

CHIPPENHAM

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Monday 15th May 2023

Time and Location: 7pm - Chippenham Village Hall

Attending: Cllr Royston, Cllr Bennett, Cllr Hawkins, Cllr Wajid, Fiona Maxwell

Cllr Huffer

Minutes

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
Julie Sheldrick, Nick Wright
3. Chairman's Report

Since May 2022, the Parish Council has held a meeting each month, except August 2022.

Cllr Suzanne Royston will present the planning report, Cllr Nick Bennett will present reports on the village hall, play areas and Palace Lane properties.

I will present a separate report on the Sunnica proposals.

The Council has organised and supported two major events – the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022 and King Charles' Coronation in May 2023. Both events were very successful, with a great turnout from residents, and thanks are due to the Organising Committees. For each event, the Council benefitted from an 'Awards for All' grant.

The council continues to support other events, such as the Seniors' Lunches, through the Chippenham Charity.

The parish clerk, Sally Hughes, has completed her CILCA training. The council continues to benefit from Sally's knowledge and abilities. Thank you, Sally, for your ongoing dedication to the Council.

The Council planted daffodil and tulip bulbs at the entrances to the village. This has resulted in a lovely display this Spring.

The Council now has a new logo, which will help residents identify communications and events run by the Council.

Following the successful Local Highways Improvement (LHI) bid, 40mph buffer zones have been installed at the approaches to the start of the 30mph speed limits at the Forhahm and Newmarket entries to the village.

The Parish Council's Finance review, and budget and precept, were set in December 2022.

4. Planning Report

Planning

Over the past 12 months from 06.05.22 we have had 11 Parish Council Meetings during which the following planning applications have been discussed;

Type of Planning Application	No of Applications
Existing House Alterations/Extensions	6
New Developments (including detailed planning from outline applications and significant condition amendments)	2
Sunnica	1
Other Applications e.g. road naming, solar panels, external to immediate village area	2
Total no of Planning Applications	11

The outcomes to the above Planning Applications are;

Outcome of Planning Application	No of Applications
Approved	6
Refused	0
Withdrawn	2
Ongoing (no decision made yet)	3
Total no of Planning Applications	11

Ongoing Applications awaiting a decision;

Application	Comments
Sunnica	Ongoing – update to be given separately in Annual Report
1a/1b Scotland End conditions amendment	Comments submitted, awaiting decision.
Road Naming off Scotland End	Consultation taken place on two proposed new road names, awaiting decision.

5. Palace Lane Report

Cllr Bennett reported that there has been a change of tenancy for one property. The new tenants are settling in well. The council needed to carry out work at the vacant property to bring it back to marketable condition. It was vacant between Sept-Dec 22. Both properties have now been fitted with handbasins in their upstairs WCs. The exterior of the properties is due to be painted in June 2023.

6. Play Area Report

The annual inspection report has been received. One item, the double swings, have been identified as high risk due to rot in one of the upright posts. It has been taped off as out of bounds. A tree has been removed due to its growth damaging a neighbouring fence.

The contractor is continuing to carry out weekly visual inspections.

7. Speed Sign Report

The two speed signs in the village seem to be having an effect on traffic, especially traffic approaching the sign. There are plans to move to them other locations around the village to provide more cover. Monthly statistics which are downloaded from the signs are available on the council's website.

8. Village Hall Report

Cllr Bennett reported that he has been elected Chair of the Village Hall Committee. Work is underway to review the legal arrangements of the lease. The VHC has applied for a grant to upgrade the lights in the hall to LED and is awaiting a decision.

9. Sunnica Report

The plans presented by Sunnica over two years ago to build a solar and battery power plant in our area have been complex and demanded much time from not only from our Parish Council, but many others councils also affected.

The Say No to Sunnica Action Group has worked tirelessly to research the scheme, and the issues associated with it, and to campaign to raise awareness of the impact this will have on our communities.

Early in the process, the Parish Council produced a survey to find out residents views about Sunnica. The overwhelming view (92% of respondents) was that residents were unhappy with the scheme, in size and scale, as presented.

In January 2021, the Parish Council Alliance was set up, to provide a platform for a unified response from the affected Parishes and Towns. Member parishes included Chippenham, Snailwell, Fordham, Isleham, Freckenham, Worlington, Mildenhall, Red Lodge, West Row, Kennett and Newmarket. We also had involvement from Exning, Reach and Burwell.

