

Minutes of the Blackbird Leys Parish Council Meeting
Held on Tuesday 27 November 2007 at the Jack Argent Rooms, Community Centre
Blackbird Leys, commencing at 7pm

Present at meeting:

Parish Councillors: G Roper, C Hatton, P Stannard, R Morlin, G Webb, V Smith, C Roberts, S Marshall, R Marshall, C Martin and L Cole (Chair)

Also present for part of the meeting: 2x PSCOs, Steet Wardens, A Pavelin (Leys News), A Thomas (Oxford City Council) and L Francis (The People's People)

1. Apologies for absence were received from S Fitzsimons.

3. Police/PSCOs/Street Wardens: PSCO Jones informed the Parish Council that she would be leaving the local PSCO group to start training as a police officer – the Chair thanked her for the support that she had given to the estate and wished her well in her new role. This was echoed by other Parish Councillors who had worked along side PSCO Jones and she was wished the best of luck in the future. The Street Wardens stated that the previous month and been quite quiet. Four tricycles had gone missing from the Pegasus Pre-school; two were recovered by the street wardens and one was 'returned'. These along with all other items at the pre-school have now been stamped with the pre-school's post code for future identification should anything go missing.

P Stannard raised the issue of CCTV on the estate – a short discussion was held with the general consensus was that it would not be of benefit to the estate in general. Most shops have their own systems in place and the only external place that might benefit would be next to the cash machines.

The PSCOs and Street Wardens were thanked for attending the meeting.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 30th October 2007: C Martin and K Johnson were co-opted on to the Parish Council. Some grammar and spelling errors were corrected and the following alterations were made:

6c – altered to read 'to discuss the bollards being removed and it was expected that there would be some problems with this'.

8a – voting altered to 'a majority with 3 abstaining'.

11 – date of next meeting changed to 27th November.

It was also noted that under financial matters that the BDO accounts form had been signed by the Chair after the meeting and not during the meeting as stated.

The minutes were then signed as a true record.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

a) It was reported that it had been agreed that the last three bollards along Blackbird Leys Road were to be removed for emergency access. The City Councillors were to hold further meetings with S Hatton to try to get further bollards removed. V Smith commented that residents in the area had received a note with an update on the current position and the next move. L Cole and R Humberstone stated that they would be in contact with S Hatton and would keep the residents and the Parish Council updated.

7. Financial matters

The following expenses were proposed by S Marshall, seconded by G Webb, and carried with 10 votes for and 1 abstaining; Clerk's salary – £258.90; telephone answering service – £35.25; photocopying – £76.76; postage – £49.36; Vodafone (direct debit) £36.50; hire of Jack Argent Room for meeting – £10.00; grant releases to: Healthy Living –£400.00 and Barn Youth Group (balance of grant due on equipment) – £.
Grant applications discussed:

Blackbird Leys senior groups (Golden Circle and Silver Circle). After a brief discussion, R Humberstone proposed that the full grant of £350.00 should be awarded. This was seconded by C Hatton and was carried by a unanimous vote.

A representative was present from The People's People stating that a grant application form had been requested from the office during the past month but none had been forwarded to her to submit a grant request for this year's Christmas dinner. The Clerk apologised for the fact no application form had been sent. The Chair invited L Francis to put forward a verbal application and although no formal decision could be made at this meeting an 'in principle' decision could be made. L Francis submitted a report on last year's event which had been well supported and enjoyed by all who attended. The amount being requested for this year's event was £500.00 but any increase would be much appreciated. V Smith commented that this could also go to Area Committee for consideration at their next meeting for further funds to be requested. R Humberstone offered to speak to F LaPage about it and arrange for this item to be placed on the Area Committee agenda. After giving a brief talk and answering questions, L Francis left the meeting and the Parish Council continued their discussion of the event. S Marshall and G Webb both declared an interest as they had been or were currently on the committee of this organisation.

