**DRAFT MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF BISHOP’S TACHBROOK PARISH COUNCIL ON THURSDAY, 8TH FEBRUARY 2024 AT 7.30PM AT ST. CHAD’S CENTRE**

**Present:** Cllrs. M. Greene (Chair), L. Carter, M. Drew, P. Gillman, P. Guest, K. Hall, K. Wellsted, District Cllr. M. Collins (until 9.42pm) and County Cllr. J. Matecki (from 7.45pm until 9.38pm)

4 members of the public.

**1. Apologies**

Cllrs. Brewster (personal commitment), Deely (personal commitment) and District Cllr. Day (personal commitment).

**2. Public Session**

A resident spoke about the safer roads campaign around Heathcote Primary School that she has launched. She highlighted the dangerous road safety situations she has witnessed around the school. She said the issue seems to be that Vickers Way and Garrett Drive are being managed by 2 developers making it difficult for road markings to be installed. County Highways are saying that the roads haven’t been adopted yet and remain the responsibility of the developers. District Cllr. Collins said that he would speak to the developers and update the resident and councillors.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr. Gillman declared a pecuniary interest in item 10(i) as a member of Oakley Management Company.

**4. Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting (January)**

The clerk had circulated, prior to the meeting, draft minutes. Cllr. Wellsted proposed we accept these minutes, seconded Cllr. Carter and carried unanimously. The Chair signed the minutes.

The Chair informed councillors that County Cllr. Matecki had been delayed but should be arriving shortly. He asked councillors if there were any objections to rearranging the agenda so residents can receive responses to any County related issues and Cllr. Matecki can provide updates on Traffic and Road Community Safety. There were no objections.

**6. County and District Council Matters**

(i) To receive report

District Cllr. Collins reported that he was pushing for the school in The Asps to be built sooner. The District Council is looking at installing CCTV in fly tipping hot spots. The Budget Review Group has reported that the Council will be left with a deficit. They are looking at allocating reserves and more efficient ways of carrying out duties without cutting services. The budget should be passed on 21st February with a 2.99% increase in council tax. The Council is looking at investing in increasing energy efficiency in council owned homes but this will take time.

7.45pm County Cllr. Matecki joins the meeting.

The Chair mentioned the issues that have been raised by residents about the Seven Acre Close play area. He said that it would be good to have a toddler swing. District Cllr. Collins agreed to follow up on this.

The Chair explained to Cllr. Collins that he is unhappy with the figures that have been provided in respect of the parish’s tax base. Cllr. Collins said he would arrange a meeting with the officer responsible, the Chair and clerk to try and resolve this issue.

(ii) The Asps; maintenance of local green spaces update

Cllr. Gillman asked when the Parish Council will be informed of the management company that will be taking over The Asps. District Cllr. Collins agreed to find out.

**2. Public Session**

A resident repeated her previous concerns regarding road safety issues around Heathcote Primary School. She said she had started a petition for improvements which has 89 signatures. County Cllr. Matecki explained that the roads haven’t been adopted yet by the County Council. The County can paint double yellow lines but they need permission from the developer. Officers have written to the developer requesting permission for lines at the Garrett Drive/Vickers Way junction. County Cllr. Matecki agreed to follow up on this. Cllr. Guest asked about the plan he had sent to County Cllr. Matecki regarding moving the zigzag lines. County Cllr. Matecki to follow up on this. He was asked about road safety audits. He explained that 3 safety audits take place. The clerk asked if he could arrange for the road safety audits to be forwarded to the Council. Cllr. Matecki agreed to request this. Concern was expressed that the issues being experienced with Heathcote Primary School could be repeated with the other new schools being built in the parish. Councillors agreed that they should scrutinise any further planning application for The Asps school to ensure that these issues aren’t repeated and hope planning officers listen to us.

2 residents leave the meeting.

**5. Traffic and Road Community Safety**

(i) To consider how we can make our parish a safer place for pedestrians, cyclists and car users

The Chair explained that he had requested an officer attend a meeting. This has been declined. County Cllr. Matecki said that an officer might feel intimidated attending a meeting. The clerk asked Cllr. Matecki if he had received any complaints from previous officers who had attended our meetings. Cllr. Matecki said he hadn’t. The offer for an officer to attend a meeting was repeated with perhaps the manager of the road safety officer attending. County Cllr. Matecki to take this forward. Cllr. Carter said that the issues facing the parish are going to increase. He asked for an explanation as to why Kenilworth are given permission for road safety measures but Bishop’s Tachbrook is refused? County Cllr. Matecki said he would be meeting with the officer next week and would provide an answer to the Parish Council. Cllr. Hall asked if there was an appeals process for when officers refuse road safety requests? County Cllr. Matecki said he didn’t know but would find out. He said he could put speed monitors on the roads to see if they would qualify for a speed limit reduction.

