

BLEWBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 8th April 2020 at 7.30 pm. This meeting was held remotely via an e-conference application.

In attendance:- Cllrs C Lakeland (CL/Chair), M Penington (MP), M Blythe (MB), L Inglis (LI), V Humphries (VH), J Gibson (JG), P Kilroe (PK), M Shayler (MS), M Jacobs (MJ). Miss E Cooper (Clerk/EC), District Cllr H Gascoigne (HG) & S Medley (SM)

1. Apologies for absence

Mr D Hollick (Lengthman), County Cllr M Fox-Davies

2. Declarations of interests relating to this meeting

None declared.

3. Update on the Coronavirus situation and:-

3.1 The effects on the residents of Blewbury

LI reported that the Good Neighbours scheme was working well in the village, with people looking out for their immediate neighbours and helping out village wide.

All play areas, including the fitness equipment on Tickers Folly Field are out of use until further notice, but the green spaces remain open for exercise, with adherence to social distancing guidelines.

The cemetery was closed to visitors, but has since been re-opened. Current guidelines must still be observed.

3.2 The effects on the working of the Parish Council

The Parish Council remains at full strength and all meetings will be held remotely until further notice.

Both the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual General Meeting have been cancelled.

Arrangements are in place for the signing of cheques as required.

3.3 To agree if any emergency measures need to be introduced

Emergency measures are under revision, should they need to be extended, and for future use. New and updated regulations are being closely monitored.

4. County Councillor's report

Reports are being issued and disseminated on a regular basis from Cllr Mike Fox-Davies. A report was not provided specifically for the meeting.

5. District Councillor's report (see Appendix B below)

The District Councillors explained how the council had reprioritised its activities to put a great deal of resource in to helping communities at this time. More details at Appendix B. Information is regularly updated and disseminated.

District Councillors stated that funding could be made available for community groups via the Parish Council.

CL to consider how funding could be made available to help in the community.

LI to speak to other community group coordinators re how funding could help if needed.

SM and HG were happy to take questions regarding funding directly.

MP asked if any stats were available of how this area was affected by the virus? SM said that the Local Residents Forum was reporting to the COBRA Committee, but this information was not known. MP suggested stats may help with people's behaviour. SM will feedback to the District Council.

SM & HG also confirmed that all planning considerations were carrying on as normal as far as possible in the current situation.

HG stated that their action points (see below) had not been answered as there had been no meetings and resources were assigned elsewhere.

6. To receive the Lengthman's report (see Appendix A below)
7. To approve previous minutes
Minutes of the BPC meeting 11.03.20. These minutes were approved by the council with no changes and will be signed at a later date.
8. Actions from this meeting, plus Actions from previous meetings and any matters arising.

No.	Actions from this meeting	When
1.	EC to ask Beeswax to provide a written update on current work (happening & planned) for dissemination to village.	May meeting
2.	MJ to look at more environmentally friendly weed killers & report back to council.	May meeting
3.	EC to issue notice on Facebook regarding use of the chalk pits during this time.	May meeting
4.	CL to produce an annual Chair's Report & send to Clerk	24.4.20
5.	LI to produce an annual Planning report & send to Clerk	24.4.20
6.	CL to consider how funding could be made available to help in the community.	May meeting
No.	Actions from March 2020 meeting	When
4.	VH to look at remedial work required at KAP.	C'fwd until further notice
6.	HG to find out:- 1. Why carbon neutral new housing specs are not being applied now? 2. What are the minimum space standards being applied to new housing? 2. What is the DC doing to improve the running of its offices? 3. What kinds of climate emergency initiatives might receive funding?	By email - outstanding
No.	Actions arising from February 2020 Meeting	When
6.	Clerk to work out Blewshed proportion of electricity usage & inform Blewshed for payment	O/S
13.	CL to explore alternative environmentally friendly electricity suppliers for the Clubhouse/Melland Room and Scout Hut.	O/S
No.	Actions arising from December 2019 Meeting	When
1.	Bus stops along Bessels Way – Clerk to chase OCC.	O/S

