

MAPLEDURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held in the Parish Hall, Trench Green on 10 September 2024, commencing at 8.00pm, and concluded at 9.20pm.

Present: Mrs J E Bowen (Chairman), Dr J S Rogerson, T M Whitaker.

Also present: P H Dragonetti (district councillor).

Apologies for absence were received from Dr D W H Miles, R W Taylor, Lord Thurlow.

158 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 2 July 2024 were taken as read, confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the correction of the surname "Fourie" in Minute 141 and the substitution of the nationality "Danish" for "Swedish" in Minute 148.

159 REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Mr K Bulmer, the county councillor for the Goring division, had submitted reports which covered

- road resurfacing techniques;
- the review of his Council's spare seat (on school transport) scheme;
- the publication of the Oxfordshire Cycling Map;
- a personal statement about his decision to resign from the County Council's Conservative group, and to serve as an independent councillor;
- the approach to Government by the Local Government Association seeking the removal of Council Tax increase caps;
- monies available from his Councillor Priority Fund.

160 REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Mr P H Dragonetti, the district councillor for the Kidmore End and Whitchurch ward, spoke to his previously circulated report, which covered

- the development of his Council's Joint Local Plan;
- proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- the closure of the Oakley Wood Recycling Centre on 12 and 13 September 2024;
- his Council's revenue grants' scheme.

161 MAPLEDURHAM – POSSIBLE SPEED LIMIT

The Clerk advised that, following the discussion arising from the Open Session at the last meeting, he had approached the County Council about the possibility of an order being made for a 20mph speed in Mapledurham village, from the White House to St Margaret's Church. The Team Leader – Vision Zero, from the County Council's Highway Maintenance Division, by e-mail, had stated that his Council would be happy to progress a 20mph speed limit, funded from his Council's 20mph programme.

Following informal discussions with Members, who indicated their support for the proposal, the Chairman instructed the Clerk to make a formal request for a 20mph speed limit in the village. The County Council was, as a result, preparing to consult formally on the necessary traffic order.

RESOLVED: That action of the Chairman be approved and confirmed.

162 COMMEMORATIVE TREE

It was noted that the compilation of the wording for the plaque for the oak tree, planted to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen Elizabeth 2, remained in hand.

163 HIGHWAYS' MATTERS

(i) Road to Nuney Green

Dr J S Rogerson and the Clerk advised that they had met Highways Engagement officers from the County Council on site, on 30 July 2004, when they had discussed, at a very useful meeting, the concerns expressed about the road to Nuney Green. Advice had been given about signage which could be installed to identify the informal passing places along the road. The County Council had requested the adjoining landowners – the Mapledurham and Hardwick Estates – to cut back or down vegetation which had encroached on the highway. Arrangements would also be made to improve the carriageway surface and drainage grips in the road.

(ii) A4074 road – footway and gullies

The Clerk reported that he had raised the concerns about the condition of the footway alongside, and the drainage gullies in, the A4074 road with officers of the County Council at the meeting, on 30 July 2024, mentioned in Minute 163(i) above. He had been subsequently advised that the gully emptying work had been initiated, but that it might be a few weeks before they were completed. In the meantime, a tree branch overhanging the footway had been removed. In addition, Senior Officer – Engagement Team had raised a request for clearing the vegetation and siding out of various areas along the road, although she had no timescale for the completion of the work.

(iii) Rokeby Drive, Chazey Heath – Extent of carriageway

The Chairman advised that while a mechanical road sweeper had been deployed in Rokeby Drive, Chazey Heath, it had been somewhat ineffectual, as some 30 cm of the carriageway was covered by vegetation on each side of the road, at some points.

RESOLVED: That the County Council be advised of the encroachment of vegetation onto the carriageway in Rokeby Drive, Chazey Heath.

(iv) A4074 road, Chazey Heath – advertisements

Reference was made to 2 advertisements erected on land forming part of the vision splay at the junction of the A4074 road with the road to Trench Green and Goring Heath at Chazey Heath. One of the advertisements had been in situ for some months.

RESOLVED: That the County Council, as highways' authority, be alerted to the above advertisements, as it was thought the advertisements had been erected without that authority's consent.