V Smith proposed that the requested £500 should be awarded. L Cole commented that as the participants were predominantly from Blackbird Leys it would be good to show support by increasing the amount. V Smith then proposed that £800.00 should be awarded. This was seconded by P Stannard and carried with a unanimous vote.

j) BDO accounts – the accounts had been returned by BDO for alterations. These were made and signed by the Clerk for resubmission as required.

k) Precept for 2007–2008 financial year: an income and expenditure report was circulated for the period April to November showing most items to be in line with the previous year. C Martin proposed that the precept should therefore be held at the same amount as last year, £30,000. This was seconded by C Roberts and agreed with a unanimous vote. C Roberts requested that the Parish Council should have monthly accounts presented to each meeting allowing members to see regularly where expenditure was being made. This way, the Parish Council would know if there were sufficient funds for grant applications under discussion. There would also be a better understanding of costs being incurred in order to plan ahead and to ascertain if money was available for one-off projects and also plan for the following year's precept with everyone being more aware of the Parish Council's commitments and funds available. Those present were in agreement and the Clerk was asked to instigate this from the next meeting due to be held in January 2008.

7. Financial matters – held under confidential matters

5. Public discussion

a) L Cole introduced A Thomas from Oxford City Council Housing office to the meeting. She initially gave a short report informing the Parish Council that the garage site off Balfour Road had been tided and was now gated and locked. All relevant residents had been issued with keys to allow access to the area. Concerns about security for the Balfour Road flats had been raised and this had been put forward as a 'project' for next year's budget.

The following issues were raised and A Thomas stated that she would investigate and try to rectify them:

i) Hedges and trees in front gardens were overhanging the pavement area. (ii) Outside security lights in Warburg Crescent were not working, (iii) Field Avenue/corner of Crowberry Road flats: trees and plants were self-seeding and the resulting roots would cause problems to local buildings in the future. (iv) Drying areas are constantly being used as rubbish dumping areas. Most areas do not have clothes lines available which encourages the situation.

b) Website: the Clerk informed the Parish Council that of the original £10,000 budget agreed for the set-up and running of the Community website approximately £5,500 was still available. A Pavelin went through the proposed work that Leys News was offering to do at £12.00 per hour. G Webb proposed that the amount of £1,000 should be put forward to get the initial work carried out and start to move the project forward again. This was seconded by P Stannard and carried by a unanimous vote. L Cole would provide all

passwords/usernames, etc., allowing Leys News to have access to relevant pages and be able to update information from other organisations. It was agreed that the Clerk would forward minutes to be put on the site each month along with the agenda when available.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would remain as owners of the community website and employ Leys News to carry out the required works. The Clerk was then asked to draw up a short agreement to ensure this was the case and that the Parish Council therefore would keep control on how the site was run and used. A Pavelin notified the Parish Council that the Leys News AGM was due to be held in the Community Centre on 3rd December commencing at 6pm. All were welcome to attend.

6. Planning applications and decisions

No objections were raised to the following applications:

- a) Application No: 07/01736/ADV
Proposal: two externally illuminated fascia signs (retrospective) AT: 206 Garsington Road.
- b) Application No: 07/02296/FUL
Proposal: proposed ATM AT: Tesco Filling Station, Oxford Retail Park, Ambassador Avenue.
- c) Proposal: continued use of two modular buildings for a further two years AT: Peers School.
- d) Objections were raised against:
Application No. 07/01855/FUL
Proposal: conversion of house to 2 x 1 bed flats AT: 28 Watlington Road, on the grounds of over-development, parking problems, and not in keeping with the area.
Application No. 07/02433/FUL
Proposal: erection of two storey extension containing 2 x 1 bed flats, parking for 3 cars on frontage AT: 11 Comfrey Road: on the grounds of access to parking over grass verge, right of way and not in keeping with the area.

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

10. Any other business

a) The Clerk informed the Parish Council that she was pregnant and would need to go on maternity leave for the period from March to October. She offered to find a replacement during this time but if anyone knew of someone who would like to take the position or would like to take it themselves, they should put themselves forward at the next meeting in January.

b) A notice of resignation was handed in from the Chair. L Cole felt that due to the forthcoming City Council elections it would be difficult for him to fit in Parish Council duties as well and felt that, since the Council now had full membership, it was time for residents to ‘take back’ the Parish Council with City/County Councillors now adopting a more advisory role.

The council thanked L Cole for all the work that he had done in the past and wished him all the best hoping that he would continue to attend meetings as his role as a City Councillor.

11. Date of next meeting: January 29th 2008

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.55pm.

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