9. Planning & Housing

9.1 Planning committee report

Planning permission has been received for the following consultations:-

P20/V0161/FUL Land adjacent to The Nurseries, London Road

P20/V0191/HH Ashdown House, Berry Lane

P19/V1952/BLE Amend 1 Green Bushes, Westbrook Street

P19/V1951/HH/BLE Amend 1 Green Bushes, Westbrook Street

Planning permission has been refused for the following consultation:-

P19/V3253/FUL Amend 1 Rumseys Barn, London Road

9.2 Responses to current applications

P20/V0542/HH Fieldside House, London Road, Blewbury

Proposed alterations & extension to existing kitchen.

Deadline noon 11.04.20

Blewbury Parish Council voted no objections to this consultation.

10. Finance & Administration

10.1 Update on CIL or S106 contributions and approve planned expenditure.

The council unanimously agreed to formally accept the conditions of the S106 grant for the Village Hall Refurbishment, the sum of which is c£11000. Whatever part the sum is not spent by the end of the current financial year, it would be returned.

CIL – c£2200 had been awarded to the council this month.

10.2 Update on financial arrangements

10.2.1 Online banking update

Lloyds online banking is working fully. Due to the current difficulties in contacting Barclays Bank, it was agreed not to pursue an online banking set-up.

10.3 To approve payments to be made under ancillary powers and within budgeted amounts

Note:- All payments through Lloyds, with the exception of BT (Santander).

PAYEE	Description / Power to spend	Amount
E Cooper / D Hollick	Clerk & Lengthman's salary and expenses for March (paid online 09.04.20)	£1286.73
NEST	Clerk's pension DD March (paid 6.4.20)	£69.43
HMRC	PAYE Clerk & Lengthman payment March	£118.20
Biffa Waste Services Ltd	Waste services DD (26.4.20)	£110.16
BT	Clubhouse line rental DD March	£33.00
OALC	CiLCA Mentoring Programme (paid 16.03.20 to be ratified)	£330.00
PWLB	Loan repayment 497831 (29.4.20) DD 29.04.20	£4627.50
Downland Villages Transport Group	Annual donation	£400.00
Red Box Fire Control	Service attendance Clubhouse (paid 16.3.20 to be ratified)	£189.60
Total		£7164.62

Major Receipts Dec 2019	Description	Amount
Vale of White Horse DC	BPC Precept 06.04.20	£32,500.00
Reeves Memorial	Powell Memorial	£75.00
Total		£32,575.00

Barclays Bank Payments	Description	Amount
25.03.20	Professional services to date for the refurbishment of Blewbury Village Hall including post-contract administration and project management.	£2220.00
Total		£2220.00

10.4 To sign of end of month reconciliations for Lloyds/Santander & Barclays banks

Reconciliations were submitted via email and agreed, but physical signatures would take place at a later date.

11. Village hall refurbishment

The council members acknowledged receipt of circulated update on the Village Hall Refurbishment. CL confirmed a 'Lighting' meeting would take place on 09.04.20, with progress meeting the following week (all remotely held). Work was still ongoing, but had slowed due to current conditions. A second bill of c£20,000 was expected this month.

CL also confirmed that Heather Way, leading to the village hall, was owned by the Parish Council (road and pathways). The resurfacing of such would be included in village hall discussions at a later date.

12. Recreation Ground / Clubhouse

12.1 Update on the Tickers Folly Field recreation ground and car park

The closure signs on the play areas were still in place. No other update.

12.2 To receive an update on the Clubhouse (inc. cricket pitch, Melland room & car park)

12.2.1 To instruct the council to issue a Section 146 (return of lease) notice to the CIC

CL had spoken to S Barrett regarding the S146 notice and the CIC's ability to obtain a small business rate relief grant, which would enable remedial work to take place at the Clubhouse (when circumstances allow). CL asked for the council's approval of the S146 notice, but to be issued at a future date. Council unanimously agreed.

