**Crawley Parish Council**

**Minutes of meeting held at 7.00pm on 27th November 2024 at The Lamb**

Present: Cllrs Heather Northam (Chair), Mark McCappin, Isabel Webb, Michelle Hill, Chris Babbage; Sheena Derry (Secretary); Liv Watts (Treasurer); Liam Walker (WODC and OCC), Paul Marsh (WODC); Lewis Ross, Philippa Helyar, Joyce Parkinson (parishioners).

1. Apologies: None.

2. The Minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2024 were approved.

3. Declarations of interest: None.

4. Matters Arising

* MH has the equipment required for being a “Super User” (direct reporter to WODC of potholes etc.) and has a contact for training.
* SD reported that she had renewed the Parish Council’s Domain Name with GoDaddy.
* Following a second year when the bonfire and fireworks were cancelled due to flooding in the field, the question was raised about finding a new site less likely to be flooded. No suitable suggestions were forthcoming.

5. Parishioners’ Matters: None

6. West Oxfordshire District Council Reports

Liam Walker:

* The final draft of the new Local Plan 2041 was due to be published for comment in March 2025 before being submitted for independent examination in June 2025. It is likely that publication will now be delayed, possibly until after the local elections in May. Some councillors would like the proposed Witney North development to be moved, potentially to south of the A40.
* Phase 1 of insourcing from Publica is complete, Phase 2 is awaited.
* Communication with residents has been poor in some areas. For example, there was nothing to keep residents updated with problems caused by the recent flooding.

Paul Marsh:

* Examination and adoption of the new Local Plan 2041 is now expected in 2026 (previously “late 2025/early 2026”).
* Voice, a WODC publication delivered to every household, is a good source of information for residents, but clearly not for fast developing situations.
* There was a recent review of polling districts and facilities at polling stations. There will be no change for Crawley – we will continue to use Hailey Village Hall.
* Following the Boundary Commission review, all county and district councillors will be up for election every 4 years, starting in 2027. Parish councils may be required to align with this.

7. Oxfordshire County Council Report – Liam Walker

* Due to the increase in population, the number of county councillors in Oxfordshire will be increased from 63 to 69, and the divisions will be reorganised to even out the number of residents per councillor. Crawley, Minster Lovell, and Leafield will move to Burford and Carterton NW Division, and Ramsden to Charlbury and Wychwoods Division. As a result, Liam will no longer represent Crawley on county matters.
* Funding has been secured for revised A40 improvements. There will not be a dual carriageway from Witney to Eynsham, there will be traffic lights at the Eynsham Park and Ride, partial bus lanes towards Oxford, and upgrades to the cycle path. The works are likely to take 2 to 2.5 years to complete once commenced.
* The recent heavy rain caused flooding in Waterside Cottage again, and Dry Lane was closed from Witney Hill to the bridge. OCC ran out of signs so there was no “Road Ahead Closed” at the top of Dry Lane and a makeshift barrier had to be erected at the bridge. Liam has offered £1,000 from his discretionary fund to be put towards flood defences. HN offered thanks on behalf of the parish council and Crawley parishioners.

8. Treasurer’s Report – LW had circulated a report before the meeting

* Significant expenses since the last report included renewal of insurance, payment for grass cutting, litter pick refreshments, and Remembrance Sunday expenses for flowers and wreath. There were no adjustments and no income. The expected legacies have not been received. SD to chase up.
* The current bank balances are: current account £1,295.84, deposit account £558.67 and defibrillator account £330.86.
* Q3 report will be circulated at the end of December.
* When submitting expenses claims, please include receipts and relevant bank details for the reimbursement, and cc HN to provide sign-off.

9. Biodiversity

* MH is in touch with Jack Wheeler, the Biodiversity Officer for OCC, and would like to invite him to give a talk, possibly for our meeting in March 2025. She felt there was information and help available and that he might be able to help get us started. Suitable venues were discussed (e.g. Hailey Village Hall, Ramsden Village Hall). MH will make enquiries.
* SD attended the Local Environment Groups Conference on 9th November in Burford, hosted by Wild Oxfordshire. There is a great deal of environmental work going on around us, with help and advice available. She plans to attend a meeting of Burford Environmental Action Group in January.

10. Grass Cutting Contract. HN thanked Paul Marsh for facilitating a final cut this year. IW knows of someone local who has shown interest in taking on the contract and will pass on details of our requirements for a quote. The contractor for Hailey (McNamara) could also be approached. HN will follow up in the new year.

11. Visit from Chris Grain (OCC Highways). The visit on 30th October was very helpful. Chris listened to our concerns, inspected some of the problem areas, and sent an update on planned actions

* The gulleys around the war memorial have been cleared and Crawley has been added to the Cyclical Maintenance programme to get all the rest of the gullies cleared in one go. The drains will need to be jetted for the system to work effectively – this will need 2-3 days to carry out.
* The potholes at intervention level have been programmed in for repair (should happen by early December).
* He has asked for full updates on the flooding issue at Whiteoak Green and the barrier along Dry Lane.

Post meeting note: works are programmed to start at Whiteoak Green on 11th or 12th December; the scheme to replace/repair the barrier is progressing and the Construction Design and Management plan has been written and is being reviewed.

12. Parish Online, Website, and email addresses. CB has been looking into moving our website and emails to Parish Online. They will build the website using GOV.UK design standards (compatible with desktop, tablet or mobile), which is fully supported and allows for up to 20 email addresses. All historical data would be transferred. It has knowledge base articles and tutorials available online in addition to personal support when required. It should save about £100/year compared to the current arrangement.

Parish Online Digital Mapping, available at an additional charge, is multilayered and can be annotated. It would be useful for recording verges, drains, wooded/grassland areas etc, and can be linked, for example, to historical photographs. It allows for different levels of security, such as public or parish council only.

CB would be the webmaster with overall responsibility, but councillors would take on individual roles.

The move was proposed by CB and seconded by MM.

13. Planning Application at Curbridge Downs Farm. A request for a formal screening opinion (under Environmental Impact Assessment regulations) has been submitted for up to 400 dwellings and associated infrastructure at Curbridge Downs Farm on the Burford Road. A screening opinion (environmental impact assessment) is under consideration.

A second speculative application has been submitted for the other side of Dry Lane. HN has been in contact with Chris Hargraves (WODC Planning) and expressed concern about ribbon development out of Witney and the urbanisation of Crawley. There will be a consultation, probably in Spring 2025.

Chris Hargraves advised that these are two of a large number of sites have been submitted for consideration for the Local Plan 2041 which are currently being assessed. A shortlist is being drawn up.

14. Consultation on remote meetings and proxy voting. There is currently an open consultation on enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings. It was thought that this was a good idea, to be used only when face-to-face meeting and in-person voting were not possible. MH will submit the response from Crawley PC.

15 Future dates:

18th December 2025 – village carol singing

22nd January 2025 – PC Meeting

29th January 2025 – Pub Quiz

26th March 2025 – PC Meeting

28th May 2025 – PC Meeting

23rd July 2025 – PC Meeting

16 AOB

* The large trees in the corner of The Lamb car park have not been maintained, and in the recent strong winds a branch fell and hit a parked van, missing an adjacent roof. There was also a large branch down in the pub car park. There is disagreement over who is responsible for the trees – The Lamb or OCC Highways. It is important to establish that the owner has adequate public liability insurance. MM to raise the matter with Chris Grain.
* The village notice board is in a very poor state of repair. Buying a new one would be prohibitively expensive. MH will get some quotes from local joiners.
* Witney Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group (WING) have met with various key stakeholders (not the developers) to discuss their proposals. They were generally well received and had useful feedback, which they have used to update their documents. This version is currently with the member councils and will then be sent to all key stakeholders before final publication.