

## **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 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

### **Parish Councillors present:**

Ms. Lisbeth Thiesen, Mr. Robert Aitken, Mr. Matthew Beesley, Mrs. Ina Chantry and Mr. William Murdoch.

Oxfordshire County Council councillor David Bartholomew

Also present: Mrs. Jane Pryce (Clerk) and 3 members of the public.

Key: BAG – Bix & Assendon Grapevine alert email service to residents.  
CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy  
OALC – Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils

### **086/17 Apologies for absence**

SODC Cllr. David Nimmo-Smith emailed is apologies

### **087/17 Members declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None

### **088/17 Confirmation of the minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

The minutes were declared true and accurate and signed by the chairman. There was an error on minute reference 076/17 that stated CIL payment was £594 for Middle Assendon – it should have been £1,209.38. This was noted. Minute ref 073/17 road A480 was corrected to B480.

### **089/17 OCC Report from Cllr. D. Bartholomew**

#### **GENERAL OCC REPORT**

This report can be found attached to the minutes.

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

#### **A4155 WORKS BETWEEN FLOWING SPRING & PLAYHATCH ROUNDBOUT**

The road closure has been extended for one week until November 10th due to the sheet piling work taking longer than expected. The project has gone well and OCC took the opportunity to look more closely at future-proofing the road during the planned work. Extra works include a revised safety barrier scheme, a length of additional road resurfacing, a litter pick and the re-white lining of the Flowing Spring pub junction.

#### **POTHoles, GENERAL ROAD DEFECTS AND VEGETATION CUTTING IN THE PARISH**

Cllr Atkin and I attended a site visit with the Area Steward on Monday 11th September to review road maintenance. We were joined part of the time by a local resident who

had sent me many emails relating to the condition of White Lane. It was agreed that the Dragon-Patcher would visit the parish to repair potholes. We also drew the attention of the Area Steward to flooding caused by a blocked drainage ditch at Dobsons Lane. As expected, the Area Steward confirmed that it was the duty of the adjoining property to clear the ditch in accordance with 'Riperian Rights' legislation. Subsequent to the meeting I obtained agreement that OCC would clear the ditch strictly on a 'one-off' basis, and this has now taken place.

Cllr David Bartholomew stated that this ditch should be monitored by the parish to make sure it is kept maintained.

Also, the Dragon-Patcher visit was scheduled for 30th & 31st October. This occurred, but unfortunately, the Dragon-Patcher broke down during the visit, and operations will recommence as soon as it is repaired.

### **THIRD READING BRIDGE**

Matt Rodda MP convened a meeting of the Bridge Steering Group on Monday 18th September and I was not invited. The only Oxfordshire Councillors present were Ian Hudspeth, Leader OCC, and John Cotton, Leader of SODC, neither of whom are close to the issue. Aside from MPs Matt Rodda and John Howell, the majority of attendees were Berkshire councillors and officers. The following day, a Berkshire representative present at the meeting stated during a BBC Berkshire Radio interview that in his view the bridge would be built within five years. The project continues to be driven with enthusiasm and vigour by Berkshire bodies, while neither Oxfordshire council has much interest in the process, resulting in limited challenge to the benefits suggested by the proponents. I have circulated all available documentation to parish councillors (email to clerk 20th September 09.19hrs). I remain very concerned about the impact of the potentially large volume of traffic coming from the Reading Inner Distribution Road (IDR) and the M4 using the bridge and then travelling along the B481 to Watlington.

Cllr David Bartholomew has obtained confirmation he will be invited to the meeting.

### **HOUSING NUMBERS**

At the September meeting I reported on the Government's consultation on a new method for calculating housing numbers and urged the parish council and individual councillors to respond. The consultation closes on Thursday 9th November, so I urge those who have not yet responded to do so as a matter of urgency. The new methodology would reduce the annual house-building requirement for SODC from 725-825 homes per annum down to 617 per annum.

I am advised that the SODC position will be to support the new methodology but with the option to go for the existing higher numbers if it so chooses. However, the OCC response will be to oppose the new methodology and express a wish to stay with the existing higher numbers due to concerns that lower numbers would inhibit economic growth and reduce additional infrastructure funding from central government. The consultation can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals>

**090/17 SODC Report from Cllr. David Nimmo-Smith and Charles Bailey**

This report can be found attached to the minutes.

**091/17 COMET bus report**

Jim McWhirter gave the following report on the COMET bus service that is supported by the parish council and asked for continued support for the following year.