13. Risk Management

13.1 Update on the claim relating the Clubhouse incident

No update this month.

13.2 Update on village play spaces (TFF / KAP)

All play spaces are closed until further notice.

13.3 Update on Compliance

Information from the council on the current situation, including helpful information and changes to regulations are being posted on Facebook as appropriate and necessary.

14. Update on any issues relating to the Environment

14.1 Update from Sustainable Blewbury meeting

Nothing to report this month.

14.2 Update on the OGB & ONPA

LI had recently spoken to the Head of Neighbourhood Planning regarding problems with communication between development management officers and NDP groups in the Vale. SM requested LI to copy correspondence to her in case she could be of help. New meetings are planned between Vale officers and NDP groups, starting with the newest NDPs first. Blewbury, having had its NDP made in 2016, will be further down the list for such a meeting.

15. Update on any issues relating to Footways, Footpaths, rights of way and open spaces

15.1 Confirmation of the fence encroachment rectification on footpath 24

JG confirmed that the fence encroachment had been rectified.

15.2 Update on Coffin Way / Cycle Path

LI stated that communications had been exchanged, but there was no update this month.

15.3 Update on grass cutting contract tender.

15.3.1 To decide on stipulating a more environmentally sensitive fungicide as a condition of the spraying element.

Following a discussion, the general consensus was that environmentally weed killer should be used and the council should set an example. MJ agreed to look at more environmentally friendly and reasonable alternatives to chemical weed killer and advise council accordingly.

CL requested that further discussion take place over email, so a decision can be taken/ratified at the next meeting.

15.3.2 Council agreed unanimously to continue with Whitehorse Horticulture as the grounds contractor for specified village areas. (Letter to Whitehorse Horticulture dated 23.3.20 & subsequent response refers). EC to issue confirmation letter (Clerk's note:- Letter issued 14.04.20).

15.4 Update on any other issues relating to the above

EC was asked to put a notice on Facebook regarding use of the chalk pits during this time.

16. Update on any issues relating to roads, road safety and public transport

16.1 Conditions of local roads and decide on any course of action

None this month.

16.2 Update on the Blewbury Speed Watch group

16.2.1 To approve ordering equipment

The council agreed to the purchase of equipment as and when the Speed Watch group is able to start. No action can be taken until training is completed and no training can currently be undertaken. Approval had been received for use of the Thames Valley Police logo on the entrance signs to the village.

CL to confirm the shopping list of items required (speed guns, PPE etc). The council unanimously agreed in principle to the purchase at the appropriate time. Also to confirm the size of the signs as entrances to the village to VH. CL also confirmed that money raised for the council from the Rat Pack concert would be used for the purchase of the equipment.

17. Correspondence – To consider items circulated/requiring a reply / consultation

Largely relating to the Coronavirus. See item 3 above.

18. To set the date of the next meeting of the PC

Council to formally agree the following:-

18.1 That the Annual Parish Meeting is cancelled. Any representative reports received will be circulated and published online towards the end of April.

Council unanimously agreed. LI to produce a Planning Report. CL to produce the Chair's Report.

18.2 That the holding of the Annual General Meeting will be via an e-conference app and can currently be held up to the end of May.

Since the agenda was written, further information had been issued by NALC stating that the AGM need not be held this year. Council therefore agreed that this meeting would be cancelled, but a regular Parish Council meeting would still be held on Wednesday 13th May.

18.3 All future, regular monthly meetings of the council will be held via an e-conference system, until further notice.

Council unanimously agreed.

The meeting concluded at 20.53pm.

Appendix A

LENGTHMAN'S REPORT - MARCH 2020

Very wet start to the month but then good weather allowing for grass cutting to start in earnest.

