CULHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Clerk's Report
April 2024

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 10th April 2024 at 7.30pm in the Church. Public and press attendance is welcomed.

Transfer of The Green – Paul Gillitt from Wellers has now been appointed and I have forwarded the draft TP1 and correspondence received by email from John Taylor. I have contacted JT with information for Morrell's solicitors to contact Wellers.

Finance - Budget Variance Report – Budget Variance Report circulated – income £27470 against expenditure of £28,966 for year 23/24; Interim Internal Audit completed and to review and approve.- agenda item 10th April 2024;VAT claim submitted – 3rd April 2024; Budget/financial data to be input to the new Scribe accounting system for YR 24-25. 1st part of precept 24/25 received.

Work in progress with the AGAR in readiness for annual audit on 30th May 2024.

Diocese of Oxford - I am awaiting the invoice for the difference in rent from Diocese of Oxford and have chased it. I have also written to advise that the PC are in agreement to paying towards the costs of the Diocese to extend the lease/renew. No further contact from the Diocese during March. I will follow up with an email and contact Wellers to review the lease.

The Community Orchard – The planning officer has raised concerns. Wellers appointed to review but on hold pending John Taylor's return from overseas in May.

The Annual Parish Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 15th May and it is important that we can plan and arrange speakers urgently, this will be followed by the Parish Council AGM.

Policies review: Risk Assessment, standing orders and Asset Register updated and for review and approval on 10th April 2024. Financial regs – await updated NALC recommendations (expected May 2024).

SCRIBE -Accounting software- now subscribed and will be inputting data for 2024-25.

Abingdon Reservoir and HIF1 planning inquiry updates from CB:

Reservoir: Thames Water will give a presentation prior to the June PC meeting. Information about the proposed reservoir and the presentation has been sent to The Mouthpiece for publication in the next issue.

HIF: The third week of the Inquiry has finished and re-starts on 16 April. Chris Hancock is the last of the speakers from the Neighbouring Parish Councils Joint Committee (NPJC). He was due to speak earlier but could not for health reasons. The NPJC remains as an objector for the Compulsory Orders part of the inquiry but will not participate. Alan James (a professional expert) on Greenbelt & Landscape was brilliant under cross examination.

Closing is on 23 April.

Updates from CP (Chair)

Defibrillator

Summary: Culham Parish Council have purchased a defibrillator from AED Donate to install in the village centre. There have been challenges with finding a good installation site:

1) the external housing for the defibrillator needs a constant power supply, for lighting purposes in emergencies and in-built heating in case temperatures go below freezing.

2) needs to be centrally located so the majority of residents can access easily

3) needs to be a public place and easily visible

Having looked at various places, including Tollgate Lock, we have managed to get agreement to use the external wall on the Culham Village Nursery.

Update 180404:

Internal and external photos have now been taken of the site and the circuit board (to check electrical requirements). We are currently waiting for AED Donate to find a qualified local electrician. There is a specification by the nursery for the work to be done on the weekend, whilst children are not present.

Application for change to 20mph

Summary:

Oxfordshire County Council are rolling out 20mph zones, as part of their commitment to 'Vision Zero', elimination of deaths and serious accidents from road traffic collisions in the county. There is an existing ring-fenced funding of 8m for this project. All towns/villages neighbouring Culham have applied and some have already changed, such as Abingdon and Sutton Courtenay.

Culham fulfils the criteria for the change and it is supported by the parish council.

https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-major-projects/20mphPolicydocument.docx

Reasons for applying:

>Increase safety, following concerns raised about speed in all areas of the village but especially the school routes on Tollgate Road and Thame Lane
>Encourage more people to walk and cycle, especially children, which may in turn lead to reduced traffic volumes
>Lower noise levels and improve quality of life for villagers
>Better than introducing other measures such as speed bumps
>Minimal change to journey times, an extra 12 secs max for Tollgate road, 24 secs for the High street

Public consultation has taken place between 5th – 29th March, although the CPC did not receive any prior notice of the consultation. Notification was put on Oxfordshire Herald Series, County and Parish Council portals, the Culham public notice boards, Parish council minutes and the village Whatsapp channel. Unfortunately due to an oversight, the meeting minutes did not make the Mouthpiece newsletter.

Prior to this, a public consultation was completed in 2014, where speeding on Tollgate road was seen to be a priority issue and a lower speed limit was suggested by residents and in 2020 as part of the surveys for the Neighbourhood plan, the ¾ of respondents listed that reducing speeds in the village should be considered a

priority. More recently, the CPC heard complaints from residents in Thame Lane and Tollgate Road, saying that the limit was too high for the narrow roads, especially as they are on a school walking route.

Update 180404:

Councillors communicated to residents about the consultation period for the 20mph scheme (via Whatsapp and public notice – unfortunately we missed the Mouthpiece deadline). There was lots of support for the initiative and some suggestions for digital speed displays. There have been concerns raised by residents on the Whatsapp group that 20mph would have a counterproductive affect, citing issues of pollution and congestion. There were also concerns that if money was spent on this project, it might hinder the installation of a crossing at the top of Tollgate Road, which many see as a much bigger issue than speeding.

Councillors reminded residents again about the consultation period and have received confirmation from our county councillor that the 20mph project will have no impact on delivery of a crossing. An action group will be set up separately to hear views and find out how villagers can support progress on the crossing issue.

The county council will review the 20mph responses and if necessary (i.e. if objections are received) prepare a report to be presented to the Cabinet Member for Highway Management at a meeting scheduled for later in 2024. This will be public meeting at which members of the public may apply to speak. The agenda and reports for meetings will be made available on the Oxfordshire County Council web site about a week before the meeting (see Forward Plan of decisions meetings on the county council website)

REMINDER: I have annual leave booked as follows:

19th – 23rd April 2024
4th – 11th May 2024 (week before the Annual Parish Meeting, so need to ensure all is in place before the 4th).

Denise Corney

8th April 2024