**Weekly Door-to-Door Shopping Bus Service from Bix/Nettlebed to Henley via Swyncombe, Pishill, Stonor and Assendon.**

The weekly service has now been running very successfully for one year. For 6 months prior to that the Henley HandyBus provided a free service on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month and continues to be run by volunteer drivers making no charge for the service.

The OCC Comet has provided a service on the Thursdays of the weeks not covered by the HandyBus. The cost is £55 per week although this could go up to £60 per week if a call at Bix becomes necessary.

The regular users of the service are as follows:

Nettlebed 5 people, Swyncombe 5 people which includes two carers for a disabled passenger, Stonor has had intermittent use by one or two people, Middle Assendon 1 person.

In addition, another 12 people across the four parishes have registered interest and may use the service from time to time in the future.

Numbers are fairly consistent usually being between 8 and 10 per journey with an average of 9. The buses have 14 seats so this is quite a comfortable number once they have their shopping, a wheelchair and walkers.

Thanks to the generosity of the four parish councils, there is no charge to users of the service. The charge for each Parish Council has been determined by its population rather than the number of passengers using the service.

The service is very much appreciated by those who use it. Each passenger is telephoned each week to check their availability and then details are emailed to the drivers.

We do hope that the parish councils will continue to fund the service on the present basis recognising that the needs of individual parishes will fluctuate from time to time.

The quarterly charges are as follows, payable in advance to Nettlebed and District Good Neighbour Scheme which organises the project:

Nettlebed £160, Swyncombe £60, Stonor and Pishill £67, Bix and Assendon £134. The first charge for 2018 falls due in January.

Jim McWhirter  
November 2017

The members agreed to support again for the following year.

**092/17 Clerk's Report**

The second (west side) of the pair of village gates at Lower Assendon has a tree growing over it and the clerk emailed Orchard Dene Nurseries to have the branches cut back. There has been no reply. This prevents the gate being painted. Jane Pryce resolved to contact the owners.

The GO-Active Gold has issued a MOT event at Nettlebed and more exercise sessions which have been put on BAG. The Clerk will attend the 4<sup>th</sup> December session.

Jane Pryce has accepted the role of clerk for Highmoor parish council.

A number (24) of BAGs were submitted.

Jane Pryce joined volunteers to clean out the Bix Tank on 21<sup>st</sup> October.

Measurements of the 2 grass triangles in Lower Assendon were taken and emailed to Henley Town Council to obtain costings for including in the cut after the Fairmile. This is being looked into by them. An increase of 0.6% to current cut by HTC.

The SODC grant application for Bix has been accepted but instead of match funding it was agreed that the path clearance going from Bix to Nettlebed (terminating at the woods) would be done by other means. The OCC Big Clean department felt it was too big a job for them and other avenues would be investigated. They also submitted an incorrect 'Fix my Street' which has been reported. The CIL payment is still available (£594).

Accounts spreadsheet has been reworked. This is also in preparation for budget 2018/19.

### **093/17 CIL payments**

The white lining for Middle Assendon has been mapped out and junctions noted and request made to Oxfordshire County Council.

The quote for refreshing of white lining at Middle Assendon was £1,358.46 per day. This cost has increased since last year but the CIL payment of £1,209.38 has been taken into account.

### **094/17 Allotment Report**

Knotweed was asked to be checked by SODC and access to the adjacent area was granted. No reply to enquiry of the result.

Plot 6 back fence now has poles to complete – thanks to George Calvocoressi for this.

Plot 2 rabbit proffering and tree removal complete.

A number of allotment holders reported that they had had their best year ever – due to manure and rabbit proofing.

### **095/17 Planning**

a) Applications received

**Reference**  
**Location/Description**

**Date Registered**  
**Target Decision date**

[P17/S3688/HH](#) 25 October 2017  
Hill Cottage, Rectory Lane, Bix RG9 6DA 20 December 2017  
Conversion of garages to kitchen area with new windows installed to front elevation with flat roof removed and new roof constructed. Existing brick storage shop removed and garden restored.  
**BAPC response required by 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

b) BAPC Recommendations

**Reference**  
**Location/Description**

[P17/S3158/HH](#) 4 September 2017  
Leys Cottage, Old Bix Road, Bix RG9 6BY 27 November 2017  
External alterations to ground floor garaging within existing linked extension to facilitate the creation of a home office and construction of a new triple bay car port upon concrete hardstanding on land to the south.  
**BAPC recommendation 'NO STRONG VIEWS'**