All footpaths, the Recreation ground and play areas have been cut and are mostly in good condition although a couple of paths have wet muddy patches.

There have been a few repair jobs this month, namely the KAP gate which had a broken hinge and the replacement of the posts and rails at the bridge near the Chapel which has been damaged for some time and had become dangerous.

As a result of the Coronavirus the KAP play area has been closed and the gates chained up. Also I have removed all the swings and zip wire seat from TFF play area. Some need replacing anyway as they have splits.

I hope you are all keeping well and not too bored!!

Regards, David.

Appendix B

Hello from Hayleigh & Sarah Coronavirus Update from your Local District Councillors Thursday 9th April 2020

Hello! We hope everyone is managing to stay safe and well whilst staying at home. The fantastic local support groups in the communities we represent have been doing an amazing job ensuring that food, supplies and medicine are delivered to their neighbours in need. Councillors and council staff have put together the following message of thanks to all the incredible volunteers across the Vale, which of course includes Blewbury Good Neighbours, Harwell Helpers, Chilton Mutual Aid, Great Western Park Community Support and the Upton village WhatsApp group: <https://youtu.be/-PcgotRHFao>



This update provides our summary of all the recent news from the Vale of White Horse District Council relating to how council services are affected, and how the council is supporting community volunteer groups and vulnerable residents. Ongoing updates are posted on our councillor Facebook Page: [Cllrs Hayleigh Gascoigne & Sarah Medley](#), and on the Vale of White Horse [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.

For the most up-to-date information on how the district council's services are affected, please take a look at the dedicated Vale webpage for updates:

As the Easter Bank Holiday weekend approaches, we hope that everyone can enjoy the sunshine in their gardens or during their daily exercise. The council's parks and open spaces are open for residents to use for their daily exercise if they live locally, whilst observing social distancing guidelines, but they must not be used for recreational activities like sports, picnics or sunbathing.

Remember the simple message: Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives.
Community Support Update

- The councils' dedicated support service for people who need urgent help because of the Coronavirus pandemic will remain open over the whole Easter weekend.
- **You can call 01235 422600 or email communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk from 9am-5pm on Good Friday, Saturday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday.**
- Please don't wait until the last minute to call us as it can take a day or two to get help out to you. This may take longer over the bank holiday weekend if supplies are difficult to get hold of.
- Please remember, the first step if you need help is to check with your friends or family, or a trusted neighbour. If they can't help, then try your local volunteer group and if you have no success with either then please don't hesitate to call or email on the contact details above.

Take care, stay safe, stay home!

We will endeavour to keep you updated on the council's response to the Coronavirus COVID-19 through future newsletters and our dedicated councillor Facebook Page: [Cllrs Hayleigh Gascoigne & Sarah Medley](#). Please do not hesitate to get in touch with any issues or concerns - our email addresses are hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and sarah.medley@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

Waste Collections

- Although this isn't a typical Easter for many of us, one thing that does remain the same is there will be changes to our waste collections over the Easter break.
- Following bank holidays we empty bins on a different day to normal collections and this one's no exception. To find out more visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/bankholiday
- If your bin is not emptied, please leave it out for up to three days and we will try and catch up with collections.
- We have had to suspend our kerbside small electricals and textiles recycling service because the centres that would normally accept these items are currently unable to take them for processing.
- Residents are asked to keep these items until the service has resumed - do not put them in the general rubbish or recycling bins because of the fire risk to bin trucks.

Council Tax

- Where possible, residents should continue to pay their bills as normal. If you are genuinely having difficulty paying their council tax, contact our council tax team on vowh.counciltax@secure.capita.co.uk or call 0345 302 2315.
- People who are currently not being paid, and are struggling to pay their council tax bill, are encouraged to apply for Council Tax Reduction – their account will then be put on hold for 30 days while their application is processed. To apply for Council Tax Reduction please visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/ctrs
- The government has confirmed details of a £500million hardship fund. Under this scheme, residents in receipt of Council Tax Reduction will receive a minimum of £150 off their council tax bill for 2020/2021, unless their bill is less than £150, in which case their bill will be reduced to zero. This is in addition to

any support they already receive. The council are now working to confirm the amount each individual qualifying household will receive off their bill – as soon as this is complete, revised bills will be issued.

