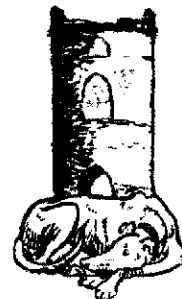


Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council



The Annual Parish Assembly for Tidmarsh with Sulham
at Tidmarsh Village Hall, 3rd April 2024, at 7.30pm.

Members of the public and press were invited to attend

Parish Councillors Present:

Cllr Jonathan Pearson (Vice chairman) acting as Chairman
Cllr Sima Elliot
Cllr Bronwyn Wynne
Cllr Mark Farrington

Invited Guests:

Mr John White (Asian Hornets Presentation)
James Austen (Flood Warden)
DC Stuart Gourley (Environment and Climate Action Portfolio Holder)
DC Tony Vickers (Planning and Berkshire Communities Portfolio Holder)

Members of the public: 20 members were present

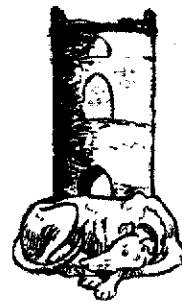
Apologies received from: Cllr Jon Chishick (holiday), DC Matt Shakespeare (attended by Zoom) and Thames Valley Police

PA/01 The Meeting was opened by Cllr Jonathan Pearson, acting as Chairperson. He introduced the parish council and guests, plus gave apologies for those who could not attend.

PA/02 1st Speaker DC Stuart Gourley (Environment and Climate Action Portfolio Holder)

- i. He gave an intro that he is a Ward Councillor for Newbury and proceeded to update the action taken during the wettest period, November 23 to March 24.
- ii. The Flooding will be an ongoing concern and Officers are already looking ahead to winter 2025.
- iii. There will be many challenges so it is essential to catalogue the current issues and proactively look to contra measures and learn how other councils have taken action.
- iv. No internal flooding in the parish was reported. No roads have been closed due to flooding, except for temporary closures of Mill Lane.
- v. SG reported the snapshots of the district to Environment Agency, and Thames Water and any other agencies of the issues withing West Berkshire. They were not always aware what was happening, and within each agency.
- vi. Across the district, there are still concerns with certain areas, such as the river Pang, The Isleys, Shaw, and Burghfield.
- vii. Thatcham and Newbury are now in recovery.
- viii. SG have been affected, flood recovery grants are available—see resident bulletins and WBC webpages. There are five different grants with different close dates.
- ix. What happens next? The district is in different stages of recovery or reaction. WBC has a report section 19 to complete for a thorough investigation on flood management and produce a report to

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capture what has happened. Look at what can be done differently and consider the report's suggestions. The rivers will also have a section 19 report - Lambourn, Kennet, Thames, Pang, Bourne.

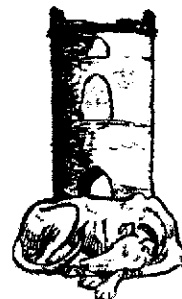
- x. Foul sewer flooding will be captured, too. Thames Water will be held accountable and ensure they complete any remedial work.
- xi. The first draft of section 19 is due at the end of April. Flood alleviation, mitigation, and landowners are all doing what they need to do.
- xii. The report will be scrutinised, including TW, EA, and WBC.
- xiii. This will be on the WBC website for all to see.
- xiv. **A member of the public raised concerns about Potholes** – that cones had to be put in them as they couldn't be seen under the puddles. This was an action taken by MF, and could have been done by the Highways Team.
- xv. **A member of the public raised concerns regarding Moors Copse:** BBOWT will maintain Pang through it. By the car park, the river reached the bank in September, and the woods have been flooded since then. Trees are rotting, falling, and dying. Who will do the repair work and replace?
- xvi. **SG:** EA dissolved responsibilities to managing the bank to the landowner and riparian owner and must be permitted by EA as Pang is theirs. A flood mitigation grant from EA could be given to BBOWT. EA can act against the landowner if necessary and if it is reported. They are reluctant to act if someone has already done unpermitted work.
- xvii. The landowner is also responsible for dredging but is deemed not ecologically sound, especially for chalk streams.
- xviii. **JP:** we can do better on Mill Lane. There used to be a network of diggers who knew when to dig the ditches. How do we keep water off the road? A culvert under the road, for example. MS will take that onboard.
- xix. **JP:** as events like this become more frequent, will the central government increase funds? The EA budget has been cut by 50%. Local councils are not adequately funded, and central government funding is on a year-to-year basis, so they can't budget.

