**Crawley Parish Council**

**Minutes of meeting held at 7.30pm on 27th September 2023 at The Lamb**

Present: Cllrs Heather Northam (Chair), Colin Dingwall, Mark McCappin, Tony Connell, Graham Howkins; Sheena Derry (Secretary); Sue Bremner-Milne (Treasurer); Jane Harris (Social Committee) Lewis Ross (parishioner).

1. Apologies: None

2. The Minutes of the meeting held on 27th July 2023 were approved.

3. Declarations of interest: None.

4. Matters Arising: None

5. Parishioners’ Matters

* Mr Franklin, who cuts the verges in the village has requested that when residents clear out the brook/ditches, they dispose of the debris after a few days. If left, it looks unsightly and makes it impossible to strim the verges neatly.
* Two branches from the willow tree at the bottom of Farm Lane came down in strong winds on 20th September, blocking the lane. Fortunately, no people or property were damaged. The branches were cut up and moved aside by villagers, and later cleared away by the council. We understand that The Lamb has made arrangements for the tree to be inspected to see if any further action needs to be taken.

6. District Council Report (LW)

* WODC is to meet with phone network providers to try to improve the service available in West Oxfordshire, where there are numerous areas with no, or poor, signal.
* LW is to meet with Blenheim Estates, the main developer for the North Witney Strategic Development Area.
* The most recent figures indicate that air quality in Bridge Street and Mill Street has improved. However, MM thinks that this is the “annualised, average” figure, which does not show that there are frequent times when NO2 levels grossly exceed the maximum permitted before action must be taken.

7. County Council Report (LW)

* OCC have £1.9million to use on redevelopment of Witney High Street, and a consultation is live to determine what changes local people would like. At a recent meeting (attended by LW, MM, SD) many ideas were put forward, but there was no clear indication of what might be achievable with the funds available.
* Labour have quit the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance of the Liberal Democrats, Labour and Green Party which runs OCC, leaving the Liberal Democrats and Green Party in control. The alliance at West Oxfordshire remains intact.
* There is no progress on replacing the guardrail along the causeway. OCC say there is no money in this year’s budget to start on the design. The current temporary repair is very unstable. We have been advised that works carried out by OCC's contractor should not be modified by others. LW's advice is that if we feel it is unsafe, we should report it on Fix my Street.

8. Treasurer’s Report: SB-M had circulated the accounts before the meeting and there were no concerns.

* We have approximately £2,500 in the current account, £548 in the deposit account, and £364 in the defibrillator fund.
* SB-M suggested that, since meetings do not always coincide with quarterly reports, she should provide a written report at each meeting and circulate the quarterly report at the appropriate time.
* The price for the PC’s Gmail subscription will increase next year for a monthly contract but remain the same for a yearly contract.
* SB-M has previously indicated that she wishes to stand down as Treasurer next year. Enquiries so far have not identified a replacement. SD to circulate the village.
* It may be necessary to change from banking with HSBC due to excessive bureaucracy.

9. Website: It is felt that the website needs a fresh look, and it would be advantageous for one or two councillors to have admin rights and possibly some training, in addition to SD. GH to contact James Walker. The domain name is due for renewal in November and will be taken over by the PC.

10. Witney North housing proposals and West End Link Road (WEL). MM and HN have completed the action to write a report on the need to complete infrastructure improvement (WEL and northern distributor road) funded by housing developers in Witney. MM had circulated the draft to all councillors before the meeting and received positive feedback. Actions for publication were agreed as follows:

* Send to Phil Shaw, Carl Rylett and Chris Hargreaves as key WODC personnel dealing with planning,
* Posted on Crawley village website and email advice to Crawley residents,
* Send to 10 WODC councillors on the cross-party working group for updating the local plan, a week later,
* Send to Robert Courts MP,
* Send to all town and parish clerks in and neighbouring Witney for distribution to their councillors,
* Send press notice to Oxford Mail and Witney Gazette.

MM advised that he has produced a second report concerning the use of the WEL as a means of flood control, which he will send to all attendees on Thursday 28th September. If the draft is agreed, a similar publication pattern is likely. The report suggests that there is too much uncertainty about the timing, design, and costs of the WEL for a developer to undertake it, but they should be required to provide funding as a lump sum.

11. Litter pick. It was agreed that we should have a litter pick on Sunday 22nd October. SD to circulate the village, add to the website, and advise The Lamb that we will call in for coffee afterwards.

12. Jane Harris, representing the social committee, clarified that the pub quiz will be on 11th October, Bonfire Night on 5th November, Remembrance service on 12th November, and carol singing on 20th December (TBC). JH will do a letterbox drop this weekend. SD will circulate the village, put the details on the website, and advise The Lamb that we will call in for coffee after the Remembrance service. CD will organise the wreath for the Remembrance service.

13. Future Dates

27th September 2023 – PC Meeting

11th October 2023 – Pub Quiz

5th November 2023 – Bonfire Night

12th November 2023 – Remembrance Service

22nd November 2023 – PC Meeting

24th January 2024 – PC Meeting

27th March 2024 – PC Meeting

13. AOB

* The team carrying our pollution testing in the Windrush met with a member of the Cotswold Rivers Trust. We are the only village who have done any testing so far and there is still no guarantee of funding for reagents, although we were given a new pack to keep us going. HN to write to Cotswold Rivers Trust about the problems we have been experiencing.
* MM advised that he had been contacted by OCC in response to the WiVTAG’s campaign about HGVs. The team in OCC looking at possible area weight restrictions have produced a report and suggested two pilots – one in West Oxfordshire and one in Henley.
* Salt bins. SD has requested top-ups of two of the bins in the village. Last year’s salt has crusted over and will be awkward to use when bad weather hits. A work party was suggested to break up the crusts ahead of winter and will take place on the same day as the litter pick (22nd October).
* SD will attend a short training course on thermal imaging cameras in October. It is hoped that we may be able to borrow or hire a camera for use in the village when the weather gets colder so that households can see where they are losing heat from their homes.