Business Support

- For the latest coronavirus advice for business owners, self-employed and job seekers, please see our South and Vale Business Support website <https://www.svbs.co.uk/coronavirus-guidance-and-support/>
- We have launched an online form for local businesses to apply for the government's small business and retail grants: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/businessrates
- Those that can pay their bills should do so as normal, however those businesses who are genuinely having difficulty paying their business rates should contact our business rates team via vowh.businessrates@secure.capita.co.uk
- We have become aware that businesses who pay business rates through a management company because they work from a shared or serviced office cannot apply for one of these grants. However, we now understand that this is not the case. The government is aware of this issue and therefore the situation may change in the future. Our message to businesses in this situation is to head to our business support website to see what other financial support they might be eligible for – www.svbs.co.uk/
- The South & Vale Business Support team publishes the latest government advice and support on svbs.co.uk and via twitter ([@TeamSVBS](https://twitter.com/TeamSVBS)), including about rates relief and business support grants. Business can also sign up to receive an e-newsletter via the website.
- The website also lists the latest job vacancies for individuals seeking temporary employment, exercises to stay healthy while working from home, and links to mental health organisations.
- The government has advised those who are self-employed who are in urgent need of financial assistance to apply for [Universal Credit](#) and Council Tax Reduction. This will provide them with support until a grant for the self-employed becomes available in June
- Food businesses who are unsure about whether they can stay open, or who wish to change to a takeaway or delivery service, can contact our environmental health team for advice either by emailing env.health@southandvale.gov.uk or leaving a message on 01235 422403

Cornerstone and The Beacon are here for you #AtHome

Arts and entertainment in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse have gone online! If you're struggling to keep the kids entertained, or you're fed up with endlessly scrolling through uninspiring choices on video streaming services, *Cornerstone Arts Centre* and *The Beacon* are here to help.

Cornerstone in Didcot

- Cornerstone is providing a full #CornerstoneAtHome schedule of great theatre, music and comedy shows all streamed online for free.
- Family fun with daily story time – join facebook.com/CornerstoneDidcot at 4pm each day for the latest instalment of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, read by Jessie Collier (Cornerstone Arts Centre's Arts Development Officer), or watch each session in your own time.
- Also, on facebook.com/CornerstoneDidcot, find out about special National Theatre shows available to watch for free for a limited period on YouTube, including *One Man Two Guvvors* and *Jane Eyre*.
- If it's classes that you're after, make sure you visit cornerstone-arts.org to find out how you can get involved with online video sessions - over the coming weeks you can try your hand at classes from theatre to photography. Alongside this they will be offering everyone the chance to check out some truly unique specially commissioned interactive content – don't miss out!

The Beacon in Wantage

- Visit beaconwantage.co.uk and facebook.com/TheBeaconWantage for #BeaconAtHome, including world class theatre online and some special performances from our favourite local acts. There will also

be new online classes and groups for you and your family to enjoy from home courtesy of their regular hirers.

- Check out the gallery at beaconwantage.co.uk of the famous Rainbow illustrations, made by children in the local area this display is guaranteed to put a smile on people's faces.
- Popular covers band, The Zoots were scheduled to play The Beacon on Saturday 18 April – instead, Jamie from the band will now be performing a special 60s and 70s live acoustic set from his garage on The Zoots Facebook page at 7.30pm: www.facebook.com/thezoots - fans can request songs in advance.
- You can also find out about the online classes and content provided by local groups, and resources and information about providing practical help in the community.

