

Langford Village Community Association AGM

Wednesday 16th September 2015

Attendees: In excess of 100 members of Langford Village were present, making the meeting quorate (list on file).

Invited guests: Lisa Michelson (OCC Locality Manager, Infrastructure), Ben Smith (OCC Senior Traffic Planner, Transport Strategy), Councillors Timothy Hallchurch, Dan Sames and Nick Cotter, PC James Waterson, PCSO Kate Ford, Maureen Thompson (Head Teacher, Langford Village Community Primary School).

- 1. Welcome:** Mike Oke welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the proceedings. He highlighted that, as the LVCA is the Voice of the Village, it was incredibly encouraging to see so many people in attendance.
- 2. Apologies:** Victoria Prentis MP, Councillors James Porter and Lynn Pratt, Steve Clack, Ellie Thompson, Pat Hare, Alistair Buckley.
- 3. a. Secretary's Report:** Presented by Mike Oke – see Appendix I. Mike highlighted the committee's successes from the past year: The acoustic panels were recently installed but are already proving to make a noticeable difference to the hall acoustics – thanks to Bob Rudge and Matt Phillips; Langford Life magazine has undergone a major revamp – thanks to Steve Clack and Rich Ponsford; The lollipop crossing was introduced outside the school after many months of effort – This was Mike's personal crusade, and he gave thanks for the help from Councillors Lynn Pratt and Tim Hallchurch.

Mike also thanked our new Treasurer Caroline Cadbury, John Broad and Pat Clissold for their relentless efforts in understanding and communicating various Planning matters, and Jayne Rossiter-Gill (Hall Cleaning and Bookings). Special thanks also went to Dom Cotter, who is stepping down from the committee after ten years of service.

Finally, Mike outlined some of the committee's plans for the coming year. The next edition of Langford Life is planned for November, and residents were encouraged to come forward with ideas and contributions. We aim to make some improvements to the Hall Garden, with Ellie Thompson taking the lead. We also intend to look in to developing Street Parties and other social gatherings.

- b. Treasurer's Report:** Presented by Caroline Cadbury – See Appendix II and Appendix IIa. The key incomings and outgoings of the three active accounts were described, and a healthy overall surplus of £1,258.69 was reported. An encouraging number of organisations (seventeen in all) hired the hall on a weekly basis, providing the bulk of the income. A review of the hall rates was conducted, and they have been left as they were in the previous year. Key expenditure included hall maintenance, cleaning and utilities.

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4. Election of Committee

Nominees:

Chairman	Mike Oke
Vice Chairman	Ted Kingston
Treasurer	Caroline Cadbury
Secretary	Matt Phillips
Website	Bob Rudge & Jon Spinage
Highways	Carole Hetherington & Richard Kingshott
Planning	John Broad
Langford Life – Editor	Steve Clack
Langford Life – Designer	Rich Ponsford
Langford Life – Advertising	Mike Oke
Langford Life – Distribution	Bob Rudge
Committee Member	Nick Cotter

Nominated en masse by Dan Sames, seconded by Dom Cotter and voted in unopposed.

5. Langford Village Primary School

Head Teacher Maureen Thompson reported success in raising standards and academic performance at the school. Mrs Thompson has been focussing on reducing yearly intakes to the current level of 60 pupils, as she aims to achieve a maximum of 30 children per class, down from 40.

Mrs Thompson also advised she has plans for improving facilities in the school grounds. One of last year's projects was the introduction of chickens. Eggs are available for sale over the summer months at 6 for £1.

In April 2016 the school will be 20 years old. They are planning a week of celebrations. The community is invited to take part. In preparation for the events the school are reviewing original registers and seeking out children and parents from that time.

6. Junction of Wretchwick Way/Peregrine Way Junction

Chaired by Carole Hetherington. The Wretchwick Way/Peregrine Way sub-committee was formed 2 years ago to address the particular safety issues at this junction. Carole welcomed to the meeting Lisa Michelson and Ben Smith from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Infrastructure and Transport Strategy departments. She expressed her thanks for their support to date.

