

Hethe Parish Council

Minutes of The AGM Of The Parish Held on Tuesday 18th April 2023, at 8.00pm In Hethe Village Hall

Councillors Present: S Wallace (Chairman)
F Boon
Mrs. J Ramsey
Mrs. S Hartwell
In Attendance Mr D Jakeman (Clerk)
Cllr Wood District Councillor

1. Apologies Cllr. Overton, Cllr. Ward, Cllr. Mrs Elkington

2. Declaration of Interest

3. Chairman Report I would like to thank all Councillors and the Clerk for the hard work that has gone into the year prior for Hethe and the Parish Council. The village has continued to grow and develop and the positive contributions by villagers are much appreciated. We have emerged from Covid 19 having learnt lessons about the importance of community and resilience and are looking at ways to enhance our immediate environment and continue to be custodians of where we live. Thinking about sustainability is increasingly important to our village as well as supporting local businesses and the concerns of our residents and we thank those that have come forward with views, ideas and worries about changing local landscapes impacting Hethe. We will continue to work on behalf of everyone in the village and look forward to continued and constructive discussion about the village and our immediate surroundings.

4. District Councillor Report We continue to make savings where we can but have found it necessary to put the Council tax up this year which works out at an increase of £5.00 per household. The local plan has been delayed a bit for the next stage of consultation due to rising energy costs and inflation the current one will run to 2030 but needs to be refreshed every five years. The planning service will improve in the short term and regulation 18 may be extended. There is a proposal from central government to have a National Bin Collecting Directive; this will cost us a lot of money if this is brought in. The proposal is for all Councils to have the same colour bins etc.

5. County Councillors Report This year marks 20 years involvement for me in local politics, firstly at parish level, then district and county. It has been an exceptionally enjoyable time, but with a big birthday looming I have decided to step down from CDC this year but will remain as a county councillor for the next two years. It has not been an easy decision, but it is as important to know when to go as when to stand and I know I'm leaving the ward in very good hands with Patrick and Barry, who I would like to thank for their support and friendship.

Cherwell District Council; It has been another busy year at CDC, where in addition to representing Fringford & Heyford Ward, I have also served as both Deputy Leader and executive member for regeneration and economy. Planning remains the most active area. Protecting the villages from inappropriate development has always been a priority, although as we know, that is not always possible once the Planning Inspectorate get involved. At the moment there are emerging applications for some large distribution sheds at junction 10 of the M40 and incredibly a rail freight interchange between Ardley and Middleton Stoney. Both are progressing very slowly, and National Highways

have a holding directive on the Jnc10 proposals while much more modelling is done on traffic impacts. In the end, it seems likely that they will all be called in by the Planning Inspectorate so they can assess the impacts in the round, but it needs watching very closely going forward. EWR and HS2 also continue their slow and impactful progress across the area, not just in the area of construction, but also in the wider area via the huge numbers of HGV's required to feed the build out. Graven Hill continues to progress well, with circa 500 occupations and 1M sqft of commercial space exchanged on. The new primary school opens in September, and good progress is being made on sports facilities, a nursery and a new extra care facility for older residents. As the number of occupations increases there is more interest in the retail premises, with a dentist being the latest to sign up. Graven Hill continues to make an appropriate financial return to the council as it offers people an alternative to the larger house builders that are active in the area. As lead member for regeneration and economy I have set in train a wide-ranging consultation for Banbury that will build on the excellent investment at Castle Quay and Waterside, delivering a new masterplan for the wider town centre and setting the direction of travel for how people want to live, work and play in Banbury for the next 30 years. In Bicester I was able to secure £4.25M in the April 23 budget to drive the transformation of the market square and surrounding area. Bicester's future is incredibly bright, especially as EW Rail opens up eastern links to Milton Keynes and beyond, but we need to make sure that the centre of the town is transformed into a really interesting destination for residents and visitors. Transforming the market square is the first part of that, and I believe it will be a catalyst to a rich public/private partnership. This will all be done with the community rather than to them, so everyone will have the opportunity to feed into what they want "their Bicester" to look like in the coming months. Of course, this all assumes that the Conservatives still control CDC after the local elections at the beginning of May. Last November an independent review by the Local Government Association heralded CDC as a "leader of place, with big ambitions and a track record of delivering." By contrast, the Lib/Lab/Green coalition in Oxfordshire is a total fiasco of anti-business, anti-farming, right-on chaos and they intend to do the same in Cherwell if they can cobble together a coalition on May 6th.

