**Crawley Parish Council**

**Minutes of meeting held at 7.30pm on 22nd March 2023 at The Lamb**

Present: Cllrs Colin Dingwall (Chair), Mark McCappin, Tony Connell, Heather Northam, Graham Howkins; Sheena Derry (Secretary); Sue Bremner-Milne (Treasurer); Lewis Ross, Rob Helyar, Keith Harris, Jane Harris, Jill Kerr, John Hill, Michelle Hill (parishioners).

1. Apologies: None

2. The Minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2023 were approved.

3. Declarations of interest: None.

4. Matters Arising.

* Following their visit to the last Parish Council meeting, there has been no further contact with the Witney Flood Mitigation Group.
* The sign in the centre of the village advertising a food van on the Crawley Mill site has been removed.
* OCC plan to plant the tree for Crawly village in the verge at the top of Leafield Hill before the end of March (not there on 19th March).
* SD has talked to Graham Franklin (grass cutting) about leaving some grass longer around the edges of the graveyard to encourage biodiversity. He is happy to accommodate our wishes if practical.

5. District Council Report. (CD)

* WODC has received a £250,000 grant to help small businesses through the economic downturn.
* The proposal to install Botley West Solar Farm was discussed at the Council meeting today (22nd March). The proposal is so large that the decision on whether to allow it will be made by the Secretary of State, and WODC have said they will not write in to comment about it until further details are available and they have the full picture. CD noted that the BWSF proposals would occupy an area equivalent to 3,000 football pitches. We already have solar farms covering land equivalent to 678 football pitches in West Oxfordshire.

6. County Council Report: No County Councillor attended the meeting.
CD noted that the current OCC administration seems determined to introduce measures despite opposition from public consultations. As examples he reported that there has been strong opposition against the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods from residents and businesses in Oxford. Witney High Street was closed to cars during the Covid pandemic to allow social distancing for pedestrians, and the closure was made permanent in January 2022 despite consultations showing that the majority of businesses and shoppers want it reopened.

7. Treasurer’s Report: SB-M had circulated the accounts before the meeting and had no concerns. We have about £2,200 left in the current account, £500 in the deposit account, and £360 in the defibrillator fund. A full report will follow at the end of the financial year.

8. Redevelopment of the Crawley Inn Site. CD had circulated some information about the proposed redevelopment of the Crawley Inn site, but a formal planning application has not yet been submitted. Contracts to buy were signed a year ago, subject to completion of probate. The purchaser is Morris Investments, and the planning consultants are based in Cirencester. Concerns were raised about the possibility of increased flooding on Foxburrow Lane.

9. Village Events (Jane Harris):

* There will be an event to celebrate the Coronation on Sunday 7th May at Manor Farm, which will include a barbeque, music and quiz. Thanks to Rob and Philippa for hosting this.
* There will be another pub quiz in September.
* There was clarification of funding arrangements for Bonfire Night – the PC buys the fireworks and the social committee refunds the cost from income on the night, with any losses covered by the PC. This year we need someone to undertake firework training (?John Hill) and possibly to do First Aid training (?Heather Northam). CD proposed that the PC authorised spending up to £300 for training, which was passed unanimously.

10. Neighbourhood Watch are having a big drive to get more people and communities to sign up. CD suggested we asked a local Police Community Support Officer to come to a future meeting to discuss the potential benefits to households/Crawley village.

Oxford City (jointly with Cherwell District Council) is consulting on future housing and economic needs. Previous assessments have substantially overestimated these needs and the current estimates are not based on Governments Standard Methodology but assumptions and trajectories that have been challenged. The conclusions on growth are not compatible with the [Oxfordshire Strategic Vision](https://futureoxfordshirepartnership.org/projects/oxfordshire-strategic-vision/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) which commits all our authorities to planning for ‘good growth’ that is both sustainable and inclusive. The concern for West Oxfordshire is that Oxford City will overestimate their need but be unable to accommodate the number of new houses, and then offload these to surrounding Districts without proper consultation. This has happened before. CD will submit a response to Need Not Greed Oxon.

11. Community Action

* Five couples have volunteered to do river pollution testing and have undergone training. We now have the test kits and will start testing in April.
* MM and SD attended a Nature and Climate Event hosted by WODC earlier this month. Three topics were discussed: Biodiversity, Retrofit, and EV charging. Attendees could discuss two of these topics in groups of about 10, and the idea was to talk about what people wanted, what they had already done in their communities, what help and advice was available, and what barriers exist. It was a lively and interesting evening, and most people agreed that it would help to create a platform where we could continue to communicate and exchange experiences. WODC said they would provide feedback on the event and parish email addresses of attendees, but so far, we have had only very brief minutes and a link to a list of all parish councils in West Oxfordshire.

12. Future Dates

4th May 2023 – Elections

6th May 2023 – Coronation; 7th May Social at Manor Farm; 8th May Bank Holiday

17th May 2023 – Annual PC Meeting and AGM

26th July 2023 – PC Meeting

27th September 2023 – PC Meeting

22nd November 2023 – PC Meeting

13. AOB

* OCC is working on a strategy to manage HGVs and has launched a consultation asking which roads are unsuitable to HGVs. MM has responded to the consultation and has also arranged a meeting with John Disley on 19th April to discuss area weight restrictions. OCC are considering the introduction of area restrictions instead of point restrictions. The conclusion from the experimental point restriction on the main road through Burford was that this point restriction had diverted the problem of HGVs to other local communities. Area restrictions may offer a more equitable solution.
* CD suggested that the PC bought a Coronation souvenir, such as a mug, for each household in the village, but the consensus was that it would not widely be appreciated or a good use of money. We would have to do a joint order with one or more other parishes to get a large enough order to get a good price.
* MM reported that the lining of cracked sewer pipes is now scheduled for July. The road closure notice shows that the section to be relined is along Dry Lane, not Foxburrow Lane as expected. There has been a fat blockage in the sewer in the centre of the village, and Thames Water have carried out some cleaning. It is unclear if they will need to return to do a more thorough clean.
* A section of the guardrail beside the footpath on the causeway has been broken and a temporary barrier erected. The problem has been reported on Fix My Street and MM has also written to Robin Calver, OCC bridge engineer, to escalate the problem. We have previously warned OCC that the guardrail is unsafe and that the whole length needs repair/replacing.
* In recent strong winds, three dead trees came down on the footpath beside St Peters, at the top of Farm Lane, and are now resting on the roof. SB-M reported it on Fix My Street and has sent follow-up emails, but nothing has been done. OCC Highways inspected the lane a year ago and agreed that the trees needed attention.
* TC reported that the stone retaining wall on Witney Hill is falling into the road. MM will contact OCC Highways to determine who is responsible for its maintenance.
* As we have no village hall it is always difficult to get many parishioners together for the Annual Parish Meeting. CD suggested that this year we combine it with the Coronation event on 7th May, holding a brief meeting before the “main event”. The AGM of the PC would remain on 17th May, as previously advertised.
* We will do a litter pick around the village on Sunday 16th April, meeting at the war memorial at 10 am. SD has arranged to borrow 10 litter grabbers from WODC. SB-M will look into buying 10 wire rings to hold open the rubbish sacks.