Council Matters

- The government has temporarily removed the legal requirement for local authorities, including town and parishes, to hold public meetings in person during the coronavirus pandemic.
- This means that councils can now hold public meetings, including annual meetings, cabinet and committee meetings, via video, telephone conference calls, live webchat and live streaming.
- Members of the public and the press may also access meetings remotely so that the meeting is conducted in a transparent way.
- These regulations came into force on 4 April 2020 and apply to meetings until 7 May 2021.
- However, this date may change if medical and scientific advice leads to the relaxation of social distancing rules.
- Although the council's main focus has shifted to responding to the coronavirus pandemic, there are some pieces of council business that can continue where they don't have a detrimental effect on our community response.
- For instance, there are some areas where the government hasn't yet relaxed targets and deadlines and so where we can, we're working to meet those deadlines.
- A good example is the new Vale Local Plan – we recently put out a call for sites, which is one of the first steps in creating a Local Plan. The government hasn't relaxed the rules on Five Year Land Supply requirements, so where we can, and where it doesn't hamper our direct community support work, we are working to ensure we continue to meet these requirements.

Helplines and Websites for Advice and Support

There are lots of ways people are being affected by the coronavirus pandemic, whether it's due to a loss of work, anxiety and stress, or simply trying to adapt to a very different way of life. The council have pulled together the following list of support services to help with this:

Mental Health support

- Support to recover from mental health issues and staying independent is available from [Connection Support](http://ConnectionSupport.org) - 01865 711267.
- [Samaritans](http://Samaritans.org) provide advice and support for anyone having a hard time. Call 116 123.
- [CALM](http://CALM.org) is the Campaign Against Living Miserably – supporting men under 45 with mental health issues. Call 0800 58 58 58.

Housing

- For housing advice, call our Housing Needs Team on 01235 422452 or email housing@southandvale.gov.uk. You can also find more information at southoxon.gov.uk/housing or whitehorsedc.gov.uk/housing.
- [Shelter](http://Shelter.org) offer housing advice, support and legal services - 0344 515 1380.
- [emmaus](http://emmaus.org) offer support for the homeless - 0300 303 7555.

Domestic Abuse

- [Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service](#) offers confidential advice and guidance as well as practical support to help rebuild your confidence and empower people to make the changes they want. To access support via the Oxfordshire helpline dial 0800 731 0055 10am to 7pm weekdays.
[Reducing the Risk](#) provide information and services for those affected by domestic abuse in Oxfordshire. Their [Facebook](#) page has helpful content. Call 01865 965055.
[National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#) 0808 200 0247 operate 24 hours, 7 days a week.
- Women's Aid have published [COVID-19 safety advice for survivors](#) to support women during this time.
- [Oxfordshire Sexual and Rape Crisis Centre](#) (OSARCC) provides support for female survivors of sexual abuse, rape and harassment. Call 01865 726295.

Relationship advice

- For relationship advice and support call [Relate](#) on 01865 242960.

Drugs and alcohol

- [National Drugs Helpline](#) (FRANK) – information about drugs and drug use, help and advice – 0300 1236600.
[Alcoholics Anonymous](#) – the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking – 0800 9177650.
[Drinkaware](#) - UK-wide alcohol education charity helping people make better choices about their drinking - 020 7766 9900.

Modern Slavery

- [Modern Slavery Helpline](#) – report concerns or seek advice about modern slavery – 08000 121 700.

Fraud

- [Action Fraud](#) – the national reporting centre to report and to get advice about fraud and cybercrime - 0300 123 2040.

Employment

- Support in finding and remaining in employment is available from the [Oxfordshire Employment Service](#) - 01865 815809.

Debt

- Free debt advice is available from the [National Debtline](#) - 0808 808 4000
- [Money Advice Service](#) also provides free debt advice - 0800 138 1677

Bereavement

- Call the [Bereavement Advice Centre](#) on 0800 6349494 for advice and support
- [SeeSaw](#) provides bereavement support for young people - 01865 744768