**Crawley Village**

**Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting**

 **held at 7.15pm on 11th May 2022**

1. Present: Colin Dingwall, Mark McCappin, Tony Connell, Graham Howkins, Sheena Derry, Gill Hill, Liam Walker, Keith Harris
2. Apologies: Sue Bremner-Milne
3. Chairman’s Report. CD reported that Crawley has enjoyed a very busy year.
	1. Drainage system. It has been established that part of the foul drainage system is worn out and needs replacement. Thames Water tried lining the pipes, but this caused further damage. MM reported that they have a new method to reline pipes using a lower pressure and we are on the priority list.
	2. The Burford HGV restriction, which had been driving more HGVs through the village, has been overturned. MM reported that OCC are now working on redrafting the freight strategy in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. This should go to Cabinet in June and Full Council in July. Once adopted they will start to work on specific schemes, including one for West Oxfordshire.
	3. SB-M has worked on a new Emergency Plan, which has now been submitted to WODC.

CD thanked all members of the parish council, mentioning specifically SD for her work as Secretary, SB-M for her thorough work as Treasurer and for her additional input on the Emergency Plan and Risk Assessments, MM for his enormous efforts on overturning the Burford weight restriction and additional work on highways and sewers, and GH for agreeing to take on administration rights for the website. He also wished to thank Sebastian and Lana for the use of the room at The Lamb for our meetings.

1. WODC reports
	1. LW was re-elected at the last election and noted how much his patch has grown – he now covers a population of 9,000 in 8 parishes.
		1. Following consultation, applications for a 20mph speed limit have been submitted and he hopes that Crawley will be in tranche 2.
		2. He has enjoyed helping with our litter picks and hopes we will continue the good work.
		3. He acknowledged that there is still work to do on drainage and roads within the village.
		4. Overturning the Burford weight restriction has been a significant change of strategy within OCC. He thanked MM and WiVTAG for all their hard work and support.
	2. GH reported that the past two years have been exceptional due to the arrival of Coronavirus, with all its issues, and subsequently the war in Ukraine. Her full report is reproduced below.

WODC finds itself in a position that is more fortunate than many councils. Through careful management it has built up a good level of reserves, but these are forecasts to be depleted significantly in the medium term and the Council’s financial security lies partly in the savings we have already made, but also potential efficiencies as yet undefined, government funding yet to be determined and future commercial strategies yet to be realised. The Council, in common with all councils, has had a difficult year. As well as maintaining business as usual, the staff have been at the forefront of coordinating support and recovery in the district. From working with local companies to help them strengthen their businesses and move forward out of the pandemic, to supporting and enabling community groups, providing a lifeline to the vulnerable, manning vaccination centres and distributing £49m of Covid grants – all while dealing with the effects of Covid on themselves and their own families. They should be justifiably proud of their efforts and we will continue to exercise caution in our finances but maintain the high level of service and innovation that the Council needs to secure our financial stability and carry on our service to our residents.

Ukraine: WODC is doing its utmost to assist the people of Ukraine. Supplies have been collected and dispatched in conjunction with the Red Cross and the RAF at Brize Norton. There are a number of national and local government responsibilities relating to the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Copies of these requirements are available.

Please let me know if you would like a copy.

Covid: Officers have been doing an incredible job in handling the recovery process and ensuring that vulnerable residents are looked after; liaising with businesses and arranging grants provided by the Government.

Waste service: Significant rises in costs have occurred. Ubico have inflationary pressures on fuel costs, coupled with driver shortages due to Covid have caused an increase of £350k on last year’s contract price. Recycling costs have increased by 50% per tonne, adding another £300k to our budget. This was partly caused by market conditions and exacerbated by a shortage of bidders on renewal.

Publica: The contract has risen by expected wage inflation. Resource shortages were recognised in several key areas including Planning and s106 support.

We have had areas that have seen an unprecedented increase in activity such as Planning. This is hugely affected by large scale housing developments which boost income in a particular year but are not a general pattern. The Local Plan is due to be revisited over the next couple of years. Business rates reset have again been deferred.

Council Tax: With a slight increase of £5 per Band D residences, we still remain with the second lowest Council Tax in England.

May I take this opportunity of thanking you for putting up with me as your District Councillor. I plan to be around for another year as I shall be up for election in May 2023.

1. Questions. KH asked if there is anything that can be done to prevent people parking close to the junction at the bottom of Farm Lane. Following discussion about that, and speeding traffic through the village, it was agreed that CD, TC, MM and KH will meet to walk round the village and try to identify a way forward.
2. Meeting ends.