**Crawley Parish Council**

**Minutes of meeting held at 7.00pm on 24th January 2024 at The Lamb**

Present: Cllrs Heather Northam (Chair), Mark McCappin, Isabel Webb, Michelle Hill; Sheena Derry (Secretary); Lewis Ross (parishioner); Liam Walker (WODC and OCC).

1. Apologies: Cllr Colin Dingwall, Sue Bremner-Milne (Treasurer).

2. The Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2023 were approved.

3. Declarations of interest: None.

4. Matters Arising

* HN reminded councillors that responses to the OCC Charter survey should be returned by 10th February.

5. Parishioners’ Matters

* Sebastian and Lana Snow have clarified their position regarding the future of The Lamb. They are looking to take a step back by either selling or renting out the pub as they slowly start thinking about retirement. Whilst this is very unlikely to happen in the near future given the current economic outlook, they remain very much committed to running the Lamb with their longstanding team and very much appreciate the support of the village since 2019, and moving forward.
* OCC consultation on Area Weight Restrictions. WiVTAG have been invited and MM nominated to attend the Steering Group that has been set up by OCC. MM has also met with the representative from Burford to share thoughts on how this might be achieved.

6 and 7. District and County Council Report (LW)

* OCC is facing a significant budget shortfall which is likely to lead to cuts in services. There will be a meeting in February to approve a new balanced budget. They are looking into moving out of County Hall, which is underused.
* WODC’s budget is looking somewhat better. Leisure centres, waste disposal and car parking are significant drains on resources.
* Sewage pollution in our rivers remains a big problem. There are moves to set up a cross-party task force to apply more pressure on Thames Water. There is an urgent need to upgrade sewage treatment works, but some planned upgrades have been delayed by five years.
* OCC has been looking at traffic movements in Witney; proposals indicate that the West End Link will get the go ahead. LW is cautiously optimistic, but it is very expensive.

8. Treasurer’s Report. SB-M was unable to attend the meeting but had sent round a report, statements for Q3, and account balances on 1st January 2024. We have £1307.04 in the current account, £550.54 in the savings account, and £467.43 in the defibrillator account.

9. Witney Infrastructure (MM). Parish councils who might be affected by the planned North Witney Strategic Development and associated infrastructure were invited to a meeting in Hailey on 9th January to discuss how they might influence proposals and, in particular, ensure that the West End Link (WEL) is built. Representatives from Hailey, Crawley, North Leigh and Witney Town Council attended, and subsequently South Leigh and Hanborough have said they wish to join in. The developer consortium is resisting building the WEL, but OCC say it should go ahead with developer funding. OCC looked at 16 options to get the best flow of traffic using the WEL, and now have a preferred option. They have said they are also looking at flood mitigation. This is all at a very early stage and is likely to cost in the region of £40 million. OCC will carry out public consultation in April on their recommended option for the Bridge Street Area in Witney. If the scheme progresses to construction, it would be managed by County with developer contributions.

10. Village Working Party (MH). Some areas of the village are looking tired and in need of attention, such as the village gates, posts around the war memorial, and signposts. There may also be opportunities for improvement, for example another bench below The Lamb car park, where there is a concrete base. MH and HN will walk round to draw up a list of things to do and work towards a schedule. Some activities will need funds, so a budget will need to be set. It is hoped that villagers will help to share the workload.

Thames Water tankers have been turning in the bottom of Farm Lane and mounting the Dry Lane verge opposite, making deep ruts. Thames Water should be responsible for making good the damage. SD to action.

MM noted that there has been no flooding on the road by the Industrial Estate during all the recent rain. This is due to extensive clearing of overgrown ditches by the Freshwaters, who now own the land opposite the Industrial Estate. The PC could write to the Freshwaters to recognise the work that they have done and the benefits for all Crawley residents. This was agreed. SD/MM to action.

11. Grass cutting (SD). Graham and Dawn Franklin are unable to continue cutting the grass verges in the village, so a new contractor must be found. Crawley PC is so small it falls below thresholds for tendering as specified in Standing Orders. HN will put together a scope of work and we will advertise and ask around locally. MH will make a poster for the noticeboard; SD will send a message round the village.

12. Emergency Plan (SD). The Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team are conducting their annual survey on Community Emergency Plans. SD will complete and return the Parish GDPR consent form, the survey to say that we have an Emergency Plan, and a copy of our plan as soon as minor updates are completed and approved (deadline 1st April).

13. Future Dates

27th March 2024 – PC Meeting

22nd May 2024 – PC Meeting

24th July 2024 - PC Meeting

25th September 2024 - PC Meeting

27th November 2024 - PC Meeting

14. AOB

* HN has been working on new Standing Orders for the PC these will be circulated for review for formal adoption at the next PC meeting.
* SB-M will be standing down as Treasurer at the end of the financial year. Our call in October for someone to take over did not identify anyone. SD to send another message round the village.
* IW reported that previous efforts by OCC to relieve flooding on the road at Whiteoak Green have made a bigger problem further down the road, with several cars getting into trouble. MM to do a site visit to see the problem and determine who to contact.
* SD has booked a thermal imaging camera for two weeks in February. HN, MH, and IW have offered to help - she will share training material with them and arrange a meeting to work out how we want to proceed.
* Planning. There were no comments from the PC on the application for Laurel Cottage. It was noted that the application for the Crawley Inn was dealt with at the Lowlands Planning meeting on 8th January and was given approval subject to various conditions being met, although the WODC Planning Applications page still shows Status as “Awaiting decision”.