

ODDINGTON PARISH ANNUAL MEETING
FRIDAY 20th APRIL 2018 AT 7 PM
Minutes

1. Apologies for absence received from Sarah Young, Julie Howkins, John Harzmann, Vicky & Michael Robinson, Virginia & Steve Lawrence, Kevin Gosling, Neil & Libby Grantham, Kevin & Claire Vickers.

29 residents attended.

2. To approve the minutes of the Meeting held on 21st April 2017. Proposed by the Chair, Adrian Young, and seconded by Mark Stanley-Price. Approved unanimously.

3. (i) To approve the annual accounts for the year 1st April 2017 - 31st March 2018 and

(ii) To approve individual payments made during the year, as shown in the 'cashbook'.

Our Treasurer Gerry Johnson presented the accounts and explained the reasons for the variation in income and expenditure compared with the previous year, which related mainly to the receipt of a grant for and the expenditure to buy a defibrillator. Following the halving of the grass cutting grant and withdrawal of the 'new homes bonus' the Meeting's income is about £250 per year but its expenditure about twice this amount. In time therefore it is likely that a precept will need to be requested from residents. But, with £2,871 in the Meeting's bank account, barring major unexpected problems that time appears some way off. Approval of both documents proposed by Adrian Young, seconded by Anita Franklin. Both approved unanimously.

4. To approve the Annual Return for the year ending 31st March 2018

(i) Annual Governance Statement 2017/2018

(ii) Statement of accounts 2017/2018

Adrian Young explained the purpose of these documents and proposed their approval, seconded by Jonathan Smith. Both approved unanimously.

5. Matters arising from the minutes:

(i) Defibrillator in telephone kiosk on village green. Fortunately this had not been used and it remains in good working order.

(ii) Oxford Green Belt Network. After a brief discussion, and especially in view of the increasing threats to the green belt around Oxford (in which Oddington is located) the Meeting resolved to continue its modest subscription to this organisation.

(iii) To consider the need to reinstate the insurance of the Meeting. The Chair expressed his long-held view that the purchase of costly insurance to cover the few assets of the Meeting and to provide public liability insurance was, given the very limited services provided, not justified. The question of insuring our defibrillator against damage and theft was discussed but only one quote could be obtained for this. On balance the meeting felt the risks were low and decided against proceeding with this.

4. Oxford – Cambridge expressway. There was a lengthy discussion about this. The Chair gave a brief synopsis of the way the scheme had developed, its major nature, involving not only extending the

railway network but also creation of a major road and large numbers of houses only having been recently made fully clear. The time scale is long; initial proposals were only made in July 2017; a decision on which 'corridor', A, B or C, for the road to be recommended to government will be made in summer 2018; following public consultations in late 2019/early 2020 the 'preferred route' will be announced in Autumn 2020; with construction possibly beginning in 2025 and completion in 2030. One of many possible 'preferred routes' might run across Otmoor. This possibility has galvanised villages to the south and east of Otmoor, including Beckley and Horton cum Studley, who would be severely affected if this were the case, to take proactive action by forming the campaigning Expressway Action Group (EAG). A road across Otmoor would also adversely affect Oddington, as would another possible route to our west, near the A34 and the railway line from Islip to Bicester. Of the three possible corridors, option A would take the road well to the south-east of Oxford and spare Otmoor and our parish; but either option B or C would leave us at risk both to east and west. However, these corridors are so wide that it is impossible to say at present how badly we would be affected. In the case of corridors B or C being chosen we would be little the wiser until the 'preferred route' is chosen in autumn 2020.

Mark Stanley-Price articulately expressed his serious concerns, and his view that Oddington should emulate the villages on the other side of Otmoor by coordinating our efforts with our neighbours in neighbouring parishes. He felt that if we failed to do this the route planners might choose the path of least resistance through the western side of Oddington Parish, near the A34 and railway. He, Gerry Johnson and Jonathan Smith kindly offered to assist the Chair in this. The Chair will contact these other parish councils and invite them to become involved in jointly opposing routes which would not only adversely affect Otmoor itself, but the 'greater Otmoor area' of which our and their parishes are a part, and the biodiversity that area contains. The threat is not only from the road, but also huge associated housing development – over 300,000 new homes within Oxfordshire.