PA/03 2nd Speaker DC Matt Shakespeare (via zoom as working overseas)

- i. Firstly, my apologies for not being there. It's been almost a year since we formed the new administration.
- ii. We discovered that there was only had eight days of reserves in the bank.
- iii. £9mil was spent to balance the budget.
- iv. We identified £10mil savings by identifying agency staff and transitioning them into employees.
- v. We have reduced the budget from £12mil to £9mill a year so far, so it's a sustainable business model to work with.
- vi. Any expenditure over £2000 must be signed off by ED and PH.
- vii. Consultations were positively engaged with and listened to what people wanted.
- viii. Manifesto promises have been met with challenges.
- ix. Specific issues about Tidmarsh I have been working on is the issue of speed. Cameras are broken. We identified a program for the PC to borrow money to buy a speed device, and we can use the data to prove we need one. I can use the Members Bid for the speeding device.

MA

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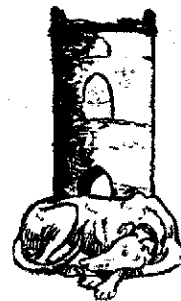


- x. **A member of the public raised concerns about Why don't we have mobile speed cameras?** He spoke to the joint police unit - their position is they don't have a suitable hardstanding to place a camera on so he will try and find a suitable one.
- xi. **MS:** Manor Farm planning enforcement will be spoken about by **DC Tony Vickers**. **MS** has had a lot of meetings regarding the progress or lack of progress on various planning enforcement issues. A letter was shared this evening to clarify the update. He will report back on the reaction to prosecution and feedback on site visit.

PA/04 3rd Speaker DC Tony Vickers (Planning and Berkshire Communities Portfolio Holder)

- i. **TV:** Gave a potted history of the past eight years. He clarified that this relates to the history of Manor Farm and the decisions made in the past. The previous administration were accountable for those decisions and the officers, most of whom have now gone.
- ii. **TV** can account for the last ten months. There are now only nine members out of the new 43 members who would have any knowledge.
- iii. The new Director of Place was not involved with the local plan. The new head of planning policy is excellent. Internal recruitment of the best officers on the management side. **TV's** approach is that planning should not be political. Judged on merits and policy. Officer backs have not been covered, so they are risk averse. Trying to ensure huge and controversial applications have a specific team and ensure smaller and /or residential planning apps can be looked at without delays by another team. **DC Tony Vickers (Planning and Berkshire Communities Portfolio Holder)** here is a National need for more planning officers. There is a backlog, post covid, after a quiet period. Enforcement is not a statutory duty.
- iv. **A member of the public raised concerns that Mr McCarthy** has just built two massive gates on AONB/Green Belt land.
- v. **JP** steered the Manor Park to review resident letter and focus on new stuff. **WC** are listening.
- vi. **A member of the public asked** - do you understand the pain of the last eight years? This was elaborated on with various comments made on the history of the last eight years.
- vii. **TV** advised of the priorities of the next actions required of Mr McCarthy and that this was being negotiated through the Land Agent.
- viii. **Members of the public stated:** Residents feel vulnerable and exposed; the intimidation, the light pollution on AONB.
- ix. **MS** reminded them to report to the police. Dial 101 or online. Copy **MS** in all reports.
- x. **JP** asked members of the public if they wanted the plans and vision of **Manor Farm life** – it was unanimous **20** that did not want it. **JP** would has Mr McCarthy to honour is word, as stated publicly, 19th November 2023, that he will go somewhere else and he is a man of his word

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- xi. A member of the public asked why are there no caps on stop notices and therefore unlimited fines, which do not seem to be a deterrent?
- xii. Is there a notice that can be served with a maximum fine of more than £100? There should be a chase and prosecute on all the enforcements
- xiii. JP suggested that the PC representatives and residents have a meeting with Clare Lawrence ED, with legal and MS, for continuity. Suggest after 27th April when MS returns.
- xiv. ***(Please note that this element of the meeting concluded 22:08)***

PA/04 4th Speaker John White Asian Hornets presentation

- i. Thank you to John who gave a fascinating insight into the complex issues of the Asian Hornet. His interest stems from his own concerns as a bee keeper in Pangbourne, on
- ii. His allotment. He explained that the Asian Hornet is an Apex Predator that can decimate the honey bees, then moths, caterpillars, spiders, ladybirds, for example. It is an invasive species, and already there has now been 73 findings in Kent, Plymouth, York, Lancashire and Romford this year. Nationally, DEFRA will send out swot teams and destroy nests . France and Belgium were saturated by them in 2 years.
- iii. JW would like to set up traps and can sue the findings to alert DEFRA.
- iv. He asked for three volunteers to set up a cannister, at One per sq km. Each cannister costs £23. The PC confirmed they will fun three cannisters.
- v. JW to send the invoice for payment.

PA/05 Open Forum

- i. John Murby is happy to continue with the upkeep of the Millenium Green.
- ii. He has also asked that there is memorial bench and tree for his grandfather.
- iii. This was agreed by the PC and it is noted that a justgiving page has been set up.

PA/06 the meeting was closed at 22.22pm

The minutes will be reviewed at the PC meeting June 12th, then be available for publication on the website.

The audited accounts will be available at a later date.

DATE : 02 APRIL 2025