

Spelsbury Annual Parish Meeting

MINUTES 2018

MAY 22, 2018

7.35 PM

SPELSBURY MEMORIAL HALL

ATTENDEES	Spelsbury Parish Council - Rick Leyland, Graham Beacham, Craig Richardson, Anne Ogilvie (Clerk) OCC – Liz Leffman, WODC – Neil Owen No parishioners attended
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1. THE MEETING WAS OPENED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Rick Leyland opened the meeting as the Chairman of Spelsbury Parish Council

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Minutes from last meeting, May 2017, were approved and signed.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Rick Leyland thanked the Council for their service over the last year. He thanked the Clerk for their work over the last year. Highway problems have been the main issue this year. Snow and its aftermath have highlighted problems caused by potholes. The GDPR project is ongoing. The Council currently have a vacancy for a Councillor.

5. OTHER REPORTS

County Council Report – Liz Leffman

Liz Leffman thanked the Parish for electing her as their County Councillor. She noted that Rodney Rose had left big shoes to fill, after his recent death. She has been having conversations with the Parishes to determine their needs. Some things have been done, others are still outstanding, some due to lack of cash and resources at OCC level. There have been some improvements to the roads. OCC has a time limit of 28 days from marking round a pothole to filling it. There are currently 333 outstanding potholes in the Ward. She is currently pushing for the Chadlington to Spelsbury Road to be resurfaced. The Cabinet Minister responsible for roads has stated that £50m is required to repair the roads, but they currently only have £3m available. Charlbury has opened its new Community Centre, which was partly funded by OCC. A grant was given to the Library to run a parent and toddler session. There is a Councillor Priority Fund of £15,000 this year and next. Liz has received a number of requests so far and is open to receive a request from Spelsbury. She has just finished a study on the decline of recycling rates in WODC. It was decided that there may be confusion over what can be recycled. This will be put to the Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, and they will be pressing for the Waste Partnership to be re-established. A motion was brought to OCC to formally support the doubling of the Cotswold Line. There is a working party committed to this project.

District Council Report – Neil Owen

The last year has been somewhat of a whirlwind affair with proposals for unitary government in Oxfordshire which have now transformed into the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. I am proud of the role this Council has played in developing the Deal which will secure government funding of £215m in Oxfordshire. The Deal will provide funding for: investment in improved infrastructure (£150m); investment in much needed affordable housing (£60m); and capacity funding (£5m) to boost capacity to deliver a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, accelerate delivery of our housing commitments for the future and update and maintain the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS). Also during the year the Council implemented a new waste and recycling service at the same time as changing the service provider. Although the implementation of the new service got off to a rocky start, I am pleased that our residents are now seeing the benefits of an improved service. Over the past few years the Council has been putting in place a number of building blocks which are now delivering financial benefits which are reflected in the budget. Some of these have been based upon difficult decisions; decisions we would rather have not made but which we have been pushed into by funding reductions. Of these decisions the introduction of charging for garden waste has been the most difficult bearing in mind the level of charge in comparison to our overall level of Council Tax. I have to say the public have taken this decision in their stride as they clearly value the garden waste service and we have exceeded the target set in the budget process with over 30,000 licences issued for 2017/18. The latest Local Government Finance Settlement was the third year of the four-year spending review delivering the anticipated reduction in Revenue Support Grant funding of a £0.25m for this Council. The next two years will see the Revenue Support Grant totally removed.

For the past two years we made the difficult decision to end the five-year freeze in Council Tax because of the budget and funding pressures facing us. We did this with the backing from the public who told us that a modest tax rise of £5 per band D equivalent property was appropriate to protect valuable local services.

Of course the tax increases are only a small part of our approach to resolving the budget conundrum. In terms of efficiency savings our shared services approach with Cotswold District Council (and others) has now reached savings of more than £16m between the two Councils since we started, with a further £4m to come in 2018/19. This £2m a year saving to each Council is generating an annual and recurring tax saving of around £50 per Band D property. This remains a central strand of our efficiency and service transformation approach which has enabled us to support frontline service provision to residents.

The savings set out above together with other significant savings made throughout the Council and increased revenue streams from garden waste, retained income from business rates, commercial property and treasury investments means that we can once again protect our services despite the significant cost pressures imposed on Council by central government. We believe we can do this even though our Revenue Support Grant is falling by over a quarter of a million pounds in 2018/19 alone.

To finance the Council's revenue expenditure and capital programme, Cabinet is proposing an annual Council Tax of £94.38 at Band D in 2018/19.

In conclusion, I am proud to remain your Councillor at WODC and am always available and ready to help with District Council matters.

6. THE MEETING WAS CLOSED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

The meeting was closed by Rick Leyland at 8.05 pm.