

**MINUTES OF THE SOULDERN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL  
ON 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

**Present:**

N Oakhill (Chair)  
K Draper (KD)  
C Rothero (CR)  
K Alpress (KA)  
Bruce May (BM)  
B McGarry (Clerk- BMC)

Apologies:  
Cllr James Macnamara  
K Hewitt  
D Carlisle  
J Carlisle

**Also in attendance:**

|            |                      |
|------------|----------------------|
| M May      | E Deeley             |
| D Summers  | R Deeley             |
| R Summers  | B Wright             |
| T Vincent  | J Clifford           |
| D Stephens | K Clifford           |
| D Blunt    | J Hoodless           |
| H Blunt    | D Hoodless           |
| A Prescott | W Johnson            |
| P Prescott | E Johnson            |
| Terry Snow | T Noble              |
| Harry Snow | K Gray               |
| AH Gray    | C Hughes             |
| D Gray     | Cllr M Kerford Byrne |

**1. Election of Officers:**

Chairman – N Oakhill Prop CR; 2<sup>nd</sup> KD  
Vice Chair – K Draper Prop NO; 2<sup>nd</sup> KA

**2. Minutes:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015 were approved & signed  
Prop: CR; 2<sup>nd</sup>: KD

**3. Matters arising & updates from last meeting:**

**Website:** There is now enough information to take this project forward. This includes information on Nancy Bowles Wood, the Village Hall and Souldern United Charities. AP has been working on the history of the village.

**Broadband:** BT, who were expected to deliver superfast Broadband 2016 and had previously said they were committed to this project have had funding withdrawn by OCC because they say Gigaclear can provide a viable alternative. Therefore the choice has to be made as to whether the village wants superfast broadband delivered by Gigaclear and everyone to pay to be connected or whether we wait for BT and funding can be re-instated by OCC if not enough people sign up to Gigaclear. As we don't know how much interest there is in Gigaclear it was resolved that residents should be asked whether they have signed up to Gigaclear in order to establish the way forward. A flyer is to be drawn up and delivered to all households. **ALL**

Prop: KA; 2<sup>nd</sup> KD

**Souldern Vision:** This is a totally different initiative from the Solstice and is progressing well. It is an opportunity for residents to have their say on the future of the village and will be launched on the morning of Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June in the village hall. Flyers will be distributed round the village inviting comments/suggestions for those who aren't able to attend the launch

**Souldern Solstice:** Preparations for this are well under way. Flyers have been distributed round the village asking for offers of help with setting up, clearing up, donations of food

numbers attending the tea party etc. The response has been very positive.

**Footpath 11:** The footpath re-opened just within the estimated time, but with a minor hiccup with the raising of the bridge. This now appears to have been rectified.

**Spring Clean:** There was a good turnout for the spring clean and 5 bags of rubbish were collected. Thank you to everyone who took part.

**4. Declarations of Interest:**

There were no declarations of interest

**5. Issues from the Floor:**

The conditions of the roads within the village are still a matter of concern. Holes in Back Lane have now been filled but Fox Lane and The Hill are still very hazardous. Parish Council to continue badgering the Highways Dept at OCC

Parking on The Hill is still a problem, particularly by the telegraph pole at the bottom which restricts access for larger vehicles and frequently causes difficulties. Residents in this area are asked to please give special consideration to motorists coming in and out of the village. The new electricity pole in Wharf Lane is leaning at a very precarious angle. The matter has been reported to the electricity board by 2 residents but as yet nothing has been done about it.

**BMc**

**6. Updates:**

**a. Playground:** Tania Noble introduced herself as the new leader of the playground group and reported on the general condition of the equipment and suggested plans for the future. There is a good team of volunteers to hand to do the inspections and general paintwork but the help of a 'handyman' would be much appreciated for the more specialised jobs. Is there anyone in the village who is willing to volunteer a bit of time to assist with some general woodworking skills? There will be a 'maintenance day' on 6<sup>th</sup> June with tea, coffee and cake for all helpers. Thank you Tania for taking this on.

**b. Nancy Bowles Wood:** The wood is currently looking good and the snowdrops did very well this year. Thanks to Sandy and Diana for another year of splitting. The 3 new apple trees doing well and damaged bat boxes have been replaced. Mapping of the trees will continue during the summer, as will the maintenance of the 2 wooden benches, with the possible addition of a new bench which will be discussed at the next meeting. In the autumn it is proposed to begin a coppice rotation of the 30 or so hazel trees coppicing 6 trees a year for the next 5 years. The grass will be cut imminently.

**NO**

There was a total spend of £33.34 between April 6 2014 and April 5 2015 leaving a balance of £730.30.

**c. Football Club:** There has been little contact with the Club who have had a difficult season. However they do plan to continue next season.

