

## TAPLOW PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF TAPLOW PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> MAY 2019 AT 8.00 P.M. IN THE READING ROOM, TAPLOW VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, TAPLOW SL6 0EX

#### Present

Cllr. Jamie Barnard (Chairman) Cllr. Roger Worthington  
Cllr. Claire Price Cllr. Louise Symons  
Cllr. George Sandy Cllr. Karen Walsh  
Cllr. Spencer Norton  
Mrs. K H Holder (Clerk) and 17 members of the public.  
The Chairman declared the meeting open at 8.00pm.

#### **1 Apologies for absence**

Cllr. Val Pridmore, Cllr. Gerry O’Riordan and County Cllr. Dhillon.

#### **2 Report from Thames Valley Police**

A report had been submitted and was read out by the Chairman. Crime in Taplow for the last year amounted to 2 burglaries (one from a shed), 13 vehicle thefts and 20 occurrences of criminal damage. A ‘whats app’ group had been set up to warn land owners about travellers.

#### **3 Report from the Parish Council**

##### 3.1 Report from the Chairman

3.1.1 The Chairman noted that two councillors were needed to replace Cllrs. Le Touze and Greeves. Ideally they should come from areas not already represented such as Mill lane or the north of the Parish. They would hold office until May 2020 when the next elections were due to take place. Elections had been delayed because of the decision taken by the Secretary of State to abolish the county and district councils in Buckinghamshire and set up a new unitary authority. No-one was sure what this would mean yet.

3.1.2 He said the greatest efforts this year had gone towards improving the village hall - in particular refurbishing the kitchen and replacing a number of windows and putting in new lights in the Perkins Room. New flowers had been placed in the planters around the Green and the benches re-oiled. Hire charges had been simplified. The Legacy Fund had been used to help repair the war memorial (match funded by HTS) and repaint the village gates. The Council had negotiated with BCC to have the power to clear certain footpaths which would hopefully make a real difference soon. The Council was also moving forward with plans to put in four streetlights in Institute Road with match funding from BCC. Work was in hand to try and clear the barn on the Green. He thanked the 30 volunteers who turned up to litter pick in the parish led by Jacqueline and Mike Turner.

3.1.3 In the future he hoped volunteers would come forward to start deploying the sentinel speed camera, the Council would continue to refurbish the village hall and to lobby BCC for parking solutions and the rechanneling of the springs in Rectory Road.

##### 3.2 Report from the Finance Chairman

Cllr. Claire Price reported that, for the year ended 31 March 2019, the Precept had been increased by £4,500 and reserves had been depleted by £7,500 so that the

refurbishment work of the kitchen, windows and repair to paving slabs could take place in regards to the Hall. The Precept would increase again in 2019-20 to help fund new lighting for Institute Road and footpath clearance as well as ongoing refurbishment of the Hall. In addition this year the Council managed to release £12,046 from SBDC which they were holding from the Gladys Jones bequest for environmental issues.

### 3.3 Report from the Planning Committee Chairman

Cllr. Worthington reported that:-

3.3.1 Over the year there have been 78 applications affecting Taplow. Many of these were mundane approvals for tree pruning and modest house amendments. On a number of them, however, the council had raised comments or objections. We are now logging these on the Taplow Parish Council web site.

3.3.2 Neighbourhood Plan - This has been re-activated after a lapse. A new Working Party has been set up with Martin Maund as chairman.

3.3.3 Cliveden Stud - The current owner has been progressively making applications to remove the covenants and planning restrictions applying to the various properties on the site. Together with previous owners seven applications have been made on this basis since 2007. All have been successfully resisted but there is no reason to assume that the pressure is over. SBDC must continue to make it clear that the site is for equine or agricultural use only.

3.3.4 Mill Lane - The Berkeley Homes development has been largely very successful and has illustrated the value of preparing an SPD to guide site development. Subsequent and pending applications reflect both some promising changes and raise some concerns. The pending application for a pub has broadly received local support. The earlier approval to move the office block rather than remove it to make space for the pub is expected to lead to most of the river bank being devoted to car parking which is disappointing. It is also leading to considerable uncertainty over the continuity of boating activity – the marina and chandlery of the original approvals appears to be shrinking and the boatyard adjacent to Maidenhead Bridge is on a very short lease from SBDC. Coupled with the pending application to redevelop the Old Boathouse site leads us to query SBDC as to its view of how river focused activity is to be assured.