164 ASIAN HORNETS

It was noted that no Asian hornets had yet been found in the traps purchased by the Council.

165 RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS' ACCOUNTS 2023/24
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

The Council considered the summary receipts and payments account for the year ended 31 March 2024. (A copy of the report is attached to the signed Minutes.)

The Responsible Financial Officer regretted that he had not yet been able to produce the draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the same period. Members noted, however, from the annual accounts, that the Council's transactions in the year had been receipts of £10,629 and payments of £14,810. As this was the below the threshold for submission of the AGAR, the Responsible Financial Officer suggested that the Council submit an exemption certificate.

RESOLVED: 1 That the accounts presented be approved.

2 That a certificate of exemption be completed and submitted in respect of the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

166 SPORT INSPIRED THAMES 200 EVENT

The Council noted that there had been no further contact with Sport Inspired about the event to be held on 14 September 2024. It was also noted that no further information had been received from Mr W Sleeman about other events scheduled to be held on Mapledurham Estate.

167 PLANNING MATTERS

(i) Decisions

The Council noted that the applications for

conversion of existing agricultural building to a flexible commercial use at Hodmore Yard, Mapledurham (P24/S1805/N4C) for the Mapledurham Estate;
alterations to tea rooms at Mapledurham House, Mapledurham (P24/S1643/LB) for the Mapledurham Estate;
2 storey rear extension and detached double garage at Greendene House, Chazey Heath (P24/S1113/HH) for the Mapledurham Estate;
variation of approved plans for P23/S3444/HH: new outbuilding at Foxgloves, Nuney Green (P24/S1350/S73) for Mr A Basso;
temporary siting of tipi style covered marquee on front lawn between May and October as a wedding venue at Mapledurham House, Mapledurham (P23/S3149/FUL) for the Mapledurham Estate

had been approved.

(ii) Applications

It was reported that no objections had been submitted to the application for repair of structurally failing chimney etc at Whittles Farm, Mapledurham (P24/S2452/LB) for Mapledurham Estate. No comments had been requested on the application for siting of a temporary caravan at First Cottage, Nuney Green (P24/S2647/LDP) for Mr S Gibson.

(iii) Thatch Cott, Chazey Heath

Understanding that the Mapledurham Estate had sold Thatch Cott, Chazey Heath, Members noted that the mobile home remained in place on the property.

RESOLVED: That the District Council be alerted to the continued stationing of a mobile home in the curtilage of Thatch Cott, Chazey Heath.

(iv) Mapledurham House, Mapledurham – marquee

Reference was made to a marquee in the grounds of Mapledurham House, near St Margaret's Church.

168 ROKEBY RECREATION GROUND

The Chairman reported that the visit of the Sonning Common Green Gym the Ground in September or October, to undertake hedging work at the Rokeby Recreation Ground, had been deferred, at their request, to the Spring of 2025.

The Council considered quotations for various works at the Recreation Ground. While 7 potential contractors had been sent the specification of the works, only 2 had responded, as follows:

Ian Kendrick Ltd - £3,450, but for replenishing the play equipment pits only
Oxford Direct Services Trading Ltd (ODST) - £18,142.81.

Members noted that the price from ODST was beyond the Council's resources, not the least because the Company's quotation for refilling the pits was more than 3 times that of Ian Kendrick Ltd. Members discussed ways that the Springer item of play equipment and the 1.8m disc roundabout could be repaired.

The Chairman reported that the play equipment had been inspected by Playsafety Ltd, who had made some recommendations. There were no major issues and it seemed likely that Mr G Bowen would be able to undertake most of the requisite repairs

The Chairman advised that the community orchard continued to progress well, and drew colleagues' attention to the regular bulletins about the orchard on the Council's website.

The Clerk reported that Centurion Running had requested permission to, as in previous years, use the Recreation Ground as a water station for the Chiltern Wonderland 50, to be held on 21 September 2024. As a matter of urgency, the Chairman had agreed to that use.

The Property & Estate Administrator of the Mapledurham Estate had proposed, by e-mail, that the rent of that part of Recreation Ground owned by the Estate be increased to £250 pr annum, with effect from Michaelmas 2024. It was noted that the rent had been set at the current level - £170 – in 2011. The Bank of England inflation model suggested that the proposed increase accorded with inflation over the 13 years.