Oxfordshire County Council; The situation remains very difficult at County Hall. It continues to haemorrhage staff and its ableist fixation on all things bike is to the exclusion of its substantive responsibilities in adult social care and children's services. The highways network has never been more dilapidated (although it found £15,000 to resurface its own small car park), but it could still find £3M in the budget to plant trees. Twice to my knowledge it has done this on private land without the prior consent of the owner; once on someone's front lawn and astonishingly a single tree in 200 acres of private woodland! Parents of children with special educational needs & disabilities have marched in protest in Oxford at their disgraceful treatment, likewise business owners who have seen their businesses destroyed by the hated low traffic neighbourhoods have taken to the streets, as have farmers who rightly pointed out that their Vegan only policy of catering favoured flown in kiwi fruits and avocado's over locally grown produce. The introduction of number plate recognition cameras in Oxford in the small zero emission zone has raised £700,000 in fines in 12 months and motorists can expect to see similar schemes and fines rolled out across the county. There is a sensible way of encouraging more sustainable forms of transport, but this is not it. They are also withdrawing the school transport "spare seats scheme" for many pupils in the county. Up to 235 children are affected this year, but as many as 1,384 students could be impacted in the medium term. They will tell you this is a cost saving exercise as they rationalise home to school transport, but it has much more to do with their ideological dislike of parental choice. They have recently issued an apology to parents and admitted they handled notifications badly. They are not, however, backing down on their withdrawal policy. Likewise, a number of very unsuitable walking routes have recently been reclassified as suitable (not necessarily "safe", which they tell me is "not their responsibility", "that is down to parents"!) and free school transport has been withdrawn for those children too. If you are able bodied, live in the city and can ride a bike, you're probably in luck, but for the vast majority of Oxfordshire residents, particularly those with complex needs, Oxfordshire weekly becomes a less attractive place to live in or invest. That said, I continue to represent the

residents of Ploughley Division as best I can. I have worked hard to secure 106 mitigation for parishes, particularly those around Heyford Park. Working with Siemens, it has been possible to deliver Little Chesterton gated road status and additional attenuation to one of the watercourses that crosses their site. This will significantly reduce the chances of property flooding in Wendlebury once it is built. The future of a regular bus service from Heyford Park is still in discussion, with the new service due to launch in August this year. The repairs and restoration of Lower Heyford Long Bridge are finally underway, but only after OCC allowed a section of it to collapse. Work is also underway to make traffic improvements at Newton Purcell after funding was obtained from HS2. Likewise, I am seeking ways to improve the traffic situation in Launton, which has been heavily impacted by the highways work on the A41 and the configuration of the new Ploughley junction. Repairs and then resurfacing to Bicester Road is planned, as is a village wide 20mph scheme and extension of both the 20mph limit and HGV restriction to Charbridge Lane roundabout to help reduce rat running. Work is also ongoing to secure funding for vehicle activated speed signs within the village. This is only a snapshot of ongoing work, so please contact me directly to discuss any specific issues you may have. Casework also remains busy, but as ever, confidential. I have also had the opportunity over the last couple of years to support local groups with small grants from my councillor priority fund as follows: • Upper Heyford PC, £650: village goal posts • Lighthouse Shelswell, £300: Children's Holiday Club • Ability Community Bus, £500 • Wendlebury Woodland Project, £450: Bowlers Copse • Invicta National Academy, £250: Summer school post covid catch up • Launton Village Players, £452: HEPA filter • Ardley United Football Club, £1500: To repair storm damage • Cottisford Parish Meeting, £613: Community speed watch equipment • Shelswell History Festival, £1000: Art and history festival • Chesterton PC, £1000: New notice board • Lower Heyford Bowls Club, £2150: New equipment repair and storage shed • Heyford Park Scouts, £1550: New camping equipment • Little Lambs Play Group, £180: New play equipment • Stoke Lyne Meeting Room, £2690: New audio equipment • Chesterton Play Group, £1540: New fence around play area Perhaps typically, OCC have been very slow processing payments for some of the later ones, but they assure me they will all be done by the end of April. A new fund will be open in early May, and I will let everyone know when it is available. Finally, I would like to give a huge shout out to all of the volunteers and parish councillors who do so much brilliant work. You make an incredible difference to your communities, and you have my heartfelt thanks.

6. Hethe Play & Stay It has been a pleasure to run the group over the last few years, in particular the last 12 months as we have emerged from the pandemic and numbers of parents and toddlers have recovered. We now have a regular attendee group with new joiners frequently. We have used the money funded to settle the agreed costs with the village hall, the remainder funding improvements to the toys and games and to cover catering costs. We have regular positive feedback and I am anticipating handing over the Group as my child ages-out and this passes to the next safe pair of hands. I would like to thank the village hall for hosting us and the village in continuing to be a welcoming place to come for our attendees.

7. Hethe Village Hall

Last year was exceptional as bookings increased with dog training from (Lyn Bowers – Best Paw Forwards and Heather Donnelly's Dogs) – these have now gone back to Finmere.

Yoga/Karate/Line Dancing/Shelswell Benefice/parties etc continue with the addition of a weekly After School Club. John Horwood's Line Dancing remains a popular feature twice a week.

