

Annual Meeting of the Parish 2022

Minutes

Held at Goring Village Hall, 6pm Tuesday 31st May 2022

1 Welcome, apologies for absence and administration

Councillors present were: Cllr Bryan Urbick (Chair of the Council and of the meeting), Cllr David Brooker, Cllr Sonia Lofthouse and Cllr Jim Emerson.

Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers represented South Oxfordshire District Council.

In the absence on pre-arranged leave of the Council's Clerk and Assistant Clerk, John Boler acted as Clerk for the meeting.

There were 17 members of the public, including one who arrived just before the meeting ended.

There were no apologies for absence.

Cllr Urbick, Chair, explained the origins of the Parish Annual Meeting and differences between these and regular meetings of the parish council. Parish Annual Meetings had become a way for local groups to exchange information on what they were doing.

2 To approve minutes of the previous parish meeting, on 8 April 2019

The minutes were approved.

3 Report from the Parish Council

3.1 Covid-19 Pandemic

Cllr Urbick recalled significant events since the previous meeting, especially the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. The council had supported the Hub volunteer group, based on an 80-20 per cent split with Streatley Parish Council on costs. The council had also maintained contact with the pandemic related activities of South Oxfordshire District and Oxfordshire County councils. It had been "a tough time" in which the council could not hold its scheduled meetings. The council, he

GORING-ON-THAMES

said, could have done some things differently, such as opening the children's playgrounds earlier, but had followed advice from other authorities.

3.2 Travellers on Gardiner recreation ground

After travellers arrived at the Gardiner recreation ground, on 30 May 2020, they were encouraged to move on within three days. The council had engaged an external enforcement firm to assist with this. The travellers had broken into the ground, causing expensive damage to the barriers and turf. Cllr Urbick noted that Oxfordshire had more official traveller sites than any other county in the UK.

3.3 Public open spaces strategy review

Cllr Urbick reported that the review of strategy for the five public open spaces was nearly complete. The review would be discussed at an open meeting where the public could "have their say".

3.4 Archiving of council records

The council was obliged to provide copies of its minutes to the county archive. The process of arranging this was in hand and had turned up "some interesting records and artefacts".

3.5 Documenting burial records

Purchased burial plots were owned for 99 years, after which families could re-purchase them for a further period. Records had to be maintained to enable them to do this.

3.6 Council offices

The report of a chartered surveyor had found that "a considerable amount of work" would be required to make the Old Jubilee Fire Station useable. There had been many rumours of the council's intentions, Cllr Urbick said, and "none of them was true". The council had been approached by the medical practice, which was seeking additional space to provide extra services such as X-ray facilities. Among the questions for the council to consider was whether the office should be rebuilt. Lots of ideas had been put forward but nothing had been decided. Before any disposal of a

public asset could be decided a legal process would have to be followed, including a public consultation.

3.7 *Summer of play*

Of those attending the summer of play, about eighty per cent were from Goring and Streatley, with most of the remainder from South Stoke. The council was aware of how many families “value this in current circumstances” and was going to repeat the event.

3.8 *Hub food bank*

The food bank organised by the Hub was “a sad necessity”. Others in need were being looked after by the church.

3.9 *Council membership*

The death for Cllr Matthew Brown, in February, presented one of many “challenges” the council had had to face. Cllr Brown was not aware he was ill and contributed to Council work till his last; but his health deteriorated rapidly. Cllr Jim Emerson was elected a new councillor to fill the vacancy. Shortly afterwards three councillors had resigned, Cllrs Kevin and Mary Bulmer and Cllr Tony Virgo-Harris, who would all be missed. Subject to confirmation by the SODC legal and democratic services department, there would be a further election on 14 July.

There being no immediate questions, Cllr Urbick said there would be an opportunity to ask questions later, including about the financial summary.

4 Reports from organisations

Cllr Urbick then invited contributions from representatives of other organisations.

4.1 *South Oxfordshire District Council*

District councillor, Maggie Filipova-Rivers said she had submitted a written report but was not expecting to be called, so would speak from memory.

The SODC office had been very busy with pandemic issues, including support for business and arranging for access to food and volunteers. More recently the office had been involved in providing support for refugees arriving from Ukraine. It was a

GORING-ON-THAMES

“very challenging time” for a new council with 480 staff, shared with the Vale of White Horse District Council. The council was “punching above our weight”.

The council was working on its corporate plan, its priorities for the four years ahead. The things it was going to do differently came under the headings of nature, emergency preparation, infrastructure, local, wellbeing and openness and accountability, with a “special department managing this”.

On infrastructure, there was “lots of money from developer contributions, with pots of cash from here and there but no cohesive plan to use it”. The council now planned to prioritise “wellbeing and multi-user gain”. The council “threw down the gauntlet to the towns to spend their shares of the community infrastructure levy”.

Some eighty to ninety per cent of services used to be out-sourced but had now been brought back in-house, the exception being collection of council tax. On grounds maintenance there was a need for the flexibility that in-house working gave but “I am not anti-outsourcing”.

A member of the public asked whether there was any prospect of reducing the target numbers of new homes, mentioning Chalgrove in particular. Cllr Filipova-Rivers said she would pass the question to the appropriate cabinet portfolio holder.

4.2 Goring Church of England Primary School

Representing the governors, Kerry Hughes said the past year had been dominated by dealing with the challenges of getting children back to school after the pandemic. They were also having to adjust to the drop in the birth rate. The school was fortunate in having secured capital investment from the diocese, enabling necessary replacements and repairs. They had also been fortunate in receiving investment money for the library from the parent teacher association. Taking all this into account “we’ve had a good year”, she concluded.

4.3 Genie News, Goring Gap News, Goring Gap Local History Society, Goring Gap in Bloom

In the absence of representatives, the written reports were taken as read.

4.4 MIGGS – Mobility Issues Group for Goring and Streatley

GORING-ON-THAMES

John Boler, chairman, referred to the written report and said he wished to draw attention to just two points. The first was to say that a line had now been drawn under the long saga of the Wallingford Road pavement, surface work on this having been completed to a high standard by OCC in September 2020. MIGGS was grateful for the support it had received on this from the parish council and several local corporate donors. The second issue of importance was pedestrian safety in Station Road. Two informal surveys had established strong public support for a pedestrian priority lane and MIGGS looked forward to urgent action by the parish council and OCC.

4.5 Going Forward Buses CIC

In the absence of a representative, the written report was taken as read.

4.6 Goring Cricket Club and Goring Cricket Academy

Tim Monk spoke for the club and the academy. He said the club was “doing OK” and had “big plans for the future, including for girls’ cricket”. The academy was “really good”, with some 200 children playing.

4.7 Goring United Football Club

Tim Monk said that, this season, the club had five teams, including a men’s Sunday team and a newly established women’s reserve team.

4.8 Goring Robins Football Club

James Simpson and James Forder represented the Robins, who had not presented a written report because they had received “too little notice”. The club had 350-400 children in membership and “more than ever” six- to twelve-year old girls’ teams. The club was “going from strength to strength” but was concerned about the proportion of weeds to grass on the surface at Sheepcot field.

Close

In the absence of further questions, the chairman closed the formal part of the meeting at 6.40pm.