

**BRIGHTWELL-CUM-SOTWELL PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting duly convened on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.30pm In the**  
**Church Room**

**Present:** Cllrs H. Baines (Chair), S. Robson, J. Debney, J. Davys, D. Fisher, G. Gilgrass, S. Jackson, R Nielsen and P. Sudbury (OCC) [Part]

**In attendance:** G. McEvoy (Clerk), D. Dobbin, C. Collett, S. Hill

1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Cllrs. J. Harding, A-M Simpson						
2.	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b> The minutes of the meeting held 15 <sup>th</sup> October 2024 were approved and signed by Cllr Baines.						
3.	<b>Matters Arising from Previous Minutes</b> 3 Parishioners had signed up for the FixMyStreet Superuser programme. Cllr Debney has written his Regulation 19 response to the Local Plan.						
4.	<b>Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary/Personal Interest</b> None						
5.	<b>Public Participation</b> David Dobbin addressed the meeting to highlight the now unprotected verge along Bell Lane since an anonymous person had removed the logs from that area. He stated the verge was already showing signs of damage and was concerned about the impact of cars driving on the wet, soft ground.  Stuart Hill stated that he would be available to discuss village maintenance tasks should any be identified.						
6a	<b>County Councillor's Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Sudbury highlighted that there was still £1000 available from the Council Priority Fund.</li> <li>• He informed the meeting that he had been chasing the installation of the Pedestrian Crossing but had no further updates at this time.</li> <li>• The switching off of the by-pass lights had become a contentious issue within the Oxford City Council and his position does not allow him to suggest pilot areas. The Clerk will write to Paul Firmer on behalf of the Parish Council to support the switching off of the lights.</li> <li>• Cllr Baines asked if Cllr Sudbury could advise regarding the maintenance of the Car Park at Wittenham Clumps as the Earth Trust claimed it was not their responsibility and there were concerns at the poor state of the car park surface. Cllr Debney stated that the car park in question was the responsibility of Little Wittenham and Cllr Baines should contact them.</li> </ul>						
6b	<b>District Councillor's Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Simpson's report had been circulated prior to the meeting.</li> </ul>						
6c	<b>Clerks Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Clerk reported that she had received correspondence from Lloyds Bank stating that they would be charging an Account Maintenance fee of £4.25 per month for each account (it is believed this would apply to 2 accounts).</li> </ul>						
6d	<b>Planning Report</b> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">P24/S3348/HH</td> <td>1 Little Martins (ground and first floor extn)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P24/S3510/HH</td> <td>12 Kings Orchard (Garage Conversion)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P24/S3481/0</td> <td>400 homes land West of Shillingford Road (Croudace)</td> </tr> </table> <p>Cllr Davys reported that there were no grounds for objection with regard to 1 Little Martins and 12 Kings Orchard. However, the Croudace proposal would mean 200 houses being built within the Parish. It was unanimously agreed that Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council should oppose this development. Cllr Debney offered to write the Council's response and it was suggested that all members of the Council write a personal response as well.</p>	P24/S3348/HH	1 Little Martins (ground and first floor extn)	P24/S3510/HH	12 Kings Orchard (Garage Conversion)	P24/S3481/0	400 homes land West of Shillingford Road (Croudace)
P24/S3348/HH	1 Little Martins (ground and first floor extn)						
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6e	<b>.Agree November Payments for approval</b>	
	Payee and reason	£ total
	Gabrielle McEvoy – Clerk’s Salary	798.00
	Gabrielle McEvoy – Clerk’s Salary back pay	230.64
	Scofell (grounds maintenance)	1089.42
	SODC Dog bin emptying (Apr-Oct_	1030.48
	Creative Haus	90.00
	Jet-it-Off	280.00
	SportsCourts	1014.00
	All payments were agreed.	
7	<b>Budget 2025/26</b>	
	The Budget was circulated prior to the meeting indicating the current financial position and the 25/26 forecast. Cllr Debney indicated that there is likely to be further expense regarding a re-write of the Neighbourhood Plan within the next 14 months. It was felt that there is sufficient flexibility within the forecast budget to allow for this. Following a brief discussion the budget for 2025/26 was unanimously agreed.	
8.	<b>Pavilion</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Robson reported that, to avoid Lloyds’ bank charges, she is in the process of moving the Pavilion Bank Account to the Co-Op. This will allow access to the account for herself, the treasurer, the Bookings Clerk and the Parish Clerk. She thanked the Councillors who had already provided the necessary information required and stated that the bank were now requesting further information. She asked that Councillors respond as a matter of urgency to any future questions that the Co-Op may ask.</li> <li>• Cllr Robson reported that the current Pavilion Treasurer, David Hedley, had stepped down from the role after 4 years. It was unanimously agreed by the meeting the Bob Devy would replace him as Pavilion treasurer.</li> <li>• Cllr Robson reported that at the Pavilion meeting held in October it was agreed that from 2025 onwards the Pavilion should receive a minimum of 15% of the Brightfest profits and this would be discussed with the Brightfest organisers at a later date.</li> <li>• The quote for the repairs to the Pavilion roof (£550) received from Brian Rowe Roofing was approved and Cllr Robson was instructed to proceed with this work.</li> <li>• Cllr Robson informed the meeting that as well as an increase in fees for the regular users of the Pavilion, they had all been asked to organise an annual fundraising event. Cllr Robson will start with a Film Night on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2025 with 50% of the proceeds going to the Pavilion and 50% going to the Church.</li> <li>• To allow scrutiny of electricity costs it was imperative that the Bookings Clerk, amongst others, is able to access the Valda Account which currently only Cllr Nielsen can do. The Chair asked that Cllr Nielsen looks into how contact information/access can be shared.</li> </ul>	
9.	<b>CAB S137 Request</b>	
	The S137 was received and circulated in early October. The Citizen’s Advice Bureau has requested a donation of £600. After some discussion Cllr Baines proposed that £300 be offered to this organisation. Cllr Nielsen did not agree and following a vote 6 Councillors agreed this proposal with one against and an abstention.	