The Village Hall improvement grants had a set back with the HS2 grant suggesting there would be no significant impact to the parish with regards to the disruptive nature of HS2 building work Community Building Energy Support Scheme (CBESS) Grants – help with energy costs £1000 Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund – passed stage 1, more detail required - village hall can only apply and require proof of trust and management responsibility.

The tree that came down last November 2021 from 'that' piece of wasteland is WIP - half cleared - and the tree that was dealt with last time, it's remaining branches that littered the pathway have been burnt.

8.Parochial Church Council This is a brief summary of the annual report and accounts. The full, approved, document is available on the village web site at <https://www.hethe.org/st-edmunds-st-georges-church/>. Worship and Prayer Twenty-four regular Sunday services were held in our church in 2022 with an average attendance of eleven. Other services held were on Easter Sunday (eleven attended), Harvest Festival (thirty-two), Remembrance Day (fourteen in the church) and Christmas Day (thirty-eight). A combined Harvest Festival and Service in reflection and thanksgiving for Queen Elizabeth II had been well received. An ecumenical Carol Service was held jointly with the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in the village. There were two funerals for local people in the church (one with an attendance of sixty) and one at the crematorium; three children were baptised in the church (one with an attendance of seventy-eight). The church was open for private prayer and reflection throughout the year.

The Church Building: Extensive work was completed to the roof of the porch to enable water to drain away. Other works were on hold due to lack of funds.

Churchyard: Following concerns raised by some visitors, the PCC agreed a strategy for maintaining the churchyard. The long-term vision is to preserve the churchyard as a special, sacred place, remembering that if we turn it entirely over to nature, we forget the work of past generations who cared for it, and we could impede access to graves and for on-going burials. The wild areas were cut and raked in September and some wildflower seeds and plants added. Footpaths were maintained to allow easy access to the latest graves and the Garden of Remembrance, and a contractor was paid to cut some of the grass. A compost container was erected.

Eco Church: The church was given a bronze award in January under the A Rocha UK Eco Church scheme. The electricity supply is 100% generated from renewable sources through the Parish Buying Energy Basket. Fairtrade supplies are used wherever possible. Two areas of the churchyard are being allowed to grow into natural, flowery spaces, to encourage wildlife and make them more attractive and interesting for visitors. Bird boxes have been placed in the trees and an insect hotel installed. Prayers and hymns relating to God's earth were included in regular services. Mission and Evangelism Monthly Community Coffee mornings are continuing with the location alternating between the Village Hall and St Philip's Hall at the Catholic Holy Trinity Church in the village. A "Thank You" tea was held in the village hall for volunteers and regular givers to the church. Food donated at the time of the Harvest Festival was donated to the Bicester Food Bank. One PCC member started to act as a "Referral Agency" to Bicester Food Bank for the issue of vouchers and food was being collected in the church for those in need. Books and music were available to borrow. The monthly Benefice magazine keeps parishioners informed of the important matters affecting our Church and communities. Church services and news for the parish are also recorded on the benefice, village and "A Church Near You" web sites and village Facebook pages and details of the church are included on the Explore Churches web site. Vers 1.0 Page 2 of 2

Financial Review: The net result for the year were deficits of £1,692 on Unrestricted Funds and £2,267 on Restricted Funds. Adding bank and cash balances brought forward at the beginning of the year, the balances to be carried forward on 31st December 2022 on Unrestricted Funds totalled £10,534 and on Restricted Funds £1,863, a total of £12,396. The PCC are grateful to members of the parish who continue to contribute through regular giving and the 100 Club and who donated towards the cost of repairs.

Administrative Information: PCC members who have served at any time from 1st January 2022 until 31st December 2022 are: Ex Officio members: Revd Alice Goodall (Chair) Mrs Flora Skinner (Vice Chair, Churchwarden & Safeguarding Officer) Mrs Helen Pritchard (Deanery Synod Representative) Elected members: Mr Michael Green (Secretary, Treasurer & Electoral Roll Officer) Mrs Pauline O’Gorman Mrs Helen Wood Mrs June Nisbet.

Thanks: We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our church a special place in the community. They undertake varied roles from helping to maintain the churchyard, to church cleaning, to providing flowers, to raising funds, to being members of the PCC – all are to be thanked for their work. In particular we wish to mention our churchwarden, Mrs Flora Skinner, who has worked so tirelessly on our behalf.

9 King Charles Coronation We plan to start to set up at 10am, we will put a gazebo over the tables and stream the consort outside. Please bring a “Bring and Share Lunch”. After lunch we will have children’s games on the field. Please bring your own tea. We will hold the event on the Sunday.

10 Open Forum – For Residents

11 Chairman’s Closing Remarks The Chair thanked everyone for coming and welcomed people from the village to come to the meeting and put forward ideas and suggestions on how we can improve the village for all of us.

12 Date of Next Meeting