**d. CDC** – Cllr Mike Kerford Byrne has been re-elected as Souldern's district council representative for one more year only as the re allocation of ward boundaries means that Souldern will part of a re-shaped ward as from next year.

**The Local Plan** has still not finally been determined although it is hoped that it will be by the end of next month, with one or two minor tweaks. The emphasis is to preserve the character of the local villages with any major housing development concentrated on Bicester, Banbury and Upper Heyford.

**Council Tax** for the current year remains unchanged despite the continuing government cuts. It is estimated that by the end of the decade there could be no government funding at all. CDC are in a good position. It has been recognised as

the best housing authority in the country and won awards for shared government funding, working jointly with South Northants to save money.

e. **OCC- No Report**

**7. Finance:**

- a. Financial transactions since the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> March were approved  
Prop: AM 2<sup>nd</sup>:CR

| <b>Payments:</b>   | Date     | Amount   | Power          |
|--|----------|----------|----------------|
| OALC Subscription 15-16  | 25/03/15 | £133.07  | LCA1972: s.143 |
| ORCC Subscription 15-16  | 25/03/15 | £30.00   | LCA1972: s.143 |
| Mowing grass: playground and village                           | 25/03/15 | £560     | OSA 1906: s10  |
| Payment to clerk B McGarry salary September 2014 to March 2015 | 25/03/15 | £329.90  | LGA1972: s.112 |
| HMRC: tax on clerk's salary                                    | 25/03/15 | £82.60   | LGA1972: s.112 |
| MR Cross: mowing March   | 02/05/15 | £306.00  | OSA 1906: s10  |
| MR Cross: mowing April   | 02/05/15 | £564.00  | OSA 1906: s10  |
| <b>Receipts:</b>   |          |          |                |
| Souldern Football Club   | 29.3.15  | £200     |                |
| CDC: New Homes Grant 14-15                                     | 29.3.15  | £1092.00 |                |
| CDC: Precept 14/15 first installment                           | 15.04.15 | £2948.00 |                |

Bank balance as at: 1<sup>st</sup> may 2015 £12,426.76

- b. The accounts for 2014/15 were approved and signed by the chairman.  
Prop CR; 2<sup>nd</sup> NO
- c. The Internal Audit Report was discussed and noted. There were no comments from the external audit and DS asked that VAT receipts were submitted for all purchases. David was thanked for his very thorough work.
- d. The Annual Governance Statement was agreed and approved by the Council. It was then signed by the chair and the clerk and returned to the RFO for action.  
Prop CR; 2<sup>nd</sup> KD
- e. The budget review for 2015/16 was discussed and there were no amendments.

**8. Planning Matters:**

- a. 15/00146/LB – Permission has been granted for the internal re-modelling and rear extension and detached garage at the Hermitage
- b. 15/00237/F Permission has been granted for the single storey extension at West End House, Bates Lane
- c. 15/00376/F – Permission has been granted for alterations to the existing planning application at Beech House
- d. 15/00541/F – The chairman called for any new comments from the floor regarding the application for an extension to the livestock building for the rearing and finishing of pigs at Leycroft Barn. Councillors then discussed their response to this application. It was resolved that the Council could not support this second application as the full impact of the first application could not be established as it had not yet been built. No to draft a reply to CDC. Prop CR; 2<sup>nd</sup> BM

9. **Administration:**

- a. **Elections & Co-option of New Councillor:** 5 Councillors were elected, uncontested, at the May elections. There is a vacancy for one more Councillor and it is hoped that this position will be filled at the next meeting. If anyone is interested please contact the chairman or the clerk.

10. **Other Business:**

- a. Wall & Hedgerow running from Court House to the Pond: This stretch of wall is leaning badly and the hedgerow is very overgrown making it difficult and hazardous for pedestrians to use. The ownership of the wall needs to be established so that the appropriate action can be taken before it collapses. Clerk to write to the owners of Court Cottage
- b. Air Ambulance Recycling: The Air Ambulance charity have asked if a secure re-cycling unit could be placed in the village and after some discussion it was felt that this would not be appropriate.
- c. Dog Litter Bins: The 2 dog litter bins placed at the top of Mill Lane and on the corner of Bates Lane and Hedges & Ditches have proved a great success and it was resolved to get a third, to be placed near the pond  
Prop KA; 2<sup>nd</sup> KD;
- d. Souldern United Charities: The parish Council have been asked by SUC (Souldern United Charities) to approve the appointment of 3 new members to their committee. While there was no objection in principle it was resolved to postpone a decision until the next meeting when Councillors have had an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the SUC constitution.  
Prop: KD 2<sup>nd</sup> NO

BMc

11. **Next meeting:** There next will be a planning meeting on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June followed by an ordinary meeting on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July. Both meetings 7:30 in the village hall

Signed..... Date.....  
Chairman Souldern Parish Council