

# Lower Heyford Parish Council

**Annual Parish Meeting held on 19th May 2022 at 7.00pm in the King George's Field  
Community and Sports Centre**

## **Minutes**

### **Agenda & Summons to Councillors and Invitation to Members of the Public**

**Present: Ric Fowles (RF), Chris Cox (CC), Stu Fox (SF), Sarah Varney (SV), Paul  
Wordsworth (PW),**

**Public: Denise Ball - WI , Chris Adamson – FoHS, Lyn Humberstone, Kim Stevenson  
(Bowls Club) Phil Chesser (KGF)**

1. To receive apologies for absence: James Macnamara
2. To receive the minutes of the last meeting - 5th May 2021 Agreed as a true record – hard copy not available but will be signed off at the next PC meeting.
- 3 Chairman's Report & Financial Report

### **Introduction**

The aim of this report is to ensure that you are kept informed of what the Lower Heyford Parish Council (LHPC) has been doing, and what it has spent money on, on your behalf. Since the last APM in 2021, Bruce Eggeling has stepped down from the council after 8 years of hard work, for which he has received our heartfelt thanks. We are pleased to welcome for the first time his replacement, Paul Wordsworth who was co-opted onto the PC at the March meeting. This means that we have 7 councillors and a single employee, Cathy Fleet, as our Parish Clerk who guides us through the audits, protocols, meetings and finance, ensuring that we remain legally compliant. Our thanks to all of the councillors for volunteering their time and effort and also thanks to Cathy for keeping us all on track.

### **Key Issues from the previous year**

#### **Planning/Roads**

A significant amount of time and energy has gone into addressing the issues of traffic volumes and types moving through our Parish. Chris Cox continues to diligently move and extract data from our SIDs and we have begun the process of tracking and evaluating the data that they

provide to identify patterns in traffic that will help strengthen our case with the county council for traffic calming measures. LHPC continues to actively engage with the MCNP Forum, with Emily Daly representing us at their regular meetings and more generally on local planning issues. A special thanks to Emily for representing our views to OCC and the MCNP and she continues to robustly hold OCC to account for their decision making when it comes to traffic calming and the associated funding. We have become increasingly frustrated with CDC and OCC for their lack of understanding of how their highways and planning decisions affect rural communities. We have escalated these issues to Victoria Prentis and Ian Corkin. More recently, I have been engaging with other local Parish Chairs who share our frustrations. We recently submitted a letter to the leader of OCC requesting that the decision making process and communications protocols are reviewed. We will shortly have a joint-Parish meeting with Ian Corkin to discuss this further.

**Rousham Bridge Weight Limit Progress.** Contributing to our frustrations has been the delay to any decision on the weight limit on Rousham Bridge. After a trial in Burford was not well received, OCC are planning on scoping an area weight limit. We don't yet know what this means, and I am not entirely sure they do, but Emily has a close eye on this.

**Section 106 money for Traffic Calming.** As part of the Heyford Park planning approval, the developer is obliged to provide funds for traffic calming in the surrounding villages. These are normally paid out after a certain amount of the development has been built out. It now appears likely that Lower Heyford will receive £75000 towards traffic calming measures, although we await confirmation before we start consulting on how to use these funds. We are also making a case for Caulcott to receive funding after it was inexplicably left out of the round of funding.

**250 Bus Service.** The contract for the 250 bus service is due to expire in December 2022 and there is a plan to replace it with a 15 min service between Heyford Park and Bicester. LHPC and UHPC are making representation to Oxfordshire County Council and to Dorchester that the loop should be extended to include Lower and Upper Heyford at least once an hour. This will mean that people will have access to Heyford Park and Bicester. Discussions are ongoing but we are doing everything to represent those residents who rely on this service.

We still have funding ringfenced to start a community Speedwatch programme, with TVP soon to recommence the provision of the requisite training, although we still require a lead for this programme alongside some volunteers.

