

**Minutes of the Blackbird Leys Parish Council Meeting**  
**Held on Tuesday 29 January 2008 at the Jack Argent Rooms, Community Centre**  
**Blackbird Leys, commencing at 7pm**

G Roper opened the meeting welcoming everyone back in the New Year. He also informed the Parish Council that a representative from the Oxford Mail was expected later at the meeting to take some photographs for an article to be the following week.

**Present at meeting:**

**Parish Councillors:** C Hatton, R Morlin, G Webb, V Smith, C Roberts, S Fitzsimons, C Martin, D Johnston, R Humberstone, P Stannard, M Booker and G Roper

**Also present:** H Shayler (Clerk), 1 resident, A Pavelin (Leys News), and for part of the meeting 2 Neighbourhood Police Officers, K Johnson (Oxford City Council) 3 residents.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from. S Marshall and R Marshall.

2. **Election of Chair:** C Roberts proposed G Roper as Chair. This was seconded by C Martin and carried with a unanimous vote. G Roper accepted the office of Chair.

**Election of Vice Chair:** S Fitzsimons proposed G Webb as Vice Chair. This was seconded by R Humberstone. C Martin proposed C Hatton as Vice Chair. This was seconded by M Booker. A vote was taken and there was a majority of 7 to 3 was in favour of G Webb and he accepted the office of Vice Chair.

**Election of Treasurer:** G Webb proposed S Fitzsimons which was seconded by D Johnston and carried with a majority of 9 with one abstention.

3. **Minutes of the meeting from 27 November 2007:** R Humberstone was added to those present for the meeting and (2) C Martin and D Johnston had been omitted from the October meeting after these adjustments the minutes were signed as a true record of events.

6. **Public discussion**

a) Residents living in the Blackbird Leys Road where previous discussion relating to the removal of bollards were present. V Smith opened the discussion stating that after the October Parish Council meeting she had contacted Oxfordshire County Council in order to arrange the removal of three bollards. A site visit was held and three were then removed but only two of them were correctly removed! Discussions are still being held to make arrangements for the removal of the other bollards.

C Roberts stated that she had understood that at the October meeting that it had been agreed by the Parish Council that they would support the removal of the bollards as requested by the residents and it was V Smith who would follow up the matter with the support of others to the County / City Council and was unaware of any reason why this initial process had been changed or cancelled with only three bollards being removed. G Roper commented that he and C Martin had entered discussions due to concerns over the dropped kerb and access once the bollards were removed. C Roberts stated that if a decision was made by the Parish Council with no reservations or concerns then the outcome of that decision should stand.

R Humberstone offered to move forward the initial request by email for more bollards to be removed.

V Smith and C Martin were due to have a meeting with S Hatton at the City Council and this issue would be raised again to hopefully resolve the issue fully as per the original agreement with the Parish Council and local residents.

b) **Website:** A Pavelin commented that the website had not progressed as quickly as had been hoped because J Rosa had not provided the necessary passwords. However, calls had been made to obtain updated information from those already represented on the site and details were ready to be uploaded when possible. The Clerk commented that it might be worth contacting S Cole who had initially been in contact with J Rosa for taking over the work of administering the site. It was again confirmed that only BlackbirdLeys.com would be retained and the co.uk domain would not be required. A Pavelin commented

that the current agreement seemed to be expensive, providing more facilities than possibly required. It was agreed that the Leys News could look into the provider of BlackbirdLeys.com and if necessary put forward a proposal for change when the next renewal comes up.

**4. Police/PCSOs/Street Wardens:** PC Claire Blewitt and PC Phil Gardner introduced themselves as the new Neighbourhood police and that new posters with contact details would be put up in the near future. It was stated that two new PCSOs would be joining the estate in the middle of February to replace the two who had left recently (PCSO Laura Jones had recently left the team.) V Smith commented that there had been problems around the Spar shop. The high profile of the police and PCSOs appears to have helped the situation. The police requested that the Parish Council should supply information whenever possible of trouble spots and they would try to respond in the same way, giving certain areas a visual high profile – the local sergeant had attended the last NAG meeting when the Spar had been noted as a target area. G Webb commented that the shop used to have its own security. When it was in place the level of problems decreased and increased when the security presence was removed.

It was noted with sadness that three violent attacks had occurred recently on the estate. The police informed the Parish Council that these were very isolated cases (not random attacks) and arrests had been made. The question of cars parking the ‘wrong way’ on the road and parking across footpaths was raised. It was understood that both were still offences and the police would contact the local road officer for advice and ways of stopping this.

P Stannard asked if vehicles parked on the ‘paved parking areas’ were considered to be on the highway or not as some vehicles parked on these areas on the estate were either damaged or had no tax. The police took note of this stating that not all paved areas were highway and some may be council / private.

