

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Blackthorn				
Held:		Blackthorn Village Hall	On:	Thursday 7 September 2023 at 7.30pm.
Present:		Chairman Mrs J. Lamont (JL), Cllrs. Parish Council Vice-Chairman Cllr. Mr R. Rue (RR), R. Lamont, Mr R. Burden (RB) and Mrs A. Stevenson (AS).		
In Attendance:		T. Charlesworth (Clerk/RFO) and District Cllr. G. Coton and Footpath Warden.		
Item No	Topic		Action owner	Due Date
23.133	Apologies: Accepted from: Accepted from Mr C. Hegarty-Swain (CHS).			
23.134	To receive declarations of Personal or Personal and Prejudicial Interests': Register of Members' Interest: None declared.			
23.135	Minutes: RESOLVED: 3.1: Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 6 July 2023 at 7.30pm were approved and signed by the Chairman Cllr. J. Lamont.			
23.136	Vacancy/Co-option: No applications.			
23.137	District/County Cllrs: Draft Local Plan: Approved by Cherwell District Council and will be available for a six week consultation period in October; the recommendation was to read the plan:- - Since March the proposal to allocate five hundred houses across ten villages has changed to an allocation of five hundred houses across all villages in Category A, probably not Category B. - There are more houses proposed in and around Junction 10. - C.D.C. is not in support of the proposed 'Relief' road around Bicester. Market Square Bicester: The Council has agreed to review Market Square i.e., parking and travel. Offices: Cherwell District Council is looking to move its offices from Bodicote House to Castle Quay Banbury. London Road Bicester: The options have been reviewed with no decision made yet.			
23.138	Code of Conduct: a. Code of Conduct Training – YouTube: To be viewed at the next meeting.			
23.139	Civility & Respect Pledge: a. Training: C/fwd. b. Dignity at Work Policy: To be revised. c. To put in place a training programme for councillors and staff: To be reviewed carried forward. RL			
23.140	Matters for Report 8.1: Footpath Blackthorn to Ambrosden: The matter had been raised with the Footpath Warden who was welcomed to the meeting. Having discussed the concerns regarding the footpath it was proposed that the Parish Council raise its concerns/complaint through the County Council footpath link.			
23.141	Project Reports: 9.1: Drainage and Flooding: a. River Bank Repairs/Network Rail: No update. b. Blackthorn Brook: No update. RR 9.2: Traffic Calming: All items c/fwd. a. Village Plan: Review of proposals:- i. White Traffic Calming Gates: Update on condition of gates and proposals: Review and measurement has been carried out and an initial quote obtained; information has been provided to Cllr. Hegarty-Swaine and will be reviewed for next meeting. CHS - Proposed new gate on Station Road at the junction of Weir Lane: Consider if permission needs to be sought: C/fwd. ii. Speed Check: To consider contacting the Police to carry out speed check: C/fwd. iii. 20mph Application: - Second consultation: Approval of a door-to-door survey: This has been overridden by the online survey by O.C.C. below. - O.C.C. – Blackthorn: 20mph Limits – O.C.C. to carry out an online consultation and has agreed to reposition the proposed siting of one of the signs. - Residents Only Road: No response received from online O.C.C. enquiry form. 9.3: Play Area: a. RoSPA – Playsafety Inspection Report: As a matter of urgency the Parish Council Maintenance contractor had been contacted and asked to provide a quote (see 23.142 – 10.5-c) for matters identified in red in the report. b. Maintenance Procedure: A template to be devised. It was noted that the goal post, posts need to be tightened. JL/RR - The Chairman reported that, for personal reasons, the parish council no longer has someone to clean the bus shelter or empty the play area bins. It was therefore agreed to look at creating a job role, for a contractor or self-employed person, for various maintenance tasks in the village including the weeding round play area equipment. Clerk tasked with adding to next agenda. Agenda			
BUSINESS				

23.142	Finance:		
	10.1: To accept the list of accounts paid prior to the meeting and receipts received and to approve payment of invoices:		
	a. Accounts Paid Prior to the Meeting: i. SLCC – Inv. No: BK211189-1 – £72.00 - Agendas & Minutes Webinars – 2nd at 10am and 9th August at 11am: Meeting cancelled and transferred to October. ii. M.R. & J.S. Cross – Inv. No's: 199 - £732.00 (Grass cutting verges – 13.7.2023) – 200 - £324.00 (Grass cutting play area 4.7.2023/21.7.2023) – Total £1,056.00 – Cheque No: 101472.		