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10.	<p><b>Tennis Courts/SportsCourts</b></p> <p>Cllr Gilgrass reported that the cleaning of the Courts had taken place (payment agreed at item 6e with the Tennis Club paying 50%). It was unanimously agreed by the Councillors that a donation of £60 be given to the Friends of Brightwell School to reimburse the school for the water used by SportsCourts.</p> <p>He had previously reported that the court surface was in need of significant repairs/replacement. He was in the process of drawing up a formal agreement with the Tennis Club regarding financial responsibilities for maintenance.</p>
11.	<p><b>Millennium Wood</b></p> <p>Following information provided by Steve Colam (see October minutes) it was unanimously agreed to trail a wildlife camera at the Millennium Wood for 6 months. The costs of the camera, SanDisk and batteries, totalling £167 would be borne by the Parish Council.</p> <p>Cllr Davys informed the meeting that following the recent clearing of the wood he had spoken to the Environment Group who keen to see the woods maintained rather than allow to go wild. Steve Capel-Davies and Paul Chilton agreed that they would mobilise the group to organise an ongoing programme of maintenance. Cllr Davys agreed to monitor progress.</p>
12.	<p><b>Verge Maintenance</b></p> <p>Prior to the meeting the Councillors had been made aware of the anonymous removal of the logs protecting the verge along Bell Lane (see D. Dobbin's Public Participation). It was unanimously agreed that logs should be temporarily reinstated (Cllr Debney to contact Dave Cottrell) to prevent further deterioration of the verge (signage to be placed informing the public this action has been carried out by the Parish Council).</p> <p>It was also unanimously agreed that Arrow Fencing should be approached to quote for the erection of 2 foot posts to allow for a more permanent solution.</p>
13.	<p><b>Shop Lights - Vandalism</b></p> <p>Following the tampering of the security lights on the shop and village hall it was unsure as to whether this was vandalism or a pre-cursor to a potential robbery/break-in of the shop/village hall. The Shop are looking for replacement lights as the tampering has caused irrevocable damage. It was agreed that the Parish Council would post concerns on Facebook and address the issue in the next Villager.</p>
14.	<p><b>Succession of Parish Councillors</b></p> <p>Cllr Robson expressed her intention to resign from the Council at the next election or sooner if the opportunity arose. Four other Councillors also indicated that this would be their last term in the role of Councillor. It was agreed that a "staggered" approach to resignations would be preferred and Councillors should be looking for people to co-opt onto the Council as soon as possible. Cllr Robson will add this subject to her Villager submission.</p>
15.	<p><b>Village Hall</b></p> <p>Cllr Gilgrass reported that a professional fundraiser had been engaged on favourable terms. They will have a basic programme in place by the end of the year. Next steps will be the engagement of consultants to draw up detailed designs.</p>
16.	<p><b>Recruitment</b></p> <p>Following successful references the appointment of a new Clerk had been finalised with Jeanette Gray (Nettie) taken up the role from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025. Nettie had visited the Clerk's office that day to begin a handover programme. She would be visiting the office several times over the next few weeks and will attend the December Parish Council meeting.</p>

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17.	<b>Remembrance Day – Organisation</b> Cllr Debney volunteered to organise future Remembrance Day Services.
18.	<b>Matters for reporting and items for inclusion on December’s Agenda</b> Precept Coppicing Pavilion

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Council would take place on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 7.30pm. There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at approximately 9.10 pm.