

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 21ST MARCH 2017 AT 7.30PM
AT THE WOODSTOCK COMMUNITY CENTRE**

PRESENT:

Cllrs Dr E. Poskitt (Town Mayor also District Councillor) F. Collingwood (Deputy Mayor) J. Cooper(also District Councillor) P. Redpath, Mrs T. Redpath, S. Parnes, Mrs E. Stokes, Mrs S. Rasch, B. Yoxall, P. Jay Mrs A Grant (Acting Town Clerk) County Councillor Ian Hudspeth,
Invited speakers and some 100 members of the public

APOLOGIES: None

WELCOME AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The Town Mayor welcomed residents to the meeting, thanked them for attending and asked whether they were happy to accept the Agenda

- The Agenda was agreed

MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Tuesday 15th March 2016 were received and agreed with no amendments.

- The Mayor signed the minutes as a true record.

INVITED SPEAKER

Presentation by: Mr Dominic Hare Chief Executive of Blenheim Estate.
Mr Hare gave thanks for being invited and explained he had worked for the Blenheim Estate as a Finance Director and had now taken over from Mr John Hoy who had now left. He praised John for his success and hoped he would also be successful in their role. He went on to talk about the changes that had been made and future plans for Blenheim

- The Palace had been kept open all through the winter with great success.
- The Christmas lighting had also being very well attended and would be even more magnificent this year
- The Triathlon event was extremely popular and residents walking passes would get them in to view this event.
- The Spring Food Festival will be bigger than ever
- Giffords Circus
- Music Festival extended to 4 nights this year
- August will see the return of Country File live. Blenheim were well aware of the impact of traffic last year and are working with the organizers to improve this year. Complimentary ticket numbers would be reduced but all Woodstock will be given complimentary tickets.

- Christmas Lights would be for 30 days and as mentioned earlier will be more spectacular.
- Blenheim are building 170 houses in Long Hanborough
- Open air Tai Chi and Yoga classes for Blenheim staff are starting soon, but will be open to residents to join in if they so wish. 18th July 2017 starting date
- The Blenheim Flower Show in June
- The half marathon
- Literary Festival in October

Restoration programme for Blenheim.

- Work is already underway to the North front steps
- Work to be carried out on Bladon bridge
- Queens pool to be dredge and repairs to the Grand Bridge will be carried out in 2019 This would be disruptive but fascinating

Blenheim/Pye Development

It was hoped that 300 Affordable houses would be made available during the 10 year development plan

Working with the Community

Blenheim is listening to the residents. The success for both Blenheim and Woodstock was to work together, conserving for future generations. Blenheim is aware of how many care for their town. Woodstock needs to grow in the right way over the next 10 years. We need to share and listen, Blenheim is a massive stakeholder, and if we fail to do this we all lose

Jobs for Locals

Blenheim employs many local people and future plans are to make available training for young people in such fields as Finance, Marketing, Shepherding, Forestry and more.

Questions to Blenheim Representatives

Cllr T Redpath

The Planning term: PLACE REVIEW.

What is it?

It looks at a location (e.g. Woodstock) to identify the public services and buildings to look at sharing and avoidance of duplication of functions.

Set up by OCC?

First steps: informal consultations with key partners.

In January, Blenheim Estates (Roger File) suggested that such a review for Woodstock stating that the Estate and the Town are inseparable.

OCC then sent out invitations for partners to arrange a meeting, as one would expect Woodstock Town Council was included in the invite.

That was until the Town Council tried to respond. The invitation to the Town Council was withdrawn.

So - did a meeting take place without the people elected by our town to represent them?

Mr Roger Files Property Director for Blenheim Palace replied to this stating that it was decided the a meeting between OCC and Blenheim to understand what a Place Review was needed first to understand what Place Review consists of. The idea of a Places Review was only just beginning.

Hon Townsman John Banbury

Stated his view on the infrastructure not being in place to cope with all the development proposed for Woodstock and his disappointment over WUFA, non provision of schools for the first phase, meaning the children would have to go else where and suggested that Woodstock and Blenheim needed more dialogue.

Roger Files said the WUFA would be included in the first phase. Infrastructure is really expensive and funding would need to be found and part of this would come from the first phase house sales. We have had good dialogue with the Town Partnership in the past but would welcome open dialogue with Woodstock Residents.

Comments made by residents

- Entrance Fee into Blenheim too expensive.
- Too many large expensive houses being build none in the affordable range.
- More houses means more cars.
- Parking is a problem in Woodstock.
- Could Blenheim supply some more parking.

Mr Hare said

- Entrance fee comparable with other stately homes.
- Larger house make profit to enable affordable housing to be funded.
- Possibility of car park provision.
- Need to work together.

Cllr P Redpath

- The view that young people wish to remain in Woodstock near their families was shown to be unfounded. A review of youngsters at eth Marlborough School (a few years ago) resulted in an overwhelming comment being they did not want to stay in Woodstock.
- Developers try to paint a rosy picture but we are loosing good farm land.
- More pollution and congestion.
- If we don't agree it will all be done anyway.

Cllr Parnes:

In relation to the 'Place Review' meeting, the Town's people should know that when it emerged that this meeting would be taking place with the County Council. An invitation was received by WTC for one councillor to attend this was followed with a request for not only one Town Councillor to attend but for any Town Councillor

wishing to attend to be welcome, leading to many different views to be considered. The immediate response was that the invitation was rescinded meaning neither Town Councillor - nor any District Councillors would be able to attend. This seems to be an opposite approach compared to the openness that you are expressing.

Dominic Hare:

Not our approach.

Cllr Parnes:

Well, it could have been suggested to remedy that matter.

Dominique Hare:

I think Roger spoke about that.

Cllr Parnes:

The other thing that I was surprised about in your remarks is that you referred to 300 affordable houses. Mr File mentioned publicly, and was quoted saying in the press that there is a plan to build 1600 houses; and by my calculation if you include the Cherwell proposed sites and the West Oxfordshire sites there will be more than 2,000 – possibly more than that - and so I don't see how 'up to 50%' affordable homes is limited to just 300.

Dominique Hare:

300 is the target. It's of course more than we could deliver [inaudible] today. We'd love to go beyond that target. That's subject to planning applications. We also hope to get good enough at building affordable housing that we can build it in conjunction with local councils - not just as part of these developments. It's a target. It doesn't particularly relate to the numbers you've motioned. But if we got that kind of consent you'd have more than 300 affordable houses.

Cllr Parnes:

If you could dispense with some of the discrepancies, people would be much more encouraged and open. Some of the discrepancies, for example, at the 'Woodstock East' planning meeting, you went and made representations with a colleague of yours who was a consultant for the planning who in her opening remarks said that - she pointed out the proximity to Oxford with bus service and said how great the bus service is. And the next day the Oxford Mail reported that the bus service that you referred to specifically, are un-viable. So we see contradictions in the way things are presented.

In October the WTC Environment Committee put a motion forward, concerning some discrepancies that we perceived in statements from the Blenheim Estate. One of the issues actually being in relation to the Joint Committee for Town and Palace Dialogue - which promised to be a quite productive thing, though it had it's disappointments. One disappointment resulted in a resolution by the Environment Committee that the JCTPD is called to open its meetings for public attendance. The full council approved this motion at their next meeting. I would now like to put to this meeting the Motion that we ask for the

JCTPD committee to open its meetings to public attendance, just like now, so people can witness, hear, feed back, and understand the things that they're talking about. There has been a reluctance to do that until now.

Dominique Hare

You don't need a motion. I'll do that.

Cllr Parnes

That would be wonderful and very encouraging.

Dennis Allen (Chair of Wake up to Woodstock)

Spoke of the Cotswold Hare Trail and that 4 hares would be placed around Woodstock remaining for 6 months and were sponsored by retailers. The Official Launch (the unveiling of the hares) would be taking place in the garden between the Soldiers of Oxford Museum and the Oxford Museum tomorrow 22nd March 2017, featuring special guest "Joey the life size War Horse puppet from the National Theatre and Toyah Willcox, all welcome. The festival is a charity event and this year's charity was National Star a charity that provides speciality residential education, personal development, occupation and transition service to young people with disabilities, mainly through the National Star College.

PC Rob Webb

Gave a police update for Woodstock and surrounding areas (full report as an appendices to these minutes)

The Mayor Cllr E Poskitt

Reported

- There was a vacancy on the Town Councils due to Mary Robertson resignation and gave thanks to Mary for her work during her time on the Council
- The Town Clerk had left in November 2016 and Cllr A Grant was now Acting Town Clerk
- Her full report is an appendices to these minutes

Cllr F Collingwood (Deputy Mayor and Council member for finance)

Reported

- The Precept had gone up by £5000 but due to the extra dwellings now in Woodstock there would be very little if any increase to pay
- It was hoped to refurbish the Mayor Parlour this year
- The Christmas light cost £6000 but due to some very generous donations this figure lessened the burden on the council budget.

The Mayor

Gave thanks to Cllr B Yoxall for his splendid work of seeking donations for the Christmas Lights.

Cllr Cooper (Council Member for Property)

Reported on the council's portfolio of rented properties and gave thanks to Caterer Jonas and Freeths Solicitors for their guidance. Also acknowledge the work of Mary Robertson whilst she was on the council as Council member for Property

Cllr S Parnes (Chair of Environment)

Reported looking after the environment was a team effort.

- Wychwood Project now managed the Water meadows for WTC and during the summer had an open day that was enjoyed by residents.
- Asbestos had been dumped on the OWL Reserve and had been removed by a special contractor.
- The Green Gym are a great asset to the council, working on the Water meadows to control Himalayan Balsam, erecting fencing at the New Road Play Ground and Hedging and tree works on the OWL Reserve.
- The environment budget was under spent.

The Mayor: added that Messrs Owen Mumford had an environment team that were to undertake a 3 year plan to remove Himalayan Balsam. This was where they slash it down, after which it becomes more virulent but by the end of the 3 year it gives up.

County Councillor Hudspeth

Gave his report, this is and appendices to these minutes.

A question was raised concerning the loss of free parking if we had a Unitary Council.

Cllr Hudspeth: said this would be up to the newly established local areas.

Parking was discussed at length at this point.

- We need a full time Traffic Warden.
- Shop keepers should refrain from parking outside their shops.
- Parking restrictions need to be looked at Large development will only worsen the problem.
- S106 money should be used to build another level on the car park in Hensington Road.

Woodstock Surgery Patients Participation Group

Residents were urged to join this group and have their say. Woodstock needs a New Surgery and this group was important to voice this and press the developer to listen to Woodstock needs.

WUFA

Cllr Parnes spoke of his concern for WUFA as it was thought they would be moved from the Primary School grounds to the East field development, this would not be practical as they worked closely with the Primary School and being so close aided with the transition of the children moving on to school. He asked why if the Dioceses owned the land were they not involved with the plans to move WUFA.

Lady Stubbs

Spoke about the new Catholic Hall. The plans had been amended and residents were now happy and planning permission had now been granted. It was hoped the building would soon start and that it would be finished in 26 weeks.

Dr R Edwards (Bloom Group) addressed the meeting

- The annual litter pick would be on Saturday 25th March anyone that would like to help please meet at the bottom of Union Street at 10am.
- You are all invited to dead-head the daffodils as they go over, when you are passing.

- We have been offered 2000 pink tulip bulbs from the Cancer of the Prostrate Charity Oxford. It was thought a target of 900 would be possible if volunteers were available. A show of hands confirmed that this target would be achievable. Volunteers were requested to fill in the forms with their contact details that were at the back of the room.
- A similar request was put out for planting English Bluebells, this had a good response so once again would be achievable.

Mr Robert McGurrin reported

After 19 years he was stepping down from being WAG (Woodstock Action Group) Chairman, however he had been asked to be “WAGs Reporter at Large” He gave thanks to his legion of supporting soldiers that had delivered 1400+ WAG leaflets concerning important issues as they arose. Over 800 people had filed objections to Pye/Blenheim development on farmland at the South/ East approach. He also gave thanks to the two people that tirelessly repaired the “SAVE WOODSTOCK” BANNER each time it was vandalised.

Dr Helen Van Oss

Spoke also of the Patience Participation Group encouraging people to join. Information leaflets were at the back of the Hall. She spoke of surgeries all over the area being closed and the pressure to see a GP becoming increasingly difficult. The PPG was the way to get you voice heard and she gave thanks to those who were working within the group to promote it.

The Mayor announced that the Carers in Oxfordshire Group wished to come and address the council, further details would soon be available.

A letter had been received showing concerns about the speed of traffic in Manor Road with the suggestion of a 20mph speed limit being enforced. Cllr Hudspeth who also chairs the Traffic Advisory Committee said that this was an Agenda item from the meeting in April.

Cllr B Yoxall

The following motion was proposed by Cllr B Yoxall and seconded by Cllr P Redpath

“This Annual Town Meeting of Woodstock residents opposes the proposals for large scale housing development at several locations in the town as being ill-considered and inconsistent with the vision for the future of Woodstock put forward by the Town Council in its submission on the Local Plan.”

This motion was passed by a significant number of attendees

Meeting Closed at 9.40pm