Crawley Parish Council

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**Minutes of Parish Council Meeting**

 **held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 25th September 2024**

**at The Lamb, Crawley**

Present. Cllrs Heather Northam (Chair), Michelle Hill, Isabel Webb, Mark McCappin; Cllr Paul Marsh (WODC); Lewis Ross (parishioner).

1. Apologies for absence: Liv Watts, Chris Babbage, Liam Walker.
2. Minutes: the minutes of the last PC meeting (24th July 2024) were approved.
3. Declarations of Interest: None
4. Matters Arising:
	1. OALC have been running at a loss of about £5,000pa for the last two years and have proposed an overall increase in subscriptions from year 2024/5 of 7%. For Crawley Parish this would mean the subscription increases to £180 + VAT (electorate under 501). HN proposed accepting the increase, seconded by IW.
	2. The owners of the peacocks responded to the complaint about them. They are reluctant to cage them as some animals died when they tried this before. There are only three elderly males left and they will not be replaced. They suggested parishioners spray them with water if they want to deter them.
	3. MH is collecting “super user” equipment from Graham Howkins and will follow up on training.
5. Parishioners’ Matters: None
6. District Council report – Paul Marsh:
	1. The new Labour government is consulting on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Under their proposals, the housing target for West Oxfordshire would increase from around 500 pa to 880 pa. WODC has completed a very full response but this has resulted in a delay in delivery of the Local Plan. Consultation on the Local Plan is now likely to be in Spring 2025.
	2. Thames Valley Police have set up a Rural Crime Taskforce which will engage with rural communities, industries, farms and rural organisations to prevent crime and have appointed a rural crime advisor. They are asking rural parishes, like Crawley, to help identify farms (which can get free security checks and kits) and encourage residents to complete a survey of their experiences and concerns. SD to circulate details and link to online survey.
	In relation to rural crime, Jack Graham from Environmental Services is available to come and talk about fly tipping.
	3. PM has been asked to pass on thanks from a relative of people buried in the churchyard for its excellent upkeep.
7. County Council update: No report.
PM wished to make clear that the A40 improvements have not been pulled altogether. The money for the Park and Ride and the associated roads were allocated separately and the one for the roads was insufficient, so plan are being redrawn to fit the budget.
8. Treasurer’s Report:
LW was unable to attend but had sent out an interim report.
	1. Significant expenses were for gardening services, OALC training, and new defibrillator pads. The West Oxfordshire precept has been paid. The current account balance is £1906.68 and defibrillator account is £329.58.
	2. The PC has been left two legacies in a will: £250 to contribute to the maintenance of the war memorial, and £500 to contribute to the maintenance of the churchyard and the three Strong family gravestones. The money has not yet been received.
	3. The PC’s public liability insurance will be renewed next month at the same cost as last year (£259.00).
9. Biodiversity and management of Nature Reserve verges – MH and SD:
	1. Rob Helyar reports that the three roadside nature verges are doing quite well and will need a final cut in October/November this year. He has had a meeting with Jack Wheeler from OCC and agreed to take back management of them. He is keen to recruit other parishioners who could help with the management.
	2. MH would like to set up a village conservation group which could help with the nature reserve verges, and potentially look at other areas, such as the churchyard, with the aim of increasing biodiversity.
	She would also like to set up a village maintenance group to improve the general appearance of the village.
	She will do a poster to be circulated and put on the notice board.
10. Grass cutting contract – HN.
Our “new” grass cutting contractor is unable, for personal reasons, to continue strimming verges within the village. PM has a garden services business and will see if he can provide a single end-of-year cut while we try to find another contractor.
11. Parish Online, Website, email addresses – MH.
MH and CB will attend an online training course on 30th September. CB has been looking at changing our email addresses to “gov.uk” and will send his proposal in the next few days. SD noted that the annual charge for the current domain name is due for renewal in November.
12. Witney Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group (WING) update – MM
	1. MM thanked the councillors for their unanimous support of the WING resolution. Eight of the ten councils have now pledged their support, with the remaining two likely to do so soon.
	2. WING met with Hugo Ashton from WODC planning and Phil Shaw (planning officer) to discuss the proposal and found them very supportive.
	3. WING met with representatives from the Environment Agency, who liked the idea but gave more information about the scale of the problem. They estimate that to prevent flooding in Witney 2 Mega m3 of water need to be held back in the floodplain. They are looking at two areas, one between New Mill and Crawley (1.4 M m3) and one closer to Witney (0.6 M m3). If the West End Link was built as an embankment bridge, it would replace the second EA proposal.
	4. OCC wants to operate a one-way system around Bridge Street and the West End Link that would make use of the WEL.
	5. WING’s efforts are focused on getting the key decision makers (OCC, WODC, EA) to work together towards a shared solution.
13. Future dates:

5th November 2024 – Bonfire Night

10th November 2024 – Remembrance Service

27th November 2024 – PC Meeting

22nd January 2025 – PC Meeting

26th March 2025 – PC Meeting

1. AOB
	1. IW offered to do First Aid training so that we have two qualified First Aiders in the village (HN did First Aid training a year ago). HN to send IW information about St John’s Ambulance training.
	2. MM reported that he has replaced the pads for the defibrillator as they were coming up to their expiry date.
	3. SD reported that no top up of salt bins is required this year.
	4. MM reported that there has been no progress with improving drainage at the soakaway at Whiteoak Green. He has chased OCC Highways.
	5. There will be a litter pick on 27th October. Meet at 10am at the war memorial as usual.
	6. A meeting to walk around the village with someone from OCC Highways is arranged for 8th October at 10am.