G Roper commented that after reporting to a PCSO that a street lamp was in need of repair in Dunnock Way it was repaired in two days.

V Smith commented that a commitment to Neighbourhood police was important as it does work.

#### **5. Matters arising from the minutes**

a) The Clerk informed the Parish Council that a person known by her had agreed to attend the meetings to complete her work whilst on Maternity leave. Sue Lee is the person’s name and she is currently Clerk to a few other Parish Councils and is therefore aware of legal requirements, etc. It was hoped that she would attend the February meeting to be introduced to the members.

b) The Clerk was asked to follow up the request from the last meeting to see if someone could attend a meeting to discuss what the Parish Council could and could not do.

c) The Clerk was asked to contact the Oxford City Planning Department and invite someone along to a meeting to answer questions of what is and is not a planning concern when dealing with applications. It was agreed that questions should be raised in advance to allow the officer a chance to come with full answers. Any questions should be brought to the February meeting so that the Clerk can forward them in good time to the planning department.

d) Concerns were raised about the building of houses on the green belt – V Smith commented that green belt areas are protected and brown sites could be built on. However, the current structure plan has now been agreed and it will be a further 10 years before new sites for development are considered.

#### **6. Planning applications and decisions**

An objection was raised to the following application:

a) Application No: 08/00052/FUL

Proposal: Conversion of house to two 1 bed flats. Alterations to provide rear balcony, cycle and refuse storage to front. Parking for two cars on frontage.

AT: 53 Field Avenue, Blackbird Leys.

Objections raised: bad parking area; noise on party walls; loss of family homes and not in keeping with rest of the street. It was also commented that other building works in that area were taking a very long time to complete with a lot of mess being left in front of houses and loose wires. R Humberstone offered to call in this application to the next area committee for discussion.

Notification from Oxfordshire County Council had been received stating that their application to retain and continue the use of two modular buildings (Unit ref P007&P008) for a further two years had been withdrawn.

The following two notifications of refusal had been received from the City Council:

Application Number 07/02433/FUL Proposal: erection of two storey extension containing 2 flats. Parking for 3 cars on frontage AT: 11 Comfrey Road

Application Number 07/01855/FUL Proposal: conversion of house to 2x1 bed flats  
AT: 28 Watlington Road

## **8. Financial matters**

The following expenses were proposed by G Webb, seconded by D Johnston, and carried an unanimous vote: Clerk's salary December and January – £517.80; telephone answering service December and January – £70.50; Vodafone December and January (direct debit) £36.50 x 2; hire of Jack Argent Room for meeting – £10.00; Isis Office Supplies £39.36; British Telecom £37.49; re-issue of cheque to Oxford City Council for the Healthy Living grant £400.00 (initial cheque issued to incorrect name).

C Roberts asked for a list of grants to be available for the next meeting showing all that has been paid and had been committed to.

S Fitzsimons commented that the project for which Leys Unity was issued a grant appeared not to be up and running and asked if the Parish Council held any information regarding the expenditure of the £4,000 grant. The Clerk confirmed that normally grants were not issued until the paperwork was received in the form of an order or paid invoice. On this occasion the cheque had been issued in good faith and nothing had been returned to support the monies. The Clerk was asked to go through all grants issued during the past year and request if needed documents to support the payments being made. It was suggested that due to the size of the grants now being issued that there should be a procedure in place to have the organisation back after three months to give an update on the expenditure and how projects are moving forward.

**9. Correspondence:** no further items of correspondence were circulated.

## **10. Any other business**

a) Pot holes in Field Avenue were raised as a concern – V Smith commented that she had spoken to Ian Hudspeth at the County Council last week and he would take up with the City Council the poor patching work that appeared to have taken place and try to get the position rectified.

b) G Roper and C Martin were due to have a meeting with S Hatton, mainly to discuss cleansing, the following week. If anyone had any issues, they were invited to pass them on so they would be raised. M Booker commented about the rubbish accumulating in the Blay Close bin area. S Fitzsimons commented about pathways covered in moss and overhanging bushes, etc. along Pegasus Road/Knights Road.

c) It was commented that three lights were not functioning in Blackbird Leys Park. – V Smith offered to take this issue up.

d) The Clerk asked for clarification that the Parish Council was no longer using 'profiles' for certain members to tackle certain areas on the estate. It was agreed that anyone who has an issue should now report it direct to the relevant City or County councillor. V Smith offered to put together a list of names and numbers that could be circulated to all members for reference. The Clerk reminded all members that issues raised must be reported back to the Parish Council each month to enable everyone to know what was going on. It was commented that maybe a form could be completed and filed back to the Clerk each month so that a list of issues being raised could be logged and circulated to each meeting to keep everyone informed.

e) A concern was raised over the placing of the new digital readouts at bus stops.

**11. Date of next meeting:** February 26th 2008

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