## **Infrastructure**

SSE will be siting two electricity substations in Lower Heyford and will remove the electricity pylons from KGF as rerouting of the supply is completed. The village will benefit from a more stable power supply, preventing power cuts and ensuring that the inevitable surge in electric vehicle charging over the coming years can be provided for. Have negotiated with SSE's agents, Savills, to ensure that the placement of these substations does not unduly affect the village aesthetics, our residents or the KGF field itself. While our power to prevent these works is limited, we have negotiated robustly to ensure that LHPC, as the landowner receives the best possible dividend. The legal documentation is currently being finalised by each side's legal teams and I expect to be able to present this to the KGF Trustees within the next few weeks. Thanks to Bruce Eggeling, we have secured a total of around £12000, which will be reinvested into community projects once the funds are secured. The PC have already asked for

suggestions from the Parish on how to spend that money and we have agreed that we will score those suggestions against three criteria.

- 1) Environmental Benefit
- 2) Number of Residents who will benefit
- 3) Longevity of the project

## **Climate Emergency**

The first of the criteria outlined above marks a change in our approach. Last year, after some discussion, the PC decided that it was right to join a large number of County, District and Parish councils across the country in declaring a climate emergency. What this means in practice for the PC is that we will consider decisions on planning applications, working practices, expenditure, infrastructure etc against the impact that it has on the environment to reduce as far as possible our contribution to climate change. Where we cannot entirely remove this impact, we will seek to mitigate it through environmentally friendly measures.

During this financial year, Chris Cox has taken the chair of our Nature and Bio-diversity sub-committee, who are studying policies and discussing ways in which we can act as a Parish. They will be making, through Chris, representations to the PC that we can then decide on.

## **Communications**

We will continue to ensure that the PC's activities are communicated to you all in a timely and effective manner, providing you all with the opportunity to be informed and to have your say. We have launched an upgraded Parish website that has kindly been built by a resident, Maria O'Meara. Noting that not all residents use the internet, either regularly or with confidence, we have upgraded our noticeboards in Lower Heyford and will continue to communicate key information and post statutory notices in both villages. We continue to utilise the Valley News publication to communicate with you and you will have noticed LHPC news bulletins being enclosed with this. We aim to produce these in Winter and Summer each year.

## **Upcoming events**

You will have noticed the bunting appearing! After COVID eliminated our ability to meet as a community, we are absolutely delighted that the Events Committee are running a Jubilee Picnic in the Park. They have put in a significant amount of energy into organising this and residents have been actively sewing bunting for months! Please make sure you join in on the 4<sup>th</sup> June.

## **Financial Report**

A summary of accounts has been provided with the meeting papers, which have been audited for completeness and will be presented to the next PC meeting. For the second year running, the PC decided against a rise in the Precept and will continue to resist increases without just cause. We recognise that the current economic climate is challenging for many and so we are content to absorb some of the increases that we face from our reserves until the situation stabilises. We must ensure, however, that the reserves remain healthy so that any unexpected items in the bagging area can be dealt with. Many years of responsible financial governance within the PC mean that we are able to do both currently.

Some of the balance is ringfenced for upcoming projects or held in reserve for future maintenance of assets, these are:

Reserves: £3602.51 for the maintenance and repair of the Playground  
£1500 ringfenced for Speedwatch Project  
£1000 ringfenced for LHPC Tree Project (grant from Councillor Priority Fund), some of which has been spent on purchasing fruit trees for a Parish plot at the allotments.

### **Focus for this year:**

I would propose that our priorities for the coming year are:

- Continuing to push OCC and CDC on traffic and planning to ensure that funding is secured for traffic calming measures and that the impact of planning decisions on rural communities is appropriately considered. We hope to use the collaborative, and more powerful, forum of the MCNP to achieve some of our aims, although we will pursue issues independently where it is in our best interests.
- Address the impact of climate change by pursuing projects that benefit the environment and the flora and fauna that make the Parish a beautiful place to live in.

Finally, thank you once more to those individuals and organisations who serve voluntarily to make our community a wonderful place to live. I will end this report with the same plea I made last year. We are always keen to hear from those who can spare a small amount of time to contribute to the Parish for the benefit of others. If our aspirations and enjoyment are saddled on too few individuals, there is the danger that these will wither with a single individual's commitment. Let's share the load wherever possible.

