ryder £100, Air Ambulance £100 and CAB £100.  
 The above donations were agreed in the budget/forecast for 2015/16  
 Nettlebed District Commons Conservators donation of £100, although in the budget, it  
 was put aside to consider.

b) Cheques for payment

Wages and office rent for clerk – Wages £403.00 and office rent £41.68 for months August and September, total = £444.68. Expenses for the allotment site was net £216.94 VAT £43.40 which is reclaimable.

c) Payments received

None

Bank balance £12,688.43

### **059/16 Village Hall Report**

LT informed the members that the next village hall meeting was on 13<sup>th</sup> September. The minutes will be on BAG. MB wondered if the village hall would fund village gates at Bix village on A4130. Only need one pair.

Currently funds are being built up for a new roof if/when it needs replacing. There are no big projects going on. Other suggested projects will be given consideration.

As budget planning for 2017/18 is to start in November, projects for the parish council were needed to be costed. Village gates will be put forward for this as a formal proposal by MB who had been approached by residents of Bix. The members agreed.

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

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

#### **FOOTPATH REPORT SEPTEMBER 2016**

Maggie Templeman

01491 637942/maggie@swimmingwithlabradors.com

#### **Clearance**

The South Chilterns Path Maintenance Volunteers (from the Chiltern Society) have recently cleared footpath Bix 10 which was very overgrown. This path leads off the restricted byway on the left of the A4130 (going towards Nettlebed).

I am contacting the landowner regarding footpaths Bix 8 and Fawley 14 (the path in Middle Assendon which leads up onto the ridge towards Stonor), and which is also very overgrown. Time of year!

#### **Stile problem**

Oxfordshire Country Council is still trying to contact the landowner about the broken stile on Bix 20 (Oxfordshire Way), the path from Middle Assendon which leads up the hill (Gingerbread Hill) towards Pond Cottage and Henley Park.

#### **Next Chiltern Society Walk**

The next walk – 10 a.m. on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> November - is being led by one of my path reps and starts from Ewelme. Meet in Ewelme in the car park at the common, post code is OX10 6PG (which is High Street, Ewelme). If using satnav it's the crossing with Parson's Lane. A delightful walk starting from the quintessentially English village of Ewelme, with great views en route. Some hills. Dogs welcome.

It was requested the above walk to be put on BAG. JOP to action.

Five maps with footpath numbers (one per member) were requested to be bought by JOP via Chiltern Society.

BAG a link to footpaths maps from the Chiltern Society (number 2 for local map) and Ordnance Survey for Explorer Map 171 for parishioners to purchase.

**061/16 Any other business**

There have been a number of accidents on the A4130 from Bix to Nettlebed. As on boundary, JOP was asked to involve Nettlebed parish council with this to add more weight to the request for traffic warning signs. The clerk informed the members that they were meeting on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup>. MB would make the request for signs to DB. Also the clerk was meeting DB and Keith Stenning at a road safety meeting in Rotherfield Greys where she would also bring the request to their attention.

WM asked about the policy for the advertising signs put on the triangle outside Lower Assendon. JOP told the members that requests should go through her which would then be passed to the councillors. There had been evidence to suggest that the permission was being given via Henley town council by mistake.

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 had no reply to a request for an inspection so asked her mother who (for free) diagnosed insect damage. The tree has been sprayed and checked and is much better. There is nothing to be done about the tree bending as that is due to the prevailing wind and any attempt to stake it higher is now not advised as it causes weak roots. The clerk ask if she could put some manure down in autumn as a feed and a mulch. The price of a bag of manure is £4.37. The parish council agreed.

Deer sign knocked over. The sign may have been removed or not been done but difficult to tell with the height of the hedges. To check in late autumn.

LT reported that there was feedback for BAG, which was very positive.

JOP reported that she and Chris were updating the mailing list to make the distribution list more village orientated. MB requested that should be a push to gain more parishioners to join. JOP informed the members that there would be an article in The Link about this.

**Time set aside for the Public**

Philip Day – Farm Manager for the Nettlebed Estate. The 1969 cow milking shed needs updating and other general improvement which include infill of slurry pits. When the planning application is submitted he would like to assure the parish that it will not be on a factory scale.

Wire fencing has been erected in Lambridge woods – the clerk to check with Maggie Templeman and Jane Warren from the Chiltern Society.

**Next Meeting – Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at 7.30pm**

**The meeting ended at 8.50 pm**