	b. Receipts: i. SLCC – Credit Note for cancelled Agendas & Minutes Training August 2023 – Inv. No: BK211739-1 - £72.00 for transfer to Oct Training sessions for which a new invoice has been issued. ii. HMRC – VAT Reclaim for £755.36. iii. Scottish Widows Bank Plc – Interest - £25.30.	Clerk	
	c. Invoices for payment: It was RESOLVED that the list of invoices were approved for payment: i. Clerks Pay/Exp July/August 2023 - £348.60 – Cheque No: 101475. - Working from Home Allowance - £6.00 per week: To be reviewed as part of the Clerks contract. ii. M.R. & J.S. Cross – Inv. No's: 207 - £324.00 (Grass cutting Play Area – 8.8.2023/25/8/2023) - 208 - £732.00 (Grass cutting verges – 14.8.2023) – Total £1,056.00 – Cheque No: .101474. iii. SLCC – Inv. No: ORD509230-2 – 13th Ed Local Council Administration - £70.90 - Local Council Administration (formerly known as Charles Arnold Baker after the first author) – Shared cost with Merton PC – Cheque No: 101476. iv. RoSPA – Playsafety Ltd – Inv. No: 73156 - £123.60 – (Initial £75 plus £3.50 per extra 8 items) – Cheque No: 101478. v. SLCC – Inv. No: MEM244339-1 - £56.00 – Annual Membership Renewal - 2023/24 – Due 1 July 2023 - (Invoice split between MPC/BPC – MPC invoiced separately this year) – Cheque No: 101477: RESOLVED: That having been advised by SLCC that cheque No: 101462 originally issued as payment for Inv. No: MEM244339-1 had not been received and verified against bank statements, that; - a replacement cheque be issued, above, cheque No: 101477. - That the cost of cancelling the cheque would not be cost effective against the cheque amount of £56.00. - Clerk to request that the Parish Council is notified if the original cheque should turn up and that it be returned if it does.	RFO/Clerk	
	10.2: Bank Reconciliation to date: (attached): It was RESOLVED to accept and approve the bank reconciliations as follows: 1.7.2023 Up to 30.9.2023 (Bank St. Issue Date: 19.7.2023): Balance B/fwd differs from last minuted balance as it did not include £17.22 interest from Scottish Widows Bank Plc., at the end of 30 June 2023. - Balance B/fwd £ 25,648.12 - Add Total Receipts £ 780.66 - Less Total Payments £ 2,190.84 - Balance C/fwd £ 24,237.94 1.7.2023 Up to 30.9.2023 (Bank St. Issue Date: 19.7.2023): - Balance B/fwd £ 25,648.12 - Add Total Receipts £ 780.66 - Less Total Payments £ 3,174.84 - Balance C/fwd £ 23,253.94 - Internal Controls: Review C/fwd; dates of last period to be checked. - Barclays Bank – Request for Review of Bank Mandate details to be completed and returned.	Clerk	
	10.3: Budget Comparison: RESOLVED - To accept and approve the budget comparison 1 April 2023 up to 7 September 2023. - Payments and Receipts: Second quarter in-line with budget with the exception of the Payments: - Admin – Election costs - budget was under by £50.00. - Play Area – Maintenance - £451.00 over budget but covered by Play Area Fund. Receipts: - Bank Interest – Over Budget by £38.52 due to rise in interest rates.	Clerk	
	10.4 VAT Claim: a. Spreadsheet: Presented and accepted:	Clerk/RFO	

	b. Claim: Next claim to be made in October; balance to date including payment schedule above £396.42.		
	10.5: Quotes: a. Allotment Post: C/fwd. b. White Gates: See 23.141-9.2-a-i. c. Play Area: Maintenance works as a result of RoSPA Inspection: RESOLVED: To approve the quote from Trevor Stewart Play Equipment as follows:- Install metal post shoe to one zip wire upright post Replace one post on the hurdles Replace two slats on the suspension bridge Replace timber at the top of the cargo net Total cost £348 excluding VAT.	JL CHS	
	10.6: Grants/Funding: To consider applications for:- a. O.C.C. - FW: BUPA Green Community Grant: Deadline of 30/6/2023 missed. b. O.C.C. - £280,000 SSEN Community Resilience Funding – 2023: To be reviewed. d. Councillors Priority Fund: Re-opened application process:	JL JL	
	10.7: End of Year Audit 2022/23: a. Internal Auditor Report – Action from Report: i. Staff Appraisal: To be finalised. ii. Payroll Controls: Registration is complete and the Basic PAYE Tool is set up as a new Employer and Employee; information regarding pay needs to be completed. iii. Chair to speak to volunteer (bus shelter/play area bins): see 23/141–9.3–b. iv. Document Management: No update.	RL/Clerk JL/Clerk	
	10.8: Training: a. Training Policy: To be actioned. The Clerk confirmed that Merton PC would also put in place a Training Policy whereby the Clerk/RFO could share or alternate costs of training that are of benefit to all. b. SLCC – Important update for clerks – finance – Join us for this virtual summit to engage with the latest advice and guidance relating to finance. Taking place virtually on Wednesday 13 September, 9:50am – 4:00pm – £60 + VAT for members - £120 + VAT for non-members: No attendance.	JL/Clerk	
	10.9: Risk Assessment: Review to be carried out in-line with the Practitioner's Guide using the matrix format.	JL	
	10.10: Budget 2024/25: Current budget to be reviewed along with fund balances for next meeting.	Clerk/RFO	
23.143	Planning Matters:		
	11.1: New Applications: a. Application No.: 22/01978/DISC - Applicant's Name: Harrow Estates (Part of Redrow Group) - Proposal: Discharge of Condition 10 (Masterplan and Design Code) of 16/01268/OUT - Location: South East Bicester, Wretchwick Way, Bicester - Parish(es): Launton - Details of amendment Design Code updated. July 2023 version. Minor changes as follows: Page 14 - Diagrams updated to reflect approved parameter plans - Pages 50,60 – Fig 48 in text is now corrected to fig 47 - Page 51 – Diagrams updated to reflect approved parameter plans - Page 61 - Diagrams updated to reflect approved parameter plans -This is a re-consultation on the above proposal, following the receipt of amendments. If you have any comments to make, please make them by 29 August 2023: b. RESOLVED: ■ That the following comments be made: ■ That the proposed additional housing in the Ray Valley area will cause more flooding issues to local areas and ■ What effects further increased traffic will have on the A41 and surrounding roads.		