RESOLVED:1 That the contract for replenishing the play equipment pits at the Rokeby Recreation Ground be let to Ian Kendrick Ltd, in the sum of £3,450.

2 That repair of the Springer and disc play equipment at the Recreation Ground be investigated further.

3 That the action of the Chairman regarding Centurion Running be approved and confirmed.

4 That the proposed increased rent for that part of the Rokeby Recreation Ground owned by the Mapledurham Estate be agreed, but the Estate be requested to indicate the duration of the increased rent.

169 MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS

The Chairman advised that she had nothing to report in respect of the Mapledurham Playing Fields Committee: indeed, the Committee seemed to have become moribund.

170 PARISH HALL

The Chairman reported that the Parish Hall Committee would meet during October 2024. There were some good bookings of the Hall in the offing. A manhole at the rear of the Hall needed to be repaired, while the Mapledurham Estate had been approached to assist the cutting the hedge on the north side of the Hall site.

171 COUNTRYSIDE COMMITTEE

It was reported that the Countryside Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Council.

However, Members referred to

- noise from an event on 7 September 2024, believed to have been in Purley, Berkshire;
- the review meeting for the Reading Festival, which Mr T M Whitaker would attend: Mr Whitaker said that he was not aware of any concerns arising from the 2024 event.

172 MYVISION OXFORDSHIRE

By e-mail, the Fundraising Officer of MyVision Oxfordshire requested the Council to consider making a donation to the cost of the organisation's Community Engagement Project, which sought to ensure that the 24,000 visually impaired people in the County could access the organisation's services.

RESOLVED: Those enquiries be made of MyVision Oxfordshire as to the number of residents of the Parish supported by the charity in 2023/24.

173 OXFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

(i) Members' update

The Council noted the updates for members published by the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils in July and August 2024.

(ii) Annual subscriptions

By e-mail, the County Officer of the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils advised that, at an extraordinary meeting to be held on 7 October 2024, the Association would consider a significant increase in member subscriptions with effect from the financial year 2025/26, in order to cover existing operating losses. The County Officer asked member councils to settle their position on the proposal prior to the general meeting.

RESOLVED: That the proposed increased membership subscriptions to the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils for the financial year 2025/26 be supported.

174 COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Council noted information about the District Council's revenue grant scheme, which aimed to help voluntary and community organisations build and support thriving communities and improve the quality of life of people across the District. The closing date for applications was 1 November 2024.

175 WINTER PREPAREDNESS

The Highways Operations Manager of the County Council enquired, by e-mail, whether any road salt was required for the salt bins in the Parish. None of the bins in the Parish were reported as needing replenishing.

176 DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE SEMINARS

The Council noted an invitation from the Data Infrastructure Programme at the County Council to a webinar to update parish councillors on the team's latest projects in the District, to be held on 14 October 2024.

177 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The following accounts were passed for payment

Parish Council

Shield Maintenance Ltd – Emptying dog hygiene bin	£26.52
Moore – AGAR reminder fees	£96.00
Playsafety Ltd – Inspection of play equipment	£103.20
Mapledurham Leisure Partnership – Rent for part of Rokeby Recreation Ground	£170.00
R F Penfold – Salary net of Income Tax	£214.22

HM Revenue & Customs – Deducted PAYE £142.82

Parish Hall Committee

Airband Community Internet Ltd – WiFi	£25.00) Already
SSE Energy Solutions – Electricity	£707.00) paid
Airband Community Internet Ltd – WiFi	£25.00)

As the Council was presently handling the receipts and payments of the Parish Hall, pending the opening of the Hall Committee's new bank account, the Council had been in danger of having insufficient funds during July and August 2024. Accordingly, the Clerk had given the Council a loan of £2,000, free of interest, against the next instalment of the precept. The Council was permitted to take a loan, without ministerial approval, in such circumstances, under paragraph 2 of Schedule 1 of the Local Government Act 2003. Although the second half of the precept had been received, the Clerk indicated that would not seek repayment of the loan until the new bank account for the Hall Committee had been opened.

RESOLVED: That the temporary loan from the Clerk be acknowledged.