#### 4 Reports from local groups :

- a) Lower Heyford Sports & Social Club  
No report was available
- b) Heyford Athletic Football Club  
No report was available
- c) ***King George's Field Committee of Management  
finances are stable and reserves same as pre pandemic.  
Looking for new streams of income, eg. dog agility. Looking  
@ rates – rateable value being challenged and application  
made to valuation office. Risk review carried out annually –  
all ok. Report to charities commission submitted last year***
- d) Lower Heyford and Caulcott Community Fund  
***The report and accounts had been circulated prior to the  
meeting.  
Income for 21/22 was £13,962.60, expenditure was £7,418.51  
with reserves of £53,859.27 with £8,391.84 set aside for re-  
thatching the roof of the reading room.***

PW suggested that people who need to use the fund may not be aware of the existence of it and PC should publish widely.

e) Lower Heyford Bowls Club

*Good evening, my name is Kim Steventon and I am the Chairperson of Lower Heyford Bowls Club.*

*Over the past 12 months a lot of changes have occurred at the club, most importantly a new lease requested by the College was quashed because of the wonderful efforts of Bruce Eggeling, which helped to secure the future of the club as it was in doubt as to whether it would continue because of the huge fees requested by the College. We also received a grant from C.D.C Lottery so we are now building the hard standing to erect a shed for all the machinery to go into and it will double as a workshop to clean and service the machines. Finance for the shed itself will have to be raised, so this is a long-term plan. The money that is paid in by members help to keep the club ticking over but there is little money spare.*

*Our membership has grown from 5 to 12 over these months, with some guests who turn up to see what it is all about and we now play for an in-club Singles Cup. We would welcome more members and especially so from Lower Heyford, as at one time nearly all those who came to the club were from Lower Heyford, sadly now this is not the case, as we only have 2. We have an article in the Valley News, a Facebook page and at times have articles in some magazines. We are in contact with other clubs who have expressed the chance of having friendly matches at home and away, which is wonderful and exciting news.*

*All our members want our club to continue and not close, so at times have made donations to help pay for the essentials such a water, electric etc. We all strive for the Club and feel hopeful that it will continue to grow. We teach those who don't understand Bowls, we welcome all comers of any ability, also physically able and not so able persons are welcomed as are families, our youngest bowler recently was 8 yrs. old and loved playing. In July, we are having an Open Day when anyone can pop in, play and hopefully decide to join our happy friendly club, have a drink at our bar and even a burger at the BBQ! Everyone is guaranteed to have a good time, but we can't guarantee the weather!*

f) FoHS - report from Chris Adamson, Chair

#### **Introduction**

- *I moved into Somerton in April 21, career Railwayman*
- *Took over from Roger Bowen as Chair in Feb 2022. Roger stood down from the group at that point.*
- *Membership is now 3 – myself, Bruce Eggeling (treasurer/secretary) and Lynn Humberstone (planting lead)*
- *I also manage the FoHS/GWR liaison process*

**2021 – What went well**

- ***New liaison process with GWR. Regular dialogue now established. Future meetings diaried***
- ***On site meeting with GWR yesterday***
- ***Safety briefing for FoHS prepared by myself, signed off by GWR and delivered in March 22***
- ***Have established water supply (through rain water harvesting) on Oxford bound platform (canal water contaminated with oil/diesel). Options for provision on Banbury bound platform under discussion with GWR***
- ***Finances remain in good order***
- ***Link with Heyford station rebuild project at Railway Centre Didcot established. Progress updates in Valley News/Steeple Life***

### **Challenges for 2022**

- ***Increase group membership!***
- ***Maintain good relationship with GWR***
- ***Crumbling station/canal tow path wall – NR asset***
- ***Retaining sleeper wall project on approach to station***
  - ***Scheme design established by FoHS***
  - ***Establish costings – in progress***
  - ***Stakeholder engagement for funding***
  - ***Timescales for on-site activity***
- ***Maintain Heyford Station rebuild project communication through VN/SL***

g) WI

***Denise Ball reported that WI numbers are growing - now 13 members and increasing. Lots from Heyford Park. Meetings are held regularly but we need more people on committee***

h) Lower Heyford Events Committee  
No report was available.

i) Lower Heyford Parochial Church Council  
No report was available

j) Lower Heyford Allotments Association

***We are pleased to report that the allotments are almost at full occupancy this year. We have 10 full sized plots, some of which have been divided into halves and quarters. The smaller plots have been popular with some new members. We presently have 18 tenants. In December 2021 the PC funded 12 fruit trees which allotment members have planted and are managing on a dedicated PC plot.***

k) Valley News

5. Public Participation

Kim mentioned crumbling walls to the bowls club. Land is owned by Corpus Christi so the lease should be looked at