

Minutes of the Caversfield Annual Parish Meeting
Wednesday 17 May 2023 at 7.30pm
Held in the Community Room of Gagle Brook School

Present

Chairman: Cllr Glenice Sutcliffe

Clerk: Mrs Jane Olds

Caversfield Residents: 9 residents

Cllr Sutcliffe (Chairman of the Parish Council) welcomed everyone to Caversfield's Annual Parish Meeting and thanked them for coming.

1. **Apologies** had been received from District Councillors Nick Mawer, Lynn Pratt and Simon Lytton and County Councillor Donna Ford.
2. **The Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting** held on 18 May 2022 were agreed to be a true record and were signed by the Chair.
3. **Matters arising**
There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Councillors for 2022-2023 were:- June Nisbet, Tom Astley, Fiona Hitchcock, Stewart Boughtflower and Carol Mackay.

Due to personal circumstances Tom Astley and Carol Mackay have recently resigned. I extend my thanks and gratitude for their past service and support.

We currently have two vacancies and two new elected Councillors: Roger Shipway and Janet Zanin. Anyone interested in joining the Parish Council would be welcome to come along and find out what it's all about, please spread the word. I can assure you that it's not onerous. We are very well supported by our dedicated and super competent Clerk Jane Olds. Training is available to all Councillors (old and new). Working with our Parish Council does not involve a significant time commitment and is a great way to contribute to your local community.

All villagers are entitled to come to Parish Council meetings and either speak for three minutes at the beginning or observe the whole meeting. We are always grateful when villagers attend and contribute, as this is an invaluable part of the democratic process that we should like to encourage everyone to take part in.

We normally meet in the Community Room of Gagle Brook School on the third Wednesday of alternate months at 7:30pm.

If you would like to receive the Agenda and Minutes by email, please do sign up on our website. Alternatively view the Minutes on the Skimmingdish Lane noticeboard or the Parish website.

There has been a wide variety of discussions on topics affecting the village during the year. The Council must ensure that our Policies and Procedures are kept up to date.

From April 2022 to March 2023 a total of 6 meetings have been held and 5 planning Applications (3 external and 2 local). The majority of Planning Applications are for small extensions to village dwellings, some are for tree maintenance.

We also deal with more major ones that fall on our doorstep e.g. The proposed alterations to the Banbury Road roundabout at the junction with Southwold Lane.

For Halloween 2022, we worked with the MoD Police, the UK Police, the County Emergency Planning Team and the Fire Service on a plan to ensure that everyone who lives in the village or visits on Halloween was able to navigate safely around the village. The plan worked with Halloween being very well attended, there was a great atmosphere of fun and laughter, many smiling faces, excellent costumes. Such a treat to enjoy a safe social gathering out in the fresh air, not too chilly and dry conditions appreciated by a huge crowd of locals and visitors alike.

The Accounts and Processes have been inspected by the Internal Auditor, these will be available for inspection in June – please contact the Clerk, Jane, directly if you would like to see them.

We should like to thank the MoD on behalf of Cherwell for their permission to have the polling Station for elections in the Park on 4th May 2023 – it is much appreciated.

Finally, I should like to extend my thanks to my fellow Councillors for the time and effort that they give to the Parish; to our Parish Clerk, Jane, for her outstanding dedication to the village, sterling support to me and her professional skills that keep us all up to speed. I must also extend my heartfelt thanks to our County Councillor Donna Ford, and the District Councillors, Nick Mawer, Lynn Pratt and Jason Slaymaker for all their support and information received. We look forward to working with District Councillor Simon Lytton.

5. Financial report for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Parish Council accounts for the year 2022 / 23 have now been closed and inspected by the internal auditor.

This year's statement of accounts, which explains last year's Parish finances, will be available in the 2022/23 Accounts section of the website once it has been considered at the Parish Council meeting later this evening.

As usual, the majority of the Council's expenditure this year has been spent on keeping the village clean and tidy and on the general administration.

The regular expenditure has managed to stay fairly static. Of course, the dog bin emptying (for which the Council has to pay £600 a year to Cherwell) and the grass cutting on Skimmingdish Lane and in Old School Close has to be done and the Parish legally has to have insurance.

We have been fortunate that we have been able to borrow Launton Parish Council's data projector so that we can display planning applications and all the other documents needed for Parish Council meetings and this has saved the Council some expenditure.

The Parish Council's Reserves Policy has been adopted in order to meet the Parish's obligations; these include holding the recommended three months' running costs, the possibility of having to pay for an election (at about £1,600), and various contingencies, including setting aside a sum for bus shelter repairs and this year, an insurance excess. Unfortunately, unless the Parish takes out a loan which is agreed by the Public Works and Loans Board, the Parish is unable to borrow money, so it is essential that funds are set aside in ear-marked reserves to pay for things when needed.

I have put on the Statement the S137 expenditure allowance. This allowance is published by Government and gives Parish Councils the power to 'incur expenditure for certain purposes not otherwise authorised'. However, as the Council has adopted the General Power of Competence, there is a little more flexibility in the awarding of grants and general expenditure.

A full budget for the 23/24 year was agreed in January. This year the Precept was increased to £8,004 (an increase of just over 14% or £1,044 on the previous year). This meant that Band D properties would pay £14.25 a year - an additional £3.12 over the whole year.

You can follow the Parish Council through both Facebook which we use as a virtual noticeboard, or via the website, which has a wealth of information. If you haven't already signed up to receive our regular updates and meeting notices, please do – you can find a quick form on the right hand side of the Home page.

While this is not totally Parish Council finance-related, I have been pleased to have been elected as Vice Chair of the Society of Local Council Clerks National Forum and am separately also working with the SLCC on helping to create a qualification for Parish Council Internal Auditors. I have also been able to represent Parish Councils at

various events in the last year as Chairman of the Oxfordshire branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks. I am wanting to raise the profile of smaller councils and support their Clerks.

If you have any questions, please do either ask now, or at the end of the meeting.

The accounts will be available to view from the beginning of June.

6. Report from representatives from RAF Croughton

No report had been received.

7. County Councillor's Report

The County Councillor sent her apologies, but no report.

8. District Councillors' Reports

The District Councillors sent their apologies, but no reports.

9. Village Management Company Reports

No reports had been received.

10. Any other business

There was no further business.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The minutes were taken by Jane Olds, Clerk to the Parish Council

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Signed..... Date.....