We will know more sometime this summer when the corridor is chosen, and the Chair will keep parishioners informed. But this may be a long battle. Parishioners seeking more information and advice can look at the impressive EAG website <https://saveotmoor.org/>; they might also consider signing the online petition <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/217244> which it is promoting. But be aware that our battle is not identical to EAG's, as we must look to our west as well as to the east.

5. Gas (and oil) for Oddington. Savy Sondhi at Pondockie is keen to explore the possibility of persuading Southern Gas Networks to bring mains gas to Oddington. To date 9 other households have also expressed an interest. If this initiative is to stand any chance it requires all those interested to make a determined effort by completing an application (at no initial cost) for their individual property. Please contact the Chair if you would like a copy of the application form. Having completed this it might be best if all were submitted together. If you wish to be involved please contact Savy, who is taking the lead in this. Those of you who have already expressed an interest should have Savy's email address. If anyone does not, please email the Chair and I will forward your email to her.

Those residents using oil are reminded about the Merton Oil Buying Group, kindly run by Steve Blood, which organises bulk buys monthly from competing suppliers, so achieving very competitive prices.

6. Fouling by dogs. Should we purchase a waste bin? (suggested by Stewart Carnegie). The Chair explained this would cost £170 to buy, plus about £100 per year to be emptied weekly by Cherwell Council. There was acceptance that this was a problem but (sorry Stewart!) no enthusiasm for a bin. A major part of the nuisance is caused by dogs wandering unaccompanied by their owners, and a bin would not help in this situation. It was agreed that if the situation worsened from time to time the Chair would send an email round; Celia Warde-Aldam felt this had been helpful in the past. Glenys Edwards asked that the church gate be kept closed to prevent dogs entering.

7. Elections of Chair and Treasurer. Adrian Young as Chair and Gerry Johnson as Treasurer were willing to stand for another year. Proposed by Jonathan Smith, seconded by Mark Stanley-Price; both elected unopposed.

8. To (i) approve the recommendations of a Committee Meeting (consisting of the Chairman, Treasurer and one parishioner) held on 4th March 2018 that the risk assessment, effectiveness of internal audit procedures, standing orders and financial regulations of Oddington Parish Meeting remain adequate for the purpose, and should not presently be amended and (ii) re-appoint the Committee to meet in March 2019 to consider these matters again. Proposed Margaret Lambert, seconded Anthony Miller. Passed unanimously.

9. Any other business.

The Chair advised the recent theft of wrought iron gates from Neil Lambert's cottage by thieves using an unmarked white van; Julia Burchell was aware of an attempted break-in of her neighbour's garage recently. Please be aware and take appropriate precautions.

The Chair thanked Vicky and Mike Robinson for being willing to cut the 'triangle' of grass near the post box; and Feng and Serena at Kotmalee for agreeing to cut the grass fronting their property. Both were areas that Neil Lambert had so kindly cut without seeking thanks or reward for so many years.

Thanks also to Ed Boanas who has kindly agreed to act as our internal auditor, something we have previously paid about £100 for each year. This will help to conserve the Meeting's reserves.

The Chair advised a new official email address for the Parish Meeting – oddingtonpm@gmail.com , but he is happy to continue to receive emails to his existing address as well.

Gerry Johnson has kindly added a tab marked 'Oddington Parish Meeting' on the website for the Church of St. Andrew. These minutes, others documents of interest, and documents which the Parish Meeting is required to make public, will be placed there - <https://churchofstandrewoddington.org/> .

Stewart Carnegie asked if we could have a 20mph speed limit in the village, and Glenys Edwards suggested the speed restriction sign on the approach past Logg Farm be moved further out of the village, nearer the village name sign on that road. The Chair will enquire.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.