**Crawley Parish Council**

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

Present: Cllrs Heather Northam (Chair), Mark McCappin, Isabel Webb, Michelle Hill; Sheena Derry k(Secretary); Liv Watts (Treasurer); Liam Walker (WODC and OCC), Paul Marsh (WODC); Lewis Ross, Jo Parker-Butler, Philippa and Rob Helyar, Joyce and Roy Parkinson, Jill and Richard Kerr (parishioners).

HN welcomed Liv Watts who has taken over from Sue Bremner-Milne as Treasurer.

1. Apologies: None

2. The Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd May 2024 were approved.

3. Declarations of interest: None.

4. Co-option of new councillor. Following the resignation of Cllr Colin Dingwall, parishioner Chris Babbage put his name forward. In the absence of other volunteers, he was nominated by HN, seconded by MH, and co-opted as a member of the parish council.

5. Matters arising – none.

6. Parishioners’ Matters. There have been complaints about the noise and intrusion of peacocks onto properties on Foxburrow Lane. The parish council has no powers to address this issue but will write to the owners asking or their suggestions as to how the matter might be resolved. If there is no resolution, the complainants will need to take the matter forward to WODC.

7. District Reports.

HN welcomed our new District Councillor, Paul Marsh.

* PM reported that since the general election there had been a flurry of activity, with much talked about, but little action so far. There has been activity on the new Local Plan, which would take us to 2041. He explained about the 5-year housing land supply, which is a list of sites that are expected to come forward to build-out within the next five years, accompanied by a trajectory illustrating how many houses are expected to be delivered in each year of the 5-year period. At present, 2,500 new houses are required to be built in West Oxfordshire in the next 5 years. If this threshold is not met, then speculative developments can be put forward and will be treated on merit. The new Westminster Government is intent on getting more houses built and may change planning regulation/laws. WODC specifies that 40% of new housing must be “affordable”.
* Some employees will be brought brought back from Publica into WODC employment. This will affect approximately 80 of 300 employees involved in local service, while transactional service will remain with Publica.
* The waste disposal contract with Ubico is up for renegotiation in approximately 12 months. There may or may not be change to the current service.
* A motion has been passed to instigate a review of parish and town council boundaries.

Liam Walker

* LW expressed concerns about “poor political decisions” and reported that £273,000 had been wasted by WODC in appeals against planning applications, and that they had fallen behind on housing supply. Small villages are being swamped by new developments, while no progress has been made on Eynsham Garden Village and the North Witney development.
* Bringing Publica employees back in house was forced upon WODC because the Forest of Dean pulled out of the arrangement. It is estimated that it will cost about £1 million.
* Planned improvements to the A40 have been pulled.

8. County Report.

* LW advised that the “super user” scheme, whereby local residents can be trained to assess and mark up potholes for repair, has been expanded to include drains and kerbs. MH volunteered to take this on.
* Resurfacing of Foxburrow Lane and repairs to the barrier on the causeway have been delayed until the 2025 financial year.

9. Treasurer’s Report. The handover to LW has been completed and her parish emails are working. Sue-Bremner Milne had circulated her Q1 report together with the account balances and a brief narrative report on 30th June. The Q1 report was signed off. The balances on 30th June were £1050.68 in the current account, £555.98 in the savings account, and £471.99 in the defibrillator account. From Q2 the report will be formatted slightly differently.

10. Biodiversity

* Jack Wheeler (OCC) contacted the PC to discuss management of our three grass verge nature reserves. Rob Helyar used to manage these, but in recent years OCC has done so. There is now an opportunity to take them back and Rob has a meeting set up with Jack.
* MH attended a training session on biodiversity, which she found useful. It was proposed that we set up a working group in the village to determine how best to record and manage biodiversity in the parish. MH will take the lead.

11. Parish Online, Mapping and Websites. This is a digital software company offering parish council website packages and digital mapping software MH attended a course and thought it could be helpful, but did not know the costs. Local councils are being encouraged to move to “.gov.uk” emails, which they could provide. Chris B to review current PC IT infrastructure and costs in relation to Parish On Line provision.

12. Witney Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group (WING) update. MM reported that WING had produced a report which has been posted on the village website and an email with links to it has been sent out to parishioners. The PC would like feedback from parishioners by the end of August as it needs to provide a response to WING before the next PC meeting.

13. Future Dates

11th August 2024 - Summer Party and Barbecue

25th September 2024 - PC Meeting

11th October - Pub Quiz

10th November 2024 - Remembrance Service

27th November 2024 - PC Meeting

22nd January 2025 - PC Meeting

26th March 2025 - PC Meeting

14. AOB.

* Maintenance – IW reported that she has stained the gates at the Leafield Hill entrance to the village and cleaned the road signs. It was agreed that we should arrange some village volunteer days to tackle some of the other maintenance jobs around the village.
* Flooding at Whiteoak Green – the soakaway has not been cleared. MM to follow up.
* MH noted that the small evergreen trees at the war memorial are getting rather large. She will contact Mary Valentine to see if they can be clipped back to make them last a bit longer.
* SD reported that she receives numerous requests from charities asking for donations. Since our precept is so small this is not something that was felt we could do, except in special circumstances where there is a direct connection with the village. A request for funding towards the bus service through Crawley was also turned down due to the small precept.
* The proposed Crawley Inn redevelopment is now “Approved” on the WODC planning website.
* HN did an online course on Risk Assessments. While the village has a Risk Register, which is kept up to date, we should carry out a specific risk assessment for village activities.