The Alliance has met regularly via Zoom to coordinate the responses from individual councils as well as a overall Alliance response.

The consultation phase was widely regarded to be inadequate and disappointing. Covid restrictions meant that public meetings could not be held, and the online alternatives gave very little opportunity for residents to challenge the scheme, and get questions answered. The planning inspectorate considered whether the consultation had met the minimum statutory requirements, and concluded that they had.

During this period, the Parish Council held several drop in sessions in the village hall, to help people to understand the proposals, the planning process and how they could have their say.

Sunnica provided 35 ring binders containing the full planning application. These were made available in the village church, specifically for those who were unable to access the internet.

After the consultation process, individuals and bodies such as the Parish Council, had the opportunity to register their views as an interested party. This is required for any further input later on in the process. The deadline for registration was 17th March 2022. The Parish Council held two further drop in sessions to assist those wishing to submit an interested party registration, one in the Village Hall, and one in the pub. There were 1359 interested Party registrations, and comments are available to view on the Planning Inspectorate website.

The PINS Examining Authority has now been appointed with three inspectors reviewing the Development Consent Order documents. We are waiting to hear when the six month examination phase will begin.

However, an update sent from PINS on 4th May indicated that Sunnica has requested a further delay to proceedings of approximately 2½ months, as they are making changes to the Scheme. The Sunnica scheme requires a connection to the National Grid substation at Burwell. There were two options proposed: 1. Build the extension within the Burwell substation compound, owned by the National Grid. 2. Build the extension on land adjacent to the existing substation. Sunnica have said the National Grid cannot accommodate Option 1, so they are seeking to remove this from the scheme. They are also seeking an alternative for Option 2, due to complications with a requirement for compulsory purchase. The new option is to build an extension within the Sunnica West A site, near Chippenham Park Estate and the Limekilns Gallops. This change has not yet been agreed; PINS are asking for feedback from all Interested Parties, Affected Persons and Statutory Parties on this delay. The deadline for feedback is 18th May 2022. The PC Alliance have been assisting individual councils with their feedback for these changes.

10. Public Events Reports.

Jubilee

To mark the Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee on 2nd June 2022 a variety of events were organised in the village to bring the community together. Led by two Councillors and the Clerk, a group of volunteers supported the organisation of events throughout the bank holiday weekend to celebrate.

Some of the events organised to decorate the village were; a bunting workshop, children's jubilee decorated bunting, allotment gardening, planting wildflower seeds, Tharp Way bench restoration, new planters and post box toppers. Finally a celebratory event was held at Chippenham Park on Sunday 5th June where residents were invited to enjoy a range of sporting activities including Kwik Cricket, a tennis tournament, bowls, and tug of war in the morning, followed by a picnic in the park in the afternoon with inflatable fun, Pimms, ice cream, candy floss and a photo booth. The Over 70's group also enjoyed celebrating together and afternoon teas were also organised for those housebound in the village.

We were appreciative of the £2,320 grant we were awarded from the National Lottery Awards for All Community Fund which helped to fund all of the events put on.

Coronation

To celebrate King Charles III Coronation an event was planned at Chippenham Park on Monday 8th May 2023. Led by two Councillors and the Clerk, a group of volunteers, many of which had supported the Jubilee helped to organise a range of activities to celebrate. In order to ensure we were being eco-friendly we re-used a large proportion of decorations and the bunting that had been made the year before.

The event itself ran from 1pm to 5pm and there were a variety of things laid on; Inflatable obstacle course, bouncy castle, photo booth, candy floss, musical band, musical organ, magician, catering vans, bambi the miniature pony and children's activities. The over 70's enjoyed an allocated table with coronation chicken sandwiches and trifle to celebrate, while afternoon teas were organised for those housebound in the village.

We were appreciative again for another £2,320 grant received from the National Lottery Awards for All Community Fund which enabled us to fund the event in full.

10a. Charity

We have a Chippenham Charity that was initially set up some time ago to help alleviate poverty. Three councillors are trustees of this Charity.

A rental income from the 10 acres of Poors Land owned brought in £1,500 this year, which was more than previous years as the rate was increased by £10 an acre.

31 Seniors Christmas bonuses were paid to Chippenham Village residents, with the overall cost being £1,240.

11. Parishioners' Question Time

All electors of the parish are invited to speak and vote on any matters placed before them. The public and press are also invited to attend. There were no members of the public in attendance.