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[P17/S3194/FUL](#) 4 October 2017  
Old Post Office, Bix RG9 6DB 29 November 2017  
Erection of single three bedroom detached house. Conversion of existing bungalow to double garage + storage. Moving of fence on the boundary with orchard house to enlarge the site. Altered access to improve visibility of shared entrance.  
**BAPC recommendation 'NO STRONG VIEWS'**

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[P17/S3370/FUL](#) 3 October 2017  
Oak Rise, Lower Assendon RG9 6AW 28 November 2017  
Provision of wool shed/hay storage  
**BAPC recommendation 'NO STRONG VIEWS'**

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[P17/S3318/FUL](#) 27 September 2017  
Bix Hill House, Old Bix Road, Bix RG9 6BY 22 November 2017  
Demolition of existing house and erection of new house and garage  
**BAPC recommendation 'SHOULD BE REFUSED'**  
**William Murdoch informed the meeting that the applicant had been shown the negative responses submitted on-line and this information had prompted a re-think on this.**

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[P17/S3404/FUL](#) 21 September 2017  
Halfacre, Bix RG9 6DB 16 November 2017  
Variation of condition 2 of Planning Permission P16/S3421/FUL (approved plans) to add car ports. (As amended by plan 1000C received 2017\_10\_20 to minor alter external appearance). The demolition of the existing dwelling and redevelopment to form two dwellings. (As amended by plans received 2016\_12\_13 to increase garden sizes for Plot 1&2 and provide landscaping proposal). (As amended further by plans received 2017\_01\_17 reducing number of dwellings and altering the layout of the development) (Amended further by plans received 2017\_04\_13 to reduce scheme to two dwellings).

**BAPC recommendation 'NO STRONG VIEWS'**

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[P17/S3208/FUL](#) 11 September 2017  
Round Hill House, Fawley RG9 6HU 6 November 2017  
Construction of an outbuilding comprising ground floor gymnasium and first floor office.

**BAPC recommendation 'NO STRONG VIEWS'**

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[P17/S2257/FUL](#) 19 June 2017  
The Fox, Wallingford Road, Bix RG9 6DB 18 September 2017  
Erection of detached outbuilding and associated landscaping to provide ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling and installation of klargester settlement tank to new building

**BAPC recommendation - 'NO STRONG VIEWS'**

**SODC - under consideration**

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[P17/S2556/FUL](#) 12 July 2017  
Land at Round Hill House Farm, Dobsons Lane, Fawley RG9 6HU 6 September 2017  
The installation of 8no x 2m high radio receiving antennae and an associated equipment cabinet for a temporary period of 1 month.

**BAPC recommendation - 'SHOULD BE REFUSED'** - serious concerns about longer term usage for this purpose and will ruin this AONB that is appreciated by the local community. Permission for 1 month may create a precedent for longer term.

It should be noted that the antennae are 8 x 2m = 52ft

SODC - under consideration

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**c) SODC Decisions**

[P17/S3345/LB](#)  
Llalamanzi, Middle Assendon RG9 6BG  
Insertion of new rooflight in bathroom  
**BAPC recommendation 'NO STRONG VIEWS'**  
**SODC - GRANTED**

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[P17/S2186/FUL](#)  
Land north of Old Bix Road, Bix  
Variation of conditions 3 (temporary structures) and 5 (enclosures) of planning permission P15/S2774/FUL: Change of use from agricultural to equestrian in respect to land north of Old Bix Road, Henley-on-Thames.

**BAPC recommendation – 'NO STRONG VIEWS'**

**SODC GRANTED**

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[P17/S2397/HH](#)  
Blythewood, Bix RG9 4RY  
Alterations and extensions ancillary to the above property.

**BAPC recommendation – 'NO STRONG VIEWS'**

**SODC GRANTED**

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[P17/S3035/LB](#)

Llalapanzi, Middle Assendon RG9 6BG

Removal of modern wall between kitchen & dining room and it's replacement with a steel beam. Replacement of modern tiled floor in kitchen. Replacement of carpet in dining room with tiled floor. Partial fill of steps in diningroom with more floor area protected by glass balustrade.

**BAPC recommendation – ‘NO STRONG VIEWS’**

**SODC GRANTED**

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[P17/S2991/HH](#)

The Fox, Wallingford Road, Bix RG9 6DB

Single storey extension and alterations to kitchen/utility area.

