

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WEIR COMMITTEE
GORING ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL
Old Jubilee Fire Station, Red Cross Road, Goring 6:30 pm Monday 31 July 2018**

Members Present:

Chairman	John Wills (JW)
Members	David Brooker (DB)
	Bryan Urbick (BU)
	Lawrie Reavill (LR)
	Matthew Brown (MBr)
	Debbie Gee (DG)

Officers Present:

Clerk	Colin Ratcliff (CR)
-------	---------------------

Four members of the public and press

18/1 To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Mary Bulmer (MBu) and Emrhys Barrell (EB)

18/2 To receive any declarations of interests

None

18/3 Chairman's announcements

JW stated he hoped the meeting would finish by 7:30 pm.

18/4 To approve minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2016.

Resolved: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

18/5 To receive a report on the Judicial Review and Appeals process

BU referred to Appendices A to G that had been circulated prior to the meeting and presented the report to the meeting.

MBr and JW both gave thanks to BU for the hard work he had done on the subject and into putting the report together.

Resolved: That the report be received and accepted.

18/6 Public Forum

Jim Emerson (JE) said that in the draft minutes of 24 November 2016 that resulted in the appeal, there was nothing to suggest committing an extra £24k, only at the initial meeting.

BU said that it had been discussed; there was also discussion about requesting the Court to limit SODC's potential costs to £5k that was initially accepted but later amended to a maximum of £10k.

JE said the council had not had a public meeting to discuss the 52.30 application. BU stated that the Court rules did not allow GPC to talk about the application, nor to have a public meeting. GPC were not allowed to even say that they were applying. The decision made was to seek an appeal and the 52:30 aspect was part of the same appeal. Although there was no public meeting there were some emails between councillors on the subject.

JE questioned the quality of GPC's legal advice. JW said he did not believe their advice was wrong; GPC nearly won the appeal; the judges could not agree on the day and it appeared to be a split decision. At the end of the 52:30 hearing those present thought that GPC had potentially won the case.

JE said the judgements do not support that. BU stated the result had to be given clearly and with no doubt as precedents were conflicting, including the Lensbury case that won an appeal. The outcome would stand as a stated case in future.

Signed:

J. Wills Dated: 13th August 2018

JE stated that if GPC consider similar in future that they may get more differing views if potential costs were published in advance.

JW said the majority of contacts with GPC were against the weir and has no regrets. The costs were discussed reasonably accurately and available for the public to comment upon at the initial meeting.

MBr said councillors tried to look after the village and felt that bringing such an action was what council was supposed to do.

David Beck (DBe) said he had attended all the public meetings, council had voted unanimously to turn the planning application down and were apparently dismissed by SODC, comments were 19:1 against on SODC's website and people in the village were willing to put their own money into the judicial review and appeal. Applications through the courts will always be a gamble of sorts.

Bill Jackson (BJ) said he was still awaiting a letter of apology.

CR said he had already written by email explaining and giving apologies. BU again stated he was genuinely sorry for any offence caused.

LR said he thought BU had been very polite and gentlemanly towards BJ and hoped he would take that in the manner given.

BJ asked how GPC had got themselves into this position. JW stated that the report at item 5 had answered that in full.

BJ then continued interjecting comments that were deemed by the Chairman to not be relevant to the meeting and stated he would close the public forum with an opportunity for another 5 minutes comments each if required.

BJ said that GPC were the only people that objected to it.

JE asked that GPC be more careful next time spending such money to be sure it was needed.

BJ said that everyone else saw the plans and GPC were looking at the wrong plans. If the decision had been set aside, the Hydro Scheme would have won again.

18/7 To consider an article be submitted to the Goring Gap News

BU proposed referring to the main report with a few paragraphs of introduction, he circulated a draft.

Resolved: That the note be approved with an added comment that copies are available at GPC.

18/8 To consider whether any other matters are outstanding for the Committee

BU stated he was not aware of any further decisions that needed to be considered and that full council could deal if necessary

18/9 To consider recommending to Council that the Weir Committee be dissolved

Resolved: That the recommendation be made to council.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 18:57 hrs.

Abbreviations:

GPC	Goring on Thames Parish Council
SODC	South Oxfordshire District Council