3.3.5 Rectory Road - The application to redevelop 3 Saxon Gardens with new access onto Rectory Road has created concern that this vehicle entrance so close to the Berry Hill turn-in is dangerous. The access itself has been approved but the redevelopment is still undecided.

3.3.6 Challen's Chicks Marsh Lane - An application for a Quail Barn has been outstanding for 6 months. It is seen as excessive development with fears that it is leading to industrial scale operations unsuited to the location.

3.3.7 Buffins - The heavy over-parking in Buffins was highlighted by an application to lower a kerb to allow parking in a front garden. Although this is perfectly legal it has led to an initiative to investigate whether more parking space can be freed up to avoid wholesale garden parking to the detriment of the estate setting.

3.3.8 Taplow Station - The construction of the new footbridge with lifts is now under way. There is no sign that SBDC or BCC is taking any notice of Crossrail in Taplow, although they talk big about its impact generally.

3.3.9 Roots Smallholding - The application to build a Care Home on this site was refused but has now gone to appeal. The site is part of the Option 16 removal from the Green Belt in the emerging Local Plan. The council strongly favours the improvement of station parking within the site.

3.3.10 Huntswood Golf Club - The club has found that it didn't own the land on which its groundsman's building was sited. It has now found that its club house has been operated for some years in contravention of its planning approvals. Its application for retrospective approval has been denied. Unclear what the impact on the course may be.

3.3.11 Mr. Michael Barnes of Orkney Court expressed concern over Cliveden Stud. He noted SBDC had issued 24 enforcement notices over the years and that following the removal of some mature trees recently it had become clear that a new and large farm building had been erected. It had also been observed that motor repair works were taking place and new residents had moved into the vacated tenancies. Cllr. Sandy thanked Mr. Barnes for his comments and promised the Council would support residents in their complaints to SBDC. Cllr. Worthington was concerned that the enforcement record of SBDC was not impressive given evidence of how issues in Ellington Road had been handled. Mrs. Norton noted that planning enforcement officers had not even responded to her emails for over a year. Cllr. Sandy would bring the matter to the attention of those on planning committee.

3.3.12 Robert Harrap asked if more information was forthcoming about time-tabling crossrail trains to stop at Taplow on Sundays. Geoff Herbert from MMPA stated that Sunday service was still in the Crossrail plan but not until after full service availability of the Elizabeth line.

3.3.13 Mr. Smales was concerned the Environment Agency had closed the car park by the Jubilee bridge in Mill Lane. HTS were campaigning for it to be re-opened and he asked the Council to support HTS in this.

#### **4 Report from County Councillor Dev Dhillon**

4.1 In the absence of County Cllr. Dhillon, Cllr. George Sandy reported that the Unitary Authority decision meant that sitting councillors continued for another year. He said there had been a lot of politics taking place. Originally District Councils had planned a judicial review of the decision but in an effort to not spend public money on this the leaders of the District councils were considering taking on lead roles in the new authority instead. Things were on hold for now.

4.2 The Emerging Local Plan had caused concern about its impact on Green Belt issues in Taplow. He did not think the effect on Taplow would be significant and that only some land around the station would be released from the Green Belt.

4.3 He noted that work on the Cycleway was due to start soon. He said most residents and the Parish Council had been against it as it was too narrow and crossed driveways dangerously not to mention the chaos of creating it.

4.4 He noted Tatling End police station in Denham was to be redeveloped into 140 dwellings and temporary accommodation for homeless was being developed near the Bishop Centre.

#### **5 Questions to District Councillor George Sandy**

5.1 In response to a question about the Berry Hill Lights Cllr. Sandy said the lights would not be upgraded until November after the cycleway had been installed.

5.2 Mr. Human of Mill Lane said he was new to the area and asked what Taplow was proud of. Responses included the river area, equestrian activities, the village green party and summer fete as well as the big properties such as Cliveden and Taplow Court.