**BAPC recommendation ‘NO STRONG VIEWS’**

**SODC GRANTED**

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[P17/S2648/HH](#)

Chalk Hill, White Lane, Middle Assendon RG9 6BD

Erection of entrance porch extension, replacement and revisions to external windows and doors, new skylights and revisions to external landscaping/drive.

**BAPC recommendation – ‘NO STRONG VIEWS’**

**SODC GRANTED**

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[P17/S3163/FUL](#)

Leys Cottage, Old Bix Road, Bix RG9 6BY

Variation of condition 2 on Application P14/S1602/FUL - amendments to design and form of approved stables building. (Proposed removal of existing stables and concrete apron and replacement with new stable building comprising a foaling stable and three stalls with a new concrete apron).

**BAPC recommendation ‘NO STRONG VIEWS’**

**SODC GRANTED**

### **096/17 Correspondence**

The Chilterns Conservation Board asking for a £500 donation. The parish council already donates £50 and this was seen as an excessive increase to the current donation.

Thanks for donations were received from Sue Ryder £100, Thames Valley Air Ambulance £100, Chiltern Conservation Board £50 and Citizens Advise £100.

BPCC emailed thanks for the £500 and this will be going towards the information board at the ruined church.

A flyer for the Bix Six & Friends Art & Crafts event on 25-26<sup>th</sup> November was asked to be put on BAG.

### **097/17 Finance**

a) Cheques for payment

Clerks wages: £444.68 (wages £403 office rent £41.68) for October and November 2017.

Clerk’s outlay (on behalf on parish council not personal expenses):

Undercoat for Village gate (£23.83) and BAG hosting (£151.20) and Doteasy website hosting (£132.55)

Total £752.26

The clerk apologised for booking of an extra place on the Charity Law course. There had been confusion about attendees.

Nettlebed & District Common Conservators £100

COMET buses £134 Q1 2018

b) Payments received  
Second half of precept of £3,550.00

SODC grant (£1,019) has not yet been received.

Bank balance: £16,067.10

The OALC has suggested that smaller councils (with precepts under £25,000) can opt out of the external audit. As the internal audit seems very thorough would the members consider this? The councillors agreed to this. Certification can only be requested after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

#### **098/17 Village Hall Report**

The Chair of the Village Hall gave a very comprehensive update at the last meeting, and the only event since then was the OALC course which was attended by The Chair, the treasurer and myself. This did shed light on some areas but also raised some questions. As reported earlier I have volunteered to draft a “constitution” (Articles of Association) for the village Hall. I have requested model formats from “Community First” Community Halls Advisory Service, which have not been received yet. The most urgent issue is recruiting for the Management Committee and I have also volunteered to write job descriptions for the posts, which we believe should help interested parties in becoming involved.

The next Village Hall Management Meeting is on Tuesday 14 November at 7:30.

#### **099/17 Footpath Report**

No report for this meeting.

#### **100/17 Data Protection directive**

The audit for this is on-going. The clerk was requested to password protect any sensitive information. This has been done. The village hall was also audited. The information held by BAG is being looked into.

Matthew Beesley was elected as ‘Data Protection’ officer as he annually attends courses in this and is well aware of the issues.

#### **101/17 Meeting dates for 2018**

January 8<sup>th</sup>, March 5<sup>th</sup>, May 14<sup>th</sup>, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, September 3<sup>rd</sup> and November 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### **102/17 Any other business**

Ina Chantry gave key points of the November police newsletter. These were speeding which will be addressed during November by neighbourhood officers, Fixed Penalty Notices for parking offences and Rural crime will have neighbourhood teams on Rural Operations throughout November.

Also two offenders were brought to justice.

There is an Active Communities campaign which is being held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 3pm-3.30pm at the Field Kitchen at Nettlebed.

Inspection log was handed to William Murdoch to start the checking of parish assets. This is due back completed at the May meeting.

Budget ideas/projects were requested to formulate the budget for 2018/19.

A USB stick was handed to Lisbeth Thiesen to have an off-site backup of minutes and accounts. This will be swapped at every meeting with an up-to-date second USB stick.

A free workshop to attract volunteers to be involved in the community was noted. This is being run by Community First Oxfordshire on 14<sup>th</sup> November 9.45-13.00 at Islip Village Hall, Islip, Kidlington OX5 2TA. Booking details can be obtained from Jane Pryce.

### **103/17 Public Comments**

Fairmile chapels are having proposals mooted by Henley Town Council for use. The clerk confirmed she would ask if HTC could keep us in the loop as in our parish.

Next Meeting – Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at 7.30pm

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm