

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 19th June 2023 at 7:30pm at Bisham Abbey

Attendees

Councillors: Jim Cooke (JC)(Chair), Alan Keene (AK), Ged Wylie (GW), Derek Oliver (DO)

District Councillors: Cllr Mandy Brar.

Participating by telephone: Councillor Colin Lemmings (CL)

Part One

Public Forum

Parking on Quarry Wood Road

A member of the public who stated that he was speaking as a representative of a group of residents of Quarry Wood Road reported on the current position regarding the measures proposed by RBWM to address the parking and related traffic problems on Quarry Wood Road. A copy of the revised proposal (RBWM Plan 3) had been provided to the BPC: this plan had been reviewed and approved by a group comprising 13 residents of Quarry Wood Road. Informal discussions with the Guides had indicated that they were also likely to support the latest proposal, although this was subject to confirmation.

JC noted that the plan would provide for double yellow lines on both sides of Quarry Wood Road from the junction with Marlow Road to the A404 bridge except for a 30 metre section near the Guides Hut where provision would also be made for limited dropping-off. The two parking places in the bay near to the junction with Marlow Road would be retained with a maximum permitted stay of 3 hours.

JC referred to comments by the RBWM Highways Officer at an earlier meeting he had attended expressing concerns that the introduction of double yellow lines on both sides of Quarry Wood Road would lead to an increase in the problem of speeding along this stretch of road. The representative of the Quarry Wood Road residents stated that they were concerned that dealing with the speeding issue in conjunction with the parking problems would delay the implementation of the remedial action, that the priority for the residents was to alleviate the parking problems and that, while serious, the speeding issue would be best dealt with separately and subsequently.

JC noted that there had been prior discussions with RBWM Highways regarding the possible introduction of a 30 miles per hour speed restriction throughout Bisham village in which it had been explained that in order to introduce new speed restrictions, set periods of checking the speed of vehicles using the relevant sections of highway were required.

The representative of the Quarry Wood Road residents reported that he had been informed that Plan 3 could be implemented by late Summer.

Traffic Congestion through Bisham

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A member of the public noted that she was relieved that the severe problems with traffic congestion through Bisham village that had been caused by the closure of one of the lanes on the Northbound carriageway of the A404 between Bisham roundabout and the A4155 intersection in connection with the sewage clearance operations involving pumping of waste to tankers stationed on the A404 had been alleviated. During the affected period walking into Marlow had been a very unpleasant, unhealthy and, at times, dangerous experience. It was noted that at present it was not clear whether the tanker operations on the A404 were at an end or had simply been suspended.

Overgrown Hedge by Bisham School

A member of the public expressed concerns about the state of this hedge which was causing significant difficulties to pedestrians using the pavement along the length of the perimeter of Bisham School. He had reported the matter to RBWM Highways and had been told that the work on the hedge was planned to be carried out in September but was concerned that this was an unacceptably long time for the problem to persist and get worse. JC noted that the primary responsibility for maintaining this hedge and ensuring that it did not interfere with the pavement rested with Bisham School and that BPC had tried on a number of occasions over the years to get the School to manage the hedge properly. The BPC would continue with these efforts.

Speed Limit on Marlow Road

A member of the public expressed concerns that the speed limit on Marlow Road was too high and that the overgrown state of the hedge increased the danger to pedestrians on the pavement next to the School.

Culvert repairs

A member of the public referred to the notices that had been sent to residents in Bisham concerning the repair works to the culvert under the A 404 which are scheduled to start on 19 August and which would involve the closure of part of the footpath near to the culvert. The Green was being tested to confirm whether it is strong enough to bear the weight of the vehicles and equipment that will be used for the works. Subject to the results of these tests, the plan for the works will involve the silt being removed during daytime working hours via The Green. Any vegetation that has to be removed in the course of the works is to be replaced with native species. The Bisham Brook Restoration Group had also arranged for works to be carried out to the Brook at the same time which would include adding gravel in certain places to manage and improve the flow of water along the Brook and to encourage reed growth.