(ii) Oakley School road works update

Cllr. Carter reported that road works (one way system) will take place on Oakley Wood Road from 18th March to 9th June. He stressed that we need a 20mph speed limit for construction traffic. We need to understand the communication plan that is going to be used by County Highways. Could the road be open both ways at the week-end when they are not working? County Cllr. Matecki to follow up on this.

(iii) Harbury Lane active travel connections consultations plus OWR/Harbury Lane speed reduction; update

See items (i) and (ii) above.

(iv) Sign repairs/removal – Oakley Wood Road

Cllr. Carter said the sign has been repaired but there is signage in the parish which is no longer required. Could County Highways remove it. The clerk said she would follow up on this.

(v) Vickers Way improvements; update

See item 2.

(vi) Heathcote Primary School; road safety concerns update

See item 2.

(vii) Pedestrian access requirements for the opening of the new school update

County Cllr. Matecki was asked about providing a safe route to Oakley School. He said the permanent route would be through the Country Park. He said a meeting has been arranged for next week to look at a temporary solution. He would provide councillors with an update. Cllr. Carter suggested a temporary traffic order reducing the speed on Oakley Wood Road to 30mph. If this is agreed County Highways would need to install average speed cameras at both ends to ensure this is maintained. The Chair said sewage and lighting would need to be part of the discussion. District Cllr. Collins said that a planning application hasn’t been received yet from Severn Trent. District Cllr. Collins said he would take the route through the Country Park up with the portfolio holder to try and move it forward.

The Chair declared a personal interest in Severn Trent as the company is a client of his employer.

County Cllr. Matecki said he would write to the Chief Executive of Severn Trent to try and get the sewage on the path issue resolved.

(viii) Additional parking areas; Kingsley Road and Millway Drive update

District Cllr. Collins explained ways to alleviate the parking issues on Kingsley Road with drop kerbs. He was asked if the District Council would pay for drop kerbs on council owned houses? He said he would investigate this. The Chair updated County Cllr. Matecki on the concerns expressed by residents attending the January meeting in respect of Millway Drive. County Cllr. Matecki said the officer was speaking to the legal department and a letter would be sent to householders on this road.

(ix) Harbury Lane drop kerb update

The clerk confirmed that this has been sorted.

(x) Path to Oakley Wood update

The Chair updated the meeting on the correspondence with the District Council officer on soft testing. He asked County Cllr. Matecki if a road safety audit would need to be carried out to ensure that County Highways would be happy with a crossing point on the Banbury Road. County Cllr. Matecki said he didn’t know but would find out.

(xi) Footbridge update

No new update.

**6. County and District Council Matters**

(i) To receive reports

County Cllr. Matecki updated councillors on the increase in Measles. Council tax would be increasing by 4.99%. There is a Fire Service Consultation and a Rights of Way improvement plan consultation. Councillors agreed that Cllr. Wellsted would respond to the Rights of Way improvement plan consultation.

9.37pm A resident leaves the meeting.

9.38pm County Cllr. Matecki leaves the meeting.

(iii) Country Park – update

See item 5(vii).

**7. Chair Matters**

(i) To receive report

No new report.

(ii) Local plan; to consider drafting a letter to developers/planners, who have submitted sites, to assess as a consultee whether the site complies with the neighbourhood plan and the local infrastructure concerns in advance of the public consultation

A visitor introduced himself as attending on behalf of a planner. He said he would be willing to meet with councillors to discuss their proposal. He was asked to email the clerk.

9.42pm District Cllr. Collins leaves the meeting.

The clerk updated councillors on the advice received from the monitoring officer regarding information received from developers/planners. This information will be commercially sensitive and must remain confidential until the developer/planner decides to make the information publicly available. Cllr. Wellsted proposed the following response to questions from residents; we are against further housing around the village but recognise we may be forced to have some.  In preparation for the consultation process, towards the end of this year, the council is undertaking its own analysis of sites. Residents will have a full chance to have their say, when the consultation period starts. Seconded the Chair and carried unanimously.

Cllr. Wellsted briefly updated councillors on the number of sites that have been put forward for development in the SWLP call for sites. Councillors agreed that we need to agree criteria for considering each site. It was agreed that Cllr. Wellsted would circulate a draft.

10.02pm The visitor leaves the meeting.

**8. School**

(i) To receive report

No new report.

(ii) Site visit

District Cllr. Day/County Cllr. Matecki to organise.

**9. Climate Change**

(i) To receive report

Cllr. Drew briefly updated the meeting.

(ii) Recycling Scheme update

Cllr. Hall reported that February’s drop off had been cancelled because of the works to the driveway. Next drop off will be in March.

(iii) Bullen Building; solar panels update

Cllr. Drew said the solar panels still aren’t working. The company has looked at the work and undertaken some repairs but they still don’t work. The clerk to follow up on this. The company explained that they worked initially because the batteries were installed fully charged.

**10. Management Companies**

(i) To receive report

Cllr. Gillman reported that the first batch of trees would be planted shortly on Oakley Meadow. The service charge is increasing by 10%. He is looking at trying to reduce the costs to the residents. The cost of emptying the 3 dog bins appears to be high. Cllr. Gillman to liaise with the clerk to try and reduce the cost to Oakley Meadows residents.

