

Northmoor Parish Council

**Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 18 November 2008
Northmoor Village Hall**

Parish Council Members Present

Mr R Florey (Chairman)
Mrs V.A. Ryan
Mr W. Bint
Mr S Good
Mr M Prickett

Mr. M. Ryan (Clerk)

Apologies

Apologies received from District Councillor Hilary Fenton.

Parishioners Present

County Councillor Charles Mathew, District Councillor Brenda Smith, and David Anderson, Ross Dean, Julia & Perry Hankey, Grenville Reeves, Michael Druce and John Waterfield.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the October Parish Council Meeting had been previously circulated to Parish Councillors. They were accepted as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising.

The Chairman referred to the consultation paper from the South East regional Assembly on the provision of sites for gypsies, travellers and show people. He gave the responses that had been prepared for the consultation and there was broad agreement that the responses reflected local opinion.

The Clerk reported that he was continuing to try and arrange a meeting between Riparian landowners in Northmoor and WODC and the Environment Agency. The Clerk also raised the issue of an emergency plan for Northmoor and the Council agreed that this needed to be developed over the next few months.

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Councillor Bill Bint said that he had hoped to bring a quote for the repair of the playing field gate to the meeting from Mark Pascoe but it was not to hand.

Declaration of Interests.

There were no declarations of interest.

Open Item to Allow points to be raised by Parishioners.

There were no issues that were not covered later in the meeting

Planning.

018/1712/P/FP Erection of Two Storey Extension to form a Self-Contained Ancillary Accommodation. Mr A Meering, Moreton Cottage, Moreton. The plans and proposal were discussed. There were no objections to the Application. *Clerk to write.*

Reports. There were no reports.

Finance

The Council considered the two issues raised by the External Auditors on the Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2008, namely the level of reserves held by the Parish Council appeared high, and the Parish Council disclosed their fixed assets as £nil.

The Clerk in his capacity of Responsible Financial Officer had responded by saying that in the accounts of the previous year he had explained that the Council believed it necessary to hold a reasonable level of reserves as a provision against replacement of the playing field apparatus should this become necessary. He continued to believe that with such a small Precept as Northmoor set, some £4000 per annum, it was prudent to develop a reasonable reserve rather than dramatically increase the Precept and thereby the domestic rates in any one year.

With regard to the fixed assets of the Parish they consisted of just three items: - the playing field apparatus, the Millennium bench and the notice board. The first two had cost the Parish Council nothing and the last one £650 that had been written off in its year of purchase.

The Council members accepted the explanation and the Clerk would write to the Auditors.

The following invoices were paid: -

WODC for grass cutting in August & September	£542.61
BDO Stoy Hayward for the external audit	£170.38

Correspondence

The following correspondence was considered.

A communication from Outrage asking for financial assistance in their campaign to oppose the Application from Hansons to extract gravel from the site at Stonehenge. The request had added that Standlake PC had donated £100 and Stanton Harcourt £200.

The Chairman, Robert Florey, in replying to this request, first considered the question as to whether it was within the powers of the Parish Council to give financial support to a body such as Outrage for the reason given, namely the campaign to stop the gravel scheme. He referred for his answer to the publication Local Council Administration by Charles Arnold-Baker Seventh Edition Chapter 22 Item D The “Free Resource”. This said that a Parish Council may spend in a single financial year up to a prescribed limit for any purpose which in its opinion was in the interests of or would directly benefit the area or its inhabitants, or part of it, or some of them.

The Chairman recognised that whilst the Parish Council after much consultation including a public meeting had in 2007 decided to oppose this Application there were people within the community that were in favour of the works proceeding. That there was also listed on the Agenda a communication from Mr Reeves that did not agree that Parish money should be spent in this way.

The Chairman said that whilst the majority of Parish funds were spent on local amenities such as the Playing Field and other village spaces it also supported requests for grants from other bodies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

It was proposed that £200 be given to Outrage. Councillor Bill Bint did not agree to this money being given saying there were people within the village who in the past had depended upon the gravel works. Councillor Steve Good suggested a compromise figure of £150. The decision was put to a vote and by a majority decision it was agreed to give the £200.

OCC Unauthorised Signs. The clerk had been engaged in correspondence with Ms Jewell of the Highways Dept regarding signs placed on the highway advertising the Christmas Sale. Ms Jewell stated the County’s position that unauthorised signs were not allowed on any part of the highway. after some passing of letters Ms Jewell accepted that charitable events could be allowed but should be taken down promptly. She also advised that in this litigious world insurance against claims for accidents caused by the distraction of the signs should be considered.

Waste Disposal Open Sites on Good Friday. This related to an extension of waste sites opening to include Good Friday. Stanton Harcourt objected to this, saying just one day’s grace from waste lorries passing through their village was not too much to ask. After some discussion Northmoor agreed with this stance.

WODC Climate Change Policy. This policy document which is available online at www.westoxon.gov.uk/climatechange sets out the District Council’s policy to reduce carbon emissions and tackle some of the extreme weather events and impacts of changing climate.

Communities and Local Government. Consultation on a Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members and Employees. This consultation required further time to consider and a response if necessary would be made.

Sign.....

WODC Standards Committee. Notice of the meeting and its contents.

OCC Economy & Environment. Notice of the meeting of the Transport Committee.

In addition there were various Newsletters and circulars from local Councils and other bodies.

Mr Reeves whose e-mail objecting to the donation of public funds to Outrage and listed on the Agenda at this point asked why his letter had not been read out. The Chairman said that he had carefully covered the points made in the letter when he opened the discussion on the request for funds from Outrage, but if Mr Reeves wanted the full wording of his e-mail to be read out then he would do so. Mr Reeves said that he did want it read and the Chairman duly complied. The arguments raised in this communication had been covered previously, the Chairman added that the indirect suggestion that Parish Councillors were using their position on the Parish Council for their own ends was an untrue and unwarranted remark to be made

Any Other Business

Councillor Bill Bint's point on the repair of the playing field gate has been referred to earlier.

Councillor Valerie Ryan said she had looked into the cost of providing bus shelters. A shelter would cost in the region of £4,000 but there may be grants from OCC to help with this outlay. Difficulties over local opposition to the siting of the shelters and the maintenance of them in a clean and acceptable manner were discussed. Further consideration would be given to their provision.

Councillor Steve Good asked whether the Clerk had written to Mrs Pratt over the name of the Thameside Residential Site. The Clerk replied that he had not because he himself had become confused over whether it was Court or Park. It was clarified the preferred name was Thameside Court.

Councillor Robert Florey reported the trees were being cut back in Moreton Lane. That a meeting between riparian owners and District Council officials was being organised. That there had been a complaint that the new sign at Bablockhythe gave Stanton Harcourt as Stan Harcourt. An abbreviation that was not acceptable.

County Councillor Charles Mathew said that it was proposed to prohibit overtaking on the A415 between Ducklington and Standlake.

There was no other business. The Parish Council meeting ended at 9.10 p.m.
Date of the next meeting of the Parish Council is the 10 December 2008.

Signed.....

Date.....