**Minutes of a meeting of Cropredy Parish Council held at the Methodist Chapel on Monday 11th December 2023 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors Tania Johnson (Chair), Des Knight, Bob Garland, Sheila Jones, Jacqui Smith, County Councillor George Reynolds, David Best (Clerk) and 14 members of the public.

The meeting started with a minute’s silence to remember Gill Moss who served as Councillor for many years.

1. **Apologies for absence –** District Councillor Phil Chapman
2. **Declarations of Interest** Cllr Tania Johnson – Lower Churchyard Strimming
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** **held on 13th November 2023.** These minutes were approved as correct and signed by the Chair.
4. **Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda.** None
5. **Reports of Working Groups:**
   1. **Village Maintenance & Improvement**:
      1. **C&RT Towpath Task Force** – Work was carried out on 29th November including filling potholes. The next date for work is 31st January 2024 TBC
      2. **Pothole at Kyetts Corner** - This has been repaired.
      3. **Crack in Wall at entrance to Kyetts Corner –** A quote has been obtained to fill this with mortar. The repair to the path on Chapel green will be replaced at the same time.
      4. **Tree Survey** –The last survey was carried out in February 2021. Mr Tim Batchelor has been asked to quote for carrying out a survey to the 100 trees which the Parish Council manages.
      5. **Broken Salt Bin** – This was first reported 12 months ago and still has not been replaced. This will be escalated to a manager within OCC Highways if not replaced shortly.
      6. **Loose bricks in planter next to the sports ground –** These will be repaired.
      7. **Playground** – Wicksteed has not replied to Cllr Jacqui Smith for repainting the play equipment. Another contractor will be sought.
   2. **Transport, Traffic & Street Lighting:**
      1. **Community Speedwatch –** The volunteer group met on 21st November and decided to continue monitoring. Feedback will be sought from Great Bourton where Community Speedwatch has commenced**.** The Vehicle Activated Speed Signs will be replaced by OCC Highways as the warning speed cannot be adjusted on them and the Parish Council will review the design of the replacements and decide whether to pay extra for better signs. An appeal will be made for additional volunteers in January.
      2. **Dangerous parking –** It was confirmed that the school will be asked if they can get pupils to design a sticker that can be printed for putting on cars if they park on the pavement.
      3. **Streetlights not working –** Kyetts Corner has been reported and the light in Hell Hole has been repaired.
   3. **Village Emergency Plan, Crime Prevention and Environment**
      1. Councillor Sheila Jones will call a meeting of the emergency team volunteers to confirm that they are still willing to participate.
   4. **Parish Council use of Internet & social media.** No update
   5. **Planning, Climate Change Finance and Legal**
      1. **Application by Obsidian for a development north of Cropredy –** The Parish Council has submitted its response to CDC Planning confirming that it remains opposed to the development as guided by the opinion survey carried out in July however if Cherwell District Council were to grant permission, then CDC’s duty would be to ensure maximum benefit to the village. It was clarified that the draft agreement between CDC and the developer referred to in the second paragraph of the PC response was the Draft Heads of Terms for S106. The application was discussed with members of the public and the PC confirmed that it had not had any discussions with the developer or the Cropredy Surgery since the public meeting in July. It was also confirmed that the PC did not know when the application will be considered by the Cherwell Planning Committee. It was agreed that the Parish Council would meet with the village action group opposing the development before the Planning Committee Meeting.
      2. **23/02075/F Thickthorn Farm –** CDC has permitted this application.
      3. **23/02350/F Wood Elf Cottage –** CDC has permitted this application.

**New Planning Applications & Appeals since last meeting:**

None since last meeting.

**Planning Decisions since last meeting****:**

23/02075/F – Thickthorn Farm – Extension to outbuilding – CDC permitted.

23/02350/F – Wood Elf Cottage – Single storey extension – CDC permitted.

1. **County Councillors Report** – County Councillor George Reynolds
   1. **OCC Coalition** – The coalition between Labour, the Greens and Liberals has broken down.
   2. **OCC element of Council Tax** – this will rise by 5%.
   3. **OCC Priorities** – This is to ensure people are fed and kept warm.
2. **District Council Report** – given by County Councillor George Reynolds
   1. **Chief Executive** – A new Chief Executive has been appointed.
   2. **Council Offices** – These will be relocated from Bodicote to Castle Quay.
3. **Sports and Social Club**
   1. **Fencing –** Cherwell Fencing has repaired the fencing.
4. **Churchyard Wall**
   1. **Survey –** Mr Andrew Baxter has carried out a survey of the wall and requested a plan of the churchyard. It was agreed that this could be purchased.
   2. **Ownership where boundary wall is shared with private houses –** The PC is contacting owners to ask if wall ownership responsibility is detailed in their deeds.
5. **Finance**: **Clerk’s Report**
   1. **Year to date accounts** - These were issued prior to the meeting. Reserves are currently £85,050.
   2. **Budget for next year** An extraordinary meeting was held on 4th December to review the budget in detail. It was agreed to increase the Precept by 10%. The Parish Council is funded by a small proportion of council tax paid by all residents in the parish. This is known as the Parish Precept. For example, in 2023-24 the total council tax bill for a band D house in Cropredy was £2181 of which £43 was paid to the parish. Cropredy Parish Council (CPC) uses this money to benefit the village. Expenditure includes grass cutting and maintenance of the playground, the cemetery, the churchyard and walls and other open spaces, dealing with dangerous trees a, refurbishing the millennium sign, road and traffic improvements such as yellow lines and street furniture such as benches. CPC is very fortunate to have volunteers who help with grass cutting etc… and this reduces some of the running costs. CPC’s precept has not been increased for at least 8 years. For 2024-25, however, CPC has decided to increase the precept by 10% to cover the increased costs and expected repairs. This equates to an increase in about £4.29 on a Band D house (a 0.02% increase on the total council tax payable). In particular a program of maintenance is required on the churchyard wall. A reserve has been held against the expected cost but this work needs to be started now under the guidance of a Structural Engineer. In future, CPC hopes to keep the increase in line with inflation.
6. **Correspondence**. Cllrs Tania Johnson and Bob Garland attended a presentation on affordable housing.

1. **Any other business not of a confidential nature**
   1. **Pam Keegan’s Bench –** Pam Keegan did a lot of work for the Historical Society and a memorial bench is being erected in her memory.
2. **Any matters raised by members of the public attending the meeting.**
   1. **Dog Bin in the Churchyard –** A resident reported that this was broken, and it was agreed that the clerk would order a replacement.
   2. **Sewage discharge onto the sports field** – with the heavy rain recently sewage has been discharged into the river and because the river has flooded over the banks raw sewage has been deposited on the sports field. It was agreed that the Parish Council will write to Thames Water to complain**.**
3. **Date of next meeting** – Monday 8th January 2024

There being no further matters the Chair closed the public meeting at 8.32pm

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Chair  
8th January 2023