**11. Technology and Digital Matters**

(i) To receive report

No new report.

(ii) Increasing community engagement update

The Chair suggested a welcome pack. It was agreed that he would circulate some ideas to Cllr. Wellsted and the clerk. The clerk said Cllr. Brewster has received the QR code badges. Cllr. Wellsted to liaise with Cllr. Brewster regarding locations. The clerk said she has asked the District Council for locations to site noticeboards on Lionheart Avenue, Jakeman play area and The Asps.

**12. Amenities Matters**

(i) To note report

The clerk reported that there are now 3 people on the allotments waiting list. 2 residents who had previously requested allotment plots are not responding to emails so these plots have been reallocated. Cllrs. Gillman, Wellsted and the clerk are meeting with Oakley Meadow allotment holders on Saturday to answer questions. A combination lock with chain has been purchased for the Meadow allotments. Bishop’s Tachbrook Primary School Y5 are visiting the Meadow allotments in the summer. They will be accompanied by an allotment holder.

(ii) Car park on the Meadow update

Cllr. Guest reported that the work on the car park and landscaping is nearly complete. The work on paving the driveway has been started. He joined the survey team when they reviewed the drain. It needs repairing or replacing. Currently waiting for quotes. Cllr. Carter asked about laying power cables. Cllr. Guest explained that the ducting had been laid but Western Power hadn’t been contacted yet. Cllr. Carter agreed to contact Western Power.

(iii) Magazine; draft articles update

The Chair reported that he is waiting to hear whether this should be set up with charity status.

(iv) Working party update

No new update.

(v) Communication with the Police

The clerk reported that the Police have said they will patrol both primary schools the week before half term and the week after.

**13. Planning Matters**

(i) The Asps planning application update

No new update.

(ii) Planning application 23/1842 and 23/1843/LB – The Grove, Oakley Wood Road

Cllr. Wellsted briefly updated the meeting. Councillors said they were pleased that this historic building would be restored but expressed concern that it could be separated from the main residence, rented, holiday let or sold. Concern was also expressed regarding the removal of the Oak tree which is listed separately to the main dwelling. Cllr. Wellsted said he couldn’t determine whether it complied with the neighbourhood plan since specification and work methodology had not been provided. Cllr. Wellsted proposed we object to both applications, seconded Cllr. Drew and carried unanimously.

Cllr. Wellsted was asked to prepare a response to these applications.

(iii) Cubbington NP

Noted.

(iv) Planning application 23/1805 (variation of condition 1) – The Asps

Councillors agreed to raise no comments or objections.

**14. To consider 2024/25 budget**

The clerk had circulated prior to the meeting a draft budget. There were no comments on the budget. The Chair said, in principle, he was happy to propose the budget but remained concerned about the tax base figure provided by the District Council. Cllr. Carter seconded the budget with the condition that the budget should be revisited should the tax base figure decrease because of errors within the District Council system. Carried unanimously.

**15. To consider response from the District Council in respect of the 2024/25 tax base and, if possible, agree 2024/25 precept**

The Chair said the current situation with the District Council was unacceptable. This opinion had been passed to both of our district councillors. We have until 1st March to approve the precept but have been provided with a tax base figure which we believe to be incorrect. Cllr. Collins has said he will try and arrange a meeting to resolve this issue. However, it may not be possible for the tax base to be rectified this year. Cllr. Carter proposed that we agree the precept of £155,000 if the tax base remains either the same with an assurance from the District Council that they will provide us with the additional funds early 2024/25 if there is a shortfall or the tax base is amended in our favour, seconded Cllr. Wellsted and carried unanimously.

**16. Financial/Administration**

(i) Bank balance

The following bank balances were reported:

Current account: £488,481.19

Investment account: £64,167.66

(ii) Deed of Easement update

The clerk had circulated, prior to the meeting, a draft deed. March agenda item.

(iii) To consider quote for cycle racks

Still awaiting quote.

(iv) Passing of following accounts for payment:

**RESOLVED: that the following accounts be approved for payment (proposer Cllr. Carter, seconded the Chair) and carried unanimously.**

Mrs. C. Hill – salary (February)

Mr. D. Herbert – play area inspections - £200.00

Melt Creative Ltd. – website - £90.00

Haystoun Construction Ltd. – car park - £17,441.81

Haystoun Construction Ltd. – car park - £35,006.57

WSP UK Ltd. – car park consultation - £564.60

WSP UK Ltd. – car park consultation - £564.60

LM Trees – removal of stumps - £600.00

WSP UK Ltd. – car park consultation - £1,368.00

Cadman Printers Ltd. – converting of tenders - £30.00

S.K.W. Electrical and Plumbing Ltd – allotments water leak - £144.00

**17. Date of next meeting**

Thursday, 14th March 2024.

The Chair closed the meeting at 10.32pm.