	11.2: Decision Notices: Noted: a. Application No: 23/01734/F – Location: 2 East View Station Road Blackthorn Bicester OX25 1TB – Proposal: Single storey rear extension, 2 storey side extension and single storey oak framed front porch. – Permission for Development subject to conditions – Decision Date: 25.8.2023		
	11.3: Appeal Notices: None.		
	11.4: Withdrawal Notices: None.		
	11.5: Planning Issues: a. Network Rail: Noted that the HS2 is not going into Euston. b. MOD.Gov - 20230804-BZN_ACP_Update - The process to appoint an airspace and procedure designer is taking longer than anticipated. As a result, we have decided to pause the BZN ACP to prevent multiple delays to Gateways. We will inform you when we restart the process and have more information regarding designs: Noted. c. Oxford United's proposals for the land known as 'the Triangle': RESOLVED:	Clerk	

	To object to the application on the following grounds; An increase in traffic on the M40 will have a knock on effect to local roads and residents and the wider M40; A41 and A34 into Bicester and will also cause further congestion in and around Pear Tree.		
	d. C.D.C. - Cherwell Local Plan Review - Update for Town and Parish Councils		
23.144	Data Protection Regulations:		
	a. Generic Emails: The ongoing problem is to be raised with Navitas Design.	RL/Clerk	
23.145	Standing Orders:		
	a. The Parish Council's Standing Orders to be reviewed.	BPC	
23.146	Clerk's Contract:		
	Review of contract, working hours and home working allowance to be carried out.	JL/All	
23.147	Correspondence: B.P.C.307/308 Circulated for comments prior to the meeting:		
	The following items were reviewed and noted with actions. a. BPC308(13) 3.8.2023 SLCC - News Bulletin - 3 August 2023 - Home Office Affairs Committee Pre-scrutiny on Martyn's Law 13.6.2023: Noted that the Parish Council owns no venues; the information was passed to the Village Hall Committee, the village hall venue is not large enough to require action. b. BPC308(17) 4.8.2023 O.C.C. - 2023 NHT Public & Public Representatives Satisfaction Survey. c. BPC308(27) 10.8.2023 O.C.C. - Community Transport grants: application form. d. BPC308(39) 18.8.2023 O.C.C. - Winter Preparedness. e. BPC308(41) 21.8.2023 O.C.C. - Highway maintenance open day invitation - Saturday 16th September 2023. f. BPC308(47) 22.8.2023 (Reminder: Expression of Interest for EV Microhubs Scheme deadline 15 September 2023. g. BPC308(51) 24.8.2023 Community Transport grants: further information. h. BPC308(52) 25.8.2023 O.C.C. - Proposals for improved rural transport: briefing document. i. BPC308(53) 25.8.2023 C.D.C. - Cherwell Local Plan Review - Update for Town and Parish Councils. ■ Whilst the Parish Council Corner is working; an alternative link for emails to go to a gmail folder will also be considered.	RL/Clerk	
23.148	Website/Issues raised through 'Facebook': Items to be approved for publishing:		
	a. Issues raised through 'Facebook': The PC utilises Facebook for items of interest not for its business: No issues raised. ■ Clerk tasked with removing 'Parish Magazine' from the agenda.	Clerk	
23.149	Village Matters: Reported incidents:		
	a. Elm Tree Close: Street lamps and road adoption of road: C/fwd.	CHS	
23.150	Matters for Further Information or Discussion at the Next Meeting:		
	a. Matters for Further Information: None raised. b. Matters for Discussion: No further matters raised.		
23.151	Date of the Next Meeting: Coronavirus: Update advice to be considered.		
	a. Meetings for 2023/24: i. Parish Council Meeting 5 October 2023 at 7.30pm.		
There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:12pm. Draft Minutes subject to Confirmation Minutes approved 5.10.2023 – Minute Ref: M9/2023-23.154 Signed by the Chairman J. Lamont – J. Lamont			