Works to trees in Bisham Abbey

A member of the public expressed concern about the recent felling of five trees in the grounds of Bisham Abbey and asked how these works could have been carried out. DO explained that the application to carry out works to trees which included the felling of a significant number of trees at the Abbey had been considered by BPC at its meeting in May (Application 23/01000 refers). The BPC had objected strongly to the proposed works on a number of grounds and submitted a detailed response outlining its concerns and grounds of

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objection to RBWM. Permission to carry out the works had been granted by RBWM subject to some conditions and recommendations set out in the RBWM Decision Notice.

DO also explained that the works to be carried out pursuant to this permission were divided into three categories, namely, immediate, within three months and within one year, according to the degree of damage to the tree or danger to individuals so that the works carried out to date should have been to trees in the first category.

BPC land adjacent to Bisham Brook

A member of the public referred to the area of land adjacent to the bank of Bisham Brook that had been cleared and planted with wildflowers in 2022 by volunteers working on the Bisham Brook restoration project without prior consultation or permission from BPC and asked the BPC to confirm what it would like to be done on this land going forward. JC noted the request and said that he would confirm the position once the BPC had considered the matter.

Parking spaces by the Playground and installation of new bins

A member of the public expressed concern that the works that were due to be carried out on 5 May remained outstanding and asked for an explanation. JC noted that the Clerk had informed the BPC that the works to restore the parking area by the Playground could not be carried out on 5 May due to the heavy rainfall in the preceding days and that the Clerk would arrange for the works to be done by the contractor as soon as possible. JC had no information on the revised date for the works. JC understood that the new waste bins and dog-waste bins had been delivered to the Clerk but as yet no arrangement for the installation of these bins had been made. JC would take these matters up with the Clerk so that the overdue works are completed without further delay.

Friends of Bisham Church

A member of the public thanked the BPC for giving permission for the Slipway to be used for the Coronation Party, albeit that the adverse weather meant that the event had to be transferred to the School. He also circulated a notice setting out the dates of future events organised by the Friends of Bisham Church and extended an invitation to these events.

24. Apologies for absence

Barry Malki (Clerk)

25. Declarations of Interest

AK declared a personal interest in Planning Application 23/01369 as he was a friend of the applicant.

26. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The Council RESOLVED to approve the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting, of the Council held on 15th May 2023, subject to the error corrections circulated by email.

27. Matters Arising

Playground Parking Spaces

CL reported that he had spoken to Holfords while they were working at The Orchard but they were not aware of any work to the parking area. JC explained that these works would be carried out by a

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different contractor. As discussed in the Public Forum, JC would be in touch with the Clerk to arrange for these overdue works to be carried out.

Bisham School Hedge

The Councillors were concerned that, and as was reported by a member of the public, nothing further had been done regarding the clearance of the vegetation and undergrowth that has encroached onto the footpath along the boundary of the School on Bisham Road.

At the December 2022 Meeting the Clerk had been instructed to report this matter to RBWM Highways as a matter of urgency as his prior discussions with the School had yielded no results. It was agreed that this state of affairs was unacceptable given the inconvenience and danger posed to pedestrians by the worsening condition of the hedge and that it was necessary to write formally to the School drawing its attention to the need to restore the hedge to a safe condition in order to ensure that a proper record of this matter is established. This letter should also be sent to RBWM Highways to put them on notice of the continuing problem. DO suggested that the letter to the School should require it to carry out the work in two distinct phases in order to reduce concerns about disturbing wildlife during the Summer months to the minimum that is consistent with the protection of pedestrians; firstly, to carry out the necessary pruning to remove all overhanging growth that is likely to cause any impediment or interference to pedestrians on this stretch of the pavement as a matter of urgency and, secondly, to agree and schedule a programme of works to be carried out during the winter months comprising hard-pruning of the hedge to take its line back to the proper position to reduce the risk of encroachment in future, together with a thorough clearance of the base undergrowth and debris which had accumulated over the years on the surface of the pavement.

Action Point: DO to draft a letter to the School and a letter to RBWM Highways requesting urgent action to deal with these problems and to circulate the letters to the Councillors for approval. Once approved, the Clerk to send the letters to the School and to RBWM Highways as a matter of urgency.

Annual Parish Meeting

At the May meeting, it had been agreed to defer the Annual Parish Meeting to early June and a provisional date of June 1st had been agreed on. This had not happened. AK pointed out that holding the Annual Parish Meeting was a statutory requirement and it was agreed that the date for this meeting be set for 29th June irrespective of whether the proposed speaker was available on that date.

Action Point: The Clerk to book a room and arrange refreshments for up to twenty people and to issue and post the notices of the Annual Parish Meeting to be held at 7:30p.m. on Thursday 29th June without delay in order to ensure that reasonable notice is given.

Appointments to Representative Bodies

GW questioned whether the Clerk had informed the relevant bodies listed in paragraph 19 of the Minutes of the May meeting regarding the appointments of the respective BPC representatives and noted that it would be helpful for each representative to be provided with the contact details for the relevant bodies. AK suggested that each representative introduce themselves to the body in question.

Traffic Problems in Burchetts Green

GW noted that the problems of speeding vehicles on Burchetts Green Road persisted and that local residents had expressed an interest in establishing a Speedwatch group. GW had advised the

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residents that they should approach Thames Valley Police to confirm the procedures that needed to be followed in this regard.

Administration

GW noted that the matters reported on and recorded under Matters Arising in the Minutes invariably do not align well with the outstanding matters on the Action List. It was agreed that this was a significant issue and that the Clerk should be instructed to ensure that all matters on the Action List are reported properly and in sufficient detail to future meetings.

Highways

Quarry Wood Road - JC referred to the discussion in the Public Forum regarding the measures proposed by RBWM to address the problems and asked for comments from the Councillors. DO noted that while he recognised the need for action on the lines proposed by RBWM to address the serious parking problems in Quarry Wood Road, it was equally important to ensure that the measures that were implemented did not lead to the problem simply being displaced. In particular, DO considered that there was a serious risk that the introduction of double yellow lines along Quarry Wood Road would lead some drivers to park on the section of Marlow Road where at present on each side of the road parking is restricted on weekdays between the hours of 10:00 and 11:00a.m. only. If drivers who were no longer able to park on the restricted zone in Quarry Wood Road were to park their vehicles on this stretch of Marlow Road, the already serious problems of congestion and the related air pollution caused by the volume of vehicles seeking to cross Marlow Bridge during rush hours would be compounded significantly.

DO was also concerned that the introduction of the double yellow lines would almost certainly lead to an overall increase in the speed of vehicles on Quarry Wood Road and the number of drivers exceeding the existing speed limit which would bring about additional, perhaps more serious, safety concerns. DO also agreed with the comment made by CL in an e mail regarding the probable increase in the number of heavy goods vehicles using Quarry Wood Road that would follow from the implementation of the proposal which would probably need to be addressed by restricting access to Quarry Wood Road to large or heavy vehicles. DO noted that to avoid problems with such vehicles discovering the restrictions on their access to Quarry Wood Road at the junction of Marlow Road and Quarry Wood Road, it would be necessary for such restrictions to be imposed at the entrance to Bisham village. At the December meeting, the Clerk had been instructed to write to RBWM Highways asking for the existing signs near the junction of Marlow Road and Quarry Wood Road regarding heavy vehicles to be made more prominent and more direct but no progress had been made on this. GW noted these points but felt that they were outweighed by the need to act as soon as possible to alleviate the parking problems in Quarry Wood Road and was concerned that any attempt to deal with the wider problems would lead to the current proposal being stalled. He was concerned about the general lack of an holistic approach to traffic management issues of which this issue was indicative. DO agreed that a holistic approach was necessary as trying to deal with these issues singly would be likely to lead to the problems he had mentioned.

JC proposed that the BPC should inform RBWM Highways that it supported the proposals for Quarry Wood Road set out in Plan 3: AK and GW agreed with this proposal, DO did not for the reasons outlined above.

Action Point: BPC to write to RBWM Highways indicating its support for the implementation of Plan 3 in Quarry Wood Road but also drawing attention to the need for RBWM Highways to monitor the effect that these measures have on parking, traffic flows and congestion and speeding in Bisham and on Quarry Wood Road carefully.

BISHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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DO to draft letter to RBWM and to circulate to Councillors.

Bisham Roundabout: access from A308 from Maidenhead

AK expressed concerns that the overgrown grass and other vegetation had not been cut on the approach to Bisham Roundabout on the A308 from Maidenhead. This was posing a risk to drivers as the lines of sight approaching the roundabout were severely limited. AK noted that in previous years there had been problems managing this area of land due to uncertainty regarding the responsible authority although its position on the A308 suggests that this would be the responsibility of the RBWM.

Action Point: DO to draft a letter to RBWM Highways requesting prompt action to cut the overgrown grass and vegetation to remove this hazard to motorists and circulate to Councillors.

Water leak in Burchetts Green Road

GW had reported a problem of a water leak in Burchetts Green Road to South-East Water but as yet no action had been taken. He would chase the water company as the situation was getting worse.

28. Ongoing Actions

In the absence of the Clerk, JC referred to a note under the heading "Action List June 2023" that had been forwarded to him by the Clerk. Most of the entries on the list were brief and apparently intended to be supplemented orally at the Meeting and did not provide any clear indication of the action that had been taken.

BPC e mail addresses

The Clerk had reported that he had set up e mail addresses to be used by Councillors for BPC Business. It was agreed that the Clerk would provide a report on this initiative at the Annual Parish Meeting on 29 June. CL noted that there were potential security issues that needed to be addressed.

Temple Footbridge

Following the surprising and sudden closure of the Temple Footbridge, the Clerk had received a number of complaints from residents. The Clerk had circulated the latest information he had received from the Environment Agency which confirmed that the footbridge would be closed for a considerable time while the Environment Agency determined whether the bridge could be repaired or needed to be removed. The Clerk had asked the Environment Agency to keep him informed of developments.

Bisham Brook Bridge

The prospective contractor had indicated that the surface of the bridge would need to be removed in order to check whether the base was still sound. If it was not, the bridge would need to be removed and replaced which the contractor estimated would cost approximately £38,000. It was noted that this was considerably more than the figures previously considered by the BPC for the repair of the bridge.

Outstanding Works

The Councillors were concerned that no revised dates had been fixed for carrying out the works originally scheduled for May 5th for installing the general waste and dog waste bins, repairing the strakes on the slipway or repairing the parking spaces by the Playground and agreed that these matters needed to be completed without further delay.

BISHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Barry Malki

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Action Point: the Clerk to make the necessary arrangements as a matter of urgency and report to the Councillors confirming the dates set for these works to be performed.

Remedial Works to the Slipway

The Clerk's ActionList indicated that he had asked Holfords for a price to carry out the work to restore the damage caused by the contractors employed by the School to the Slipway. The Councillors were concerned to note this as the responsibility for rectifying the damage caused by its contractors rated squarely with the School. The Clerk had previously reported that the School had accepted this but no remedial works had been carried out more than a year later.

Action Point: DO to draft letter to the School reminding it of its obligation to restore the Slipway to its previous condition and requesting that the School confirm the date at which these works will be carried out as a matter of urgency.

This letter should also remind the School that if it wishes to have the gate opened to allow a contractor's vehicle to have access to the Slipway, it must give prior notice in writing to the Clerk of the nature of the work and the reason for the request and provide an undertaking to remedy any damage caused by its contractor to the satisfaction of BPC.

Playground Maintenance

GW referred to the note that he had circulated with an update on the proposed works to deal with the problems that had been identified with some of the equipment in the Playground. His recommendation was to instruct Hags to carry out the work. The RBWM had confirmed that when the order is placed, it would transfer its contribution to the cost of these works. It was agreed that the contract specification or terms of business that Hags would provide should be reviewed to ensure that it covers our requirements. The Councillors agreed unanimously with GW's recommendation and expressed their appreciation to GW for the efforts he had made to bring this project to fruition.

Temple Meadow TPO

The comment reporting the response from Helen Leonard to the letter BPC had sent to RBWM regarding this TPO was confused and showed that the point behind the letter had not been understood or explained during the discussion.

Action Point: DO agreed to draft a letter to RBWM to try to put things straight.

29. Planning

Application Date: 12 May 2023 - Application Number:23/01169

Type: Full

Location: Chalkwood House Hockett Lane Cookham SL6 9UF

Proposal: Extension, replacement roof and other works

Councillors' Comments: The Councillors were neutral regarding this application and had no comments

Application Date: 17 May 2023 - Application Number:23/01131

Type: Full

Location:The Forge Golden Ball Lane Maidenhead SL6 6NW

Proposal: Replacement outbuilding

BISHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Councillors' Comments: The Councillors were neutral regarding this application subject to RBWM being satisfied that the proposed work was Appropriate Development in the Green Belt.

Application Date: 24 May 2023 - Application Number:23/01252

Type: Agricultural Determination

Location: Stubbings Estate Stubbings Lane Maidenhead SL6 6QL

Proposal: Notification to determine whether prior approval is required for an agricultural private way

Councillors' Comments: The Councillors were neutral regarding this application and considered that the question of whether prior approval is required was for RBWM to determine.

Application Date: 26 May 2023 - Application Number:23/01302

Type: Full

Location: High Rising Gibraltar Lane Cookham Maidenhead SL6 9TR

Proposal: Replacement Driveway

Councillors' Comments: The Councillors objected to this application on the grounds set out in the Tree Officer's report.

Application Date: 31 May 2023 - Application Number:23/01326

Type: Discharge of Condition

Location: White Walls Quarry Wood Road Marlow SL7 1RE

Proposal: Discharge of Conditions 4, 6, 7 and 9 of Planning Permission 21/03356

Councillors' Comments: The Councillors objected to this application on the grounds that the conditions provided for under Planning Permission 21/03356 should remain in place until they were complied with by the applicant and as a matter of principle conditions should not be discharged simply on the basis that an applicant says he will do what he is already obliged to do under the conditions.

Application Date: 5 June 2023 - Application Number:23/01369

Type: Non-material amendments

Location: 3 Cross Road Cottages Henley Road Maidenhead SL6 6QW

Proposal: Non-material amendments to Planning Permission 22/01470

Councillors' Comments: The Councillors were neutral to this application and had no comments

30. Highways

See matters arising.

31. Parish Land

JC noted that the matters concerning the Playground maintenance works, the improvement of the parking spaces by the Playground, the new bins and the remedial work required to the Bisham Brook Bridge had already been discussed.

The Councillors were extremely concerned about the failure to have the general waste and dog waste bins that had been acquired some months ago installed and the work on the parking space by the Playground carried out and instructed the Clerk to ensure that these works were completed no later than 15 July.

32. Playground

See matters arising.

33. Flooding

CL reported that the Flood Liaison Group Meeting had been cancelled as the new RBWM appointees to this group had not been determined at the relevant time following the RBWM Council elections in May.

34. Councillor Vacancy and Co-option Process

BM At the election in May the five candidates who had been nominated were returned without a poll which leaves the number of Councillors one fewer than the maximum permitted number. A question has arisen with regard to the appropriate means of filling this vacancy.

One method that has been proposed is for the existing Councillors to co-opt a new member in accordance with its Co-Option Policy. On review of this Policy, DO noted that the circumstances which it provides for the co-option of a new member of the Council do not include those that apply at present where fewer than six members were returned at an election. CL said that in discussions with the RBWM Election Officer prior to the election he had understood that co-option would be possible in such eventuality.

It was agreed that it was essential that the position was clarified definitively in order to ensure that whatever course the BPC followed was within its powers.

Action Point

DO to draft a letter for the Clerk to send to the the RBWM Election Officer to establish the means by which an additional member may be added to the Council and to confirm the statutory basis underpinning any rights of co-option and the circumstances in which such powers may be exercised.

35. Finance

JC circulated a copy of the Finance Report that he had received from the Clerk.

The Clerk had been informed by Cookham Waste that if the BPC continued to pay its monthly invoices by cheque, an additional administration charge would be applied. In order to avoid these additional costs and to simplify some other processes, the use of electronic banking would be required.

Action Point

The Clerk to make the necessary arrangements for the adoption of electronic banking by BPC and to provide a report to the July meeting of the proposed procedures to be used in relation to approving payments by electronic banking and related matters. The Clerk to circulate with the notice of the July meeting suggested amendments to the BPC's Financial Regulations that may be required in connection with this change.

36. Correspondence

None

37. Information Reports

CL reported that he had been approached by a member of the public who was considering purchasing a property in Bisham Court who had inquired about flooding in the area. CL provided some general background information but made it clear that any prospective purchaser of property should seek formal professional advice on the risk of flooding to the property in question.

Part 1 of the meeting closed at 21:31

-----End-----

Date Agreed:

Signed:

Position: – Chair/Vice Chair/Councillor