Carole also thanked Richard Kingshott, a key member of the sub-committee. As a retired member of the Highways Department, Richard's understanding and established contacts have taken the sub-committee further than they would have achieved otherwise.

Richard Kingshott then outlined the factors in the existing road layout, markings and signage that combine to create dangerous driving behaviours. He went on to describe detailed

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proposals being put forward by the sub-committee for consideration by OCC – See Appendix III. These proposals have been put together following site meetings with police officers, local government officers and councillors, as well as a formal Safety Audit. Discussions have also been held with a highway contractor and the OCC highway design department, resulting in advised costs of £8k for road markings, £8k for islands and signage, and £10k for design. Richard was pleased to report that some of the signage improvements have recently been implemented.

Lisa Michelson advised that some of the sub-committee's proposals have been considered and are already locked in to planned and funded highway improvement schemes. Some of the proposals are yet to be considered. Lisa confirmed that OCC is currently seeking funding for highway improvements from the Gavray Drive and South-East Bicester developments.

Questions were invited from the floor and Answers provided as follows:

Q: Has a roundabout been considered at this junction?

A: A roundabout would attract a significantly higher cost, estimated at £500k to £1m. However, a roundabout solution may be considered as part of discussions on the South-East Link Road.

Q: Should measures be considered to specifically address pedestrian/cyclist safety, particularly at crossing points?

A: Not currently considered by the sub-committee. It was noted that the existing shared-use facilities are segregated from the road, although it was acknowledged that the condition is poor.

Q: Wouldn't it be more sensible to reduce the speed limit? 40 mph?

A: This can be reviewed but needs to be balanced against the road's function as a strategic perimeter route. Future developments to the east of the road may lead to re-consideration of its character and the appropriate speed.

Q: No discussion about traffic lights or cameras?

A: This has been reviewed but costs were a significant step higher than the proposed scheme.

Q: Would 'No Overtaking' signs be more cost effective?

A: These are difficult to enforce and road markings are generally more effective.

7. Road Networks around Langford

This section focussed on current activities and future plans at the London Road level crossing.

Lisa Michelson advised that the current closure is associated with work being undertaken by both Network Rail and utility companies. These works have suffered unexpected delays. OCC, as network manager, is working with these parties to try to accelerate the programme.

Lisa advised that the confirmed timetable change from October 2015 will see 2 trains per hour (tph) in each direction. East-West Rail Phase 2 has the potential to add a further 2 tph in each direction. There is speculation that planned upgrades to the line may also introduce additional freight traffic.

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OCC recognise that London Road is a crucial strategic road link between East Bicester and the town centre. They have concerns about the potential detrimental impact of East-West Rail Phase 2 and any additional freight movements. As a result, OCC has commissioned a study on up to 12 options (including bridge and tunnel options), taking account of the constraints from local ecology, water table and adjacent properties. The study is to report at the end of September to a meeting of engineers and officials (including Town, District and County Councillors, and the local MP) to agree a preferred option for submission to the Government.

In parallel to this investigation of solutions for vehicle traffic, funding is already secured for a pedestrian and cycle crossing.

Public Consultation on East-West Rail Phase 2 is due to take place between late September and early October 2015. The Bicester event is to be on Thursday 24 September 12pm-8pm, John Paul II Centre, Henley House, The Causeway, OX26 6AW.

Questions were invited from the floor and Answers provided as follows:

Q: Is there a risk that Network Rail will enforce powers to close the level crossing on safety grounds?

A: Network Rail does have a national policy to close unsafe or significantly disruptive level crossings. However, it is understood that they would have to seek local government approval to implement this.

Q: Delays and disruption by the ongoing works appear to be increasing. Is there any oversight of Network Rail's work by the local Councils, as part of the East-West Rail Partnership?