#### **6 Community Updates from:-**

6.1 Rev. Cresswell, St Nicolas Church, reported that the Church dated back to the Victorian period. 55 residents regularly worshipped there although this swells at Easter

and Christmas. There had been 21 new names on their electoral register this year bringing the total to 80. A number of initiatives had happened such as 'Open Wednesdays', having the parish office open on Mondays, hosting events and the summer fete, reviewing the patterns of worship. They had welcomed a new part time curate and future ideas included focusing on starting a toddler group and providing mental health support. Challenges included raising another £30,000 for the south side appeal. They also had issues with the heating system. There was also a year on year £10,000 deficit in income over expenditure. To plug this they were launching a parish wide giving scheme with inflationary rises each year.

6.2 Steve Warren, St Nicolas School business manager, reported that the school had existed since 1848 and had moved to its present location in 1965. They were a stand alone academy and were fighting to fill spaces this year owing to a low birth rate. The school was not in a good state of repair and priorities included safeguarding the field by putting up fencing, repairing the roof and putting in disability friendly accesses. Grant bids had been made for all these and failed but were being appealed. Another big issue was the collapse of pipe work under the neighbouring garage owing to tree damage. He was aware inconsiderate parking was still an issue but this was compounded by residents parking badly too.

6.3 Robert Harrap, SGI, reported SGI had bought Taplow Court from Plessy in 1988 and reopened it as the National Headquarters of SGI in 1989. They would be celebrating 30 years in the village later this year. They were the largest growing Buddhist organisation in Europe with roots in Japan. They hosted residential courses and events, held lectures in philosophy and had the largest library of Oriental Philosophy books in the UK. They were hosting a series of Open Days throughout the summer. The gardens were thriving with 350 new trees being planted in the last 3 months. The Hall was available for charity events at no charge. They were licensed for weddings. They maintained the Saxon Burial Mound. They were delighted to be part of the community and held a series of introductory talks on Wednesday evenings followed by refreshments.

6.4 Miv Wayland-Smith and Claire Ashton-Tait reported that THRGA owned and managed land they had purchased in the mid -1950s between Boundary and Institute Roads partly let out to Clare's Court school and the Phoenix club. They also managed the OPG. In 1961 they had benefitted from a gravel extraction windfall of £10, 000 which they had invested and used the income to maintain the land. In the past year there had been a dog show on the land. They made a charitable donation of £1,500 to the school. They had taken steps to protect the land from travellers. The OPG had opened 5 years ago and was used by walkers, the school and youth groups. The aim was to encourage wildlife and develop the pond and copses. 35 bird boxes had been put in. Volunteer work parties were regularly organized. They were funded by donations and needed more volunteers.

6.5 Martin Maund, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Working Group, emphasized the importance of the NP to help manage development and protect the area from undesirable development. The NP will become a statutory planning document. It was an onerous task to prepare one and the working group were reviewing all information and starting to compile a master document of all concerns. They needed to wait for the new Local Plan before proceeding but in the meantime they were

concentrating on developing a Heritage Asset List and the threat to the Green Belt in the light of the inclusion of the Riverside area in a Townscape Character assessment not normally undertaken for Green Belt areas. They will be using a consultant and hope to be funded by grants, the Legacy fund and the Gladys Jones Fund. He encouraged everyone to study the new draft Local Plan when it is published later this summer and make as many complaints or comments as possible.

6.6 Andy Bond, Cricket Club, reported that the Club was set up in 1850 and plays on 10 acres of beautiful land gifted to the club under trust for the playing of cricket by Lady Gage in 1958. Its entrance is partly hidden opposite Taplow Court and they get little passing trade. The wooden pavilion was built in 1960 and if renovated would be a lovely venue for weddings and business meetings but funding is not easy to raise.

6.7 Nigel Smales, HTS, said the HTS was set up in 1959 as a vehicle to assist with planning and to avoid bad developments or neglect. It became a civic society to celebrate local heritage and promote community spirit. There were 250 member households each paying £7 or less pa. They often worked with other groups and had the advantage over the Council when it came to planning comments as their comments counted when deciding if a matter went to planning committee. They had a website and regular newsletter. Recent successes included persuading BCC to change their minds about right turns into Berry Hill linked to the cycleway, hosting the litter pick, contributing to the restoration of the war memorial. They were still looking into how best to commemorate the WW2 dead. They have been hosting the Village Green Party since 1986 and had been holding an Easter Egg hunt since 2010.

## **7 Any Other Business**

Mrs. Sandy enquired where the MVAS speeding sign currently was. The Clerk would enquire and advise her.

The meeting ended at 9.35 pm and was followed by a cheese and wine reception.