A: Tim Hallchurch reported that Councillors do report back to the Councils on issues that arise with the works, and have sought clarification from Network Rail for disruption and delays.

Q: Should we be suspicious that decisions are being made behind the scenes? Reference was made to a recent draft map apparently indicating the level crossing will be closed in 2019.

A: Dan Sames confirmed that the map publishers have no association with the Councils, and had already provided a written apology for their mistake.

Q: Should the number of trains be restricted to 4 tph until a solution is provided to ensure free-flowing traffic?

A: Tim Hallchurch said these points will be taken to the upcoming Council meeting.

Q: Has an alternative crossing point been investigated? For example Gavray Drive?

A: Alternative options such as these were investigated but rejected. Solutions around London Road are favoured.

8. Graven Hill

Dan Sames and Tim Hallchurch represent Langford residents on the Graven Hill development. The development is for 1900 houses, aimed at self-builders, starting in 2016. Anyone interested should take a look at the website (<http://gravenhill.co.uk/>).

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9. Community Policing

PC James Waterson reported on the recent Speed Enforcement campaign undertaken on the streets of Langford. The fastest speed recorded was 44 miles per hour. 6 people were given penalty notices, of which 4 were Langford residents. A further 37 people were given warnings for marginal speed infringements, 22 of them were Langford residents. The worryingly high proportion of Langford residents was cause for concern. The community police are aiming to increase the frequency of local road enforcement exercises, and have also requested more enforcement on the wider network (including Wretchwick Way) by Thames Valley Police.

PC Waterson also gave some details of recent reported crimes, including burglaries, assaults and property damage. However, they highlighted that Langford Village is a low-crime area within Bicester, which itself experiences general low levels of crime. Nevertheless, residents were encouraged to contact the police in the event of trouble, and not just rely on social media.

PCSO Kate Ford advised that she will shortly be leaving the area, to be replaced by Tom Bailey. Kate has spent a lot of time over the past year working with the school, and was pleased to welcome the new lollipop lady. One piece of unfinished business she'll be passing to Tom is an attempt to get the gap in the zig-zag road markings opposite the school closed. The gap is currently large enough for 3 or 4 cars, and cars that park there create a hazard. The latest advice is that closing the gap would not comply with design standards, but this will continue to be pursued.

10. Any Other Business

- There was a query as to where we can find a coordinated source of Planning information? Residents were directed to the OCC website for information on Local Development and Transport Plans. It was also reported that the Town, District and County Councils are looking to set up a coordinated website for all relevant information, to avoid conflicting information.
- Dan Sames described what has been a busy year for the Town Council. He encouraged people to report any concerns to the Council, and follow up with Councillors if no progress is being made. Dan also requested a positive approach to posts on Social Media.
- Tim Hallchurch said that he welcomes any bright ideas on all matters. He also listed out his regular communications:
 - Otmoor.co.uk
 - Emailed monthly report – Tim suggested that a link to this could also be placed on the Langford Life website. **Action:** Bob Rudge
 - Emailed weekly ornithological report
- There was a query about who to contact regarding overgrown hedgerows that are blocking footpaths. Dan Sames advised that ownership varies, some are council-owned, some are

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private and some remain in the ownership of the original developers. He recommended emailing the Town Council with a photo of the issue. The Council will do what it can to escalate it.

- Pat Clissold handed out web-links to the Gavray Meadows News Facebook page, which provides access to an online petition to stop development of Gavray Meadows – <https://www.facebook.com/WildLifeNewsGavrayMeadows?ref=hl>.

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To conclude the meeting, everyone was reminded to sign the attendance sheet in order to receive an update on actions of the meeting.

All Langford residents were invited to any of the monthly LVCA meetings, held at the hall at 8.15 on the third Monday of the month.

The meeting finished with refreshments provided by Mya and Ted Kingston, to whom thanks were expressed.

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Date of Next LVCA Meeting: 8.15 pm Monday 19th October 2015