



Watlington Parish Council

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NOTES FROM THE WATLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL OUTREACH MEETING Held at 7.30pm on MONDAY 3RD JUNE 2019 In the Fox and Hounds, Christmas Common

Parish Councillors present: Matt Reid, Ian Hill, Nicky Smallbone, Steph Van de Pette, Alex Basden, Amber Chainey, Nick Hancock, Terry Jackson

Officer: Kristina Tynan

OCC: County Councillor Steve Harrod and Vanessa Buckley, OCC Principal Officer Area Operations (South)

Apologies: Bonnie Williams, Keith Woolfson, Anna Badcock, Andrew McAuley, Tim Horton

1. Welcome and introductions

MR welcomed everyone to the outreach meeting and said it was great to see so many residents attend. MR introduced the Councillors present. He reported that we had our Annual Parish Meeting in the Watlington Club on 23rd May and our new youngest Councillor, Amber presented with some other young people on Climate Change which is very important in the light of WPC declaring a Climate Emergency. MR said that Anna Badcock could not attend but he was very pleased to have our County Councillor Steve Harrod and Vanessa Buckley at the meeting.

2. To agree the notes of the last Outreach Meeting held on 20th March 2018

These notes were agreed and signed by the Chairman, Matt Reid.

3. Identification and ranking of topics for discussion

Pre-notified Topics

1. Traffic and Road Issues at Christmas Common

Christmas Common Roads and Verges.

Following the meeting last year, several OCC officers have visited the site. The proposals put forward on looking to change the priority road to that of Hill Road and Hollandridge Lane have now been rejected by Lee Turner due to safety issues on oncoming cars not being able to be seen and lack of visibility is such a hazard he could not accept either of these proposals. VB said that this issue did not fall within her remit.

The proposal to put wooden sleepers along the Christmas Common verges has been rejected by OCC on the grounds that they would rot and would incur a lot of maintenance which would make them not cost efficient.

The Chiltern Conservation Board are not in favour of the conservation concrete kerbstones and have said they would like to have granite setts put along the verge. VB said that granite setts are expensive, and they would also be a maintenance liability as they would easily be knocked out by tractors, large vehicles etc and would need to be constantly repaired. She said that they can also rip tyres which could lead to claims from OCC. VB has requested to take a Chiltern Conservation representative out to areas where the conservation kerbstones have been put in so she can see how they do fit in a rural setting. They are shot blasted and soon blend into the rural environment.

Graham Pitman asked how the road edge is going to be defined, as the edge has widened about a foot more than the original road line?

Howard Griffiths questioned if there be a survey done to define the road edge?

VB stated that she is very against road widening done by stealth and she will look at plans from the past to get an idea of the road edge line.

Howard Griffiths asked if she would be able to give a timescale. VB said she would love to be able to do this but cannot at this stage. She will need to meet the Chiltern Conservation Board to decide on the most appropriate kerbing first, as because this area is in the AONB, the Chiltern Board must be consulted.

Robert Barber said a key thing is to have a budget for the works and VB said that until the materials have been agreed she could not give a cost.

Peter Richardson said that if other rural areas are using the conservation kerbing why are the CCB taking such a stance on granite setts. VB said that as there is very little kerbing in this area of the AONB the CCB are keen not to urbanise rural areas. The conservation kerbing is half butters and it does allow cars to drive on it without ripping tyres. Peter Richardson said that safety is paramount, and this should be prioritised over aesthetics. Howard Griffiths agreed with this and said that with the amount of rubbish, wood etc on the verges there is nowhere safe for people to get off the road.

Graham Pitman said that kerbing should also help with potholes not forming at the road edge as is presently the case.

Sylvia Glover stated that OCC have put in some kerbing around the post-box but have not left a gap for drainage. It was stated that there is gully in this location which is badly blocked. OCC have been out with a machine but have then just left without doing anything to clear it.

VB reported that the process that OCC follow with blocked gullies is that a Highway Officer will look at the problem and put in a report to fix the problem. However, they can only spend 3 minutes on this, so they just mark it up and note that it needs a service request. This then gets added to the list so there is no time frame for it being done. However, VB said she would follow up this issue with OCC.

Peter Richardson asked if VB could clarify the position on verge maintenance as there seems to be a huge discrepancy in maintenance of different areas. VB said that OCC only now do one cut per year which is usually done in July. However, if there is a safety issue it can be reported via FixmyStreet. VB stated that Matt Archer in Drayton is very keen that we look at the grass cutting regime in the various parishes as some parishes have taken on some of OCC's grass cutting areas. The Clerk said that Watlington has taken on some areas and there is a map showing these in the office.

Robert Barber said that if the kerbing is done the verges would need building up. VB said that this would be included in the scheme and all the logs etc would be removed.

2. Graham Pitman - National Trust Car Park on Hill Road and parking on nearby verges

Graham Pitman said that this is often full, especially at weekends and this has led to people parking on the verges and he is concerned that these may be damaged. It was noted that the National Trust are looking into charging for this car park unless you are a NT member. Lots of cyclists and walkers' groups use it at the moment as a meeting point and leave their cars there. They will first be scanning the area to see just how many people use it and for how long. If this happens these groups will probably park elsewhere.

Graham Pitman said that there is also a parking problem on Hollandridge Lane. There is an area with hardstanding, but cars are parking further and further down the lane and are gradually encroaching on the verges which also makes this area very muddy when it rains and if something is not down it will spoil the area we have.

Matt Reid stated that parking is a problem everywhere, but we should do what we can to protect areas. Peter Richardson said that a Car Park Group has been set up in Watlington which is looking into various issues now that we have a made Neighbourhood Plan. MR said that the Referendum on the NP was 81%

in favour and implementation will be based on the Local Plan.

We can only do the best we can, but we do have a made NP which is ideal. He also said that there was an idea that a specific amount of CIL money gets allocated to our outreach settlements but this was not agreed at Council as they agreed to deal with the money on a priority basis but note that some of the CIL money does come from the outreach areas.

3. Peter Richardson - 40mph to 30mph at Howe Hill

Peter Richardson stated that on the B4009 and B480 all the villages have a 30mph and Howe Hill has a 40mph and so why cannot Howe Hill also have a 30mph limit. He said he has an increasing feeling that this area is the exception rather than the rule. Terry Jackson said that when she was part of the Speedwatch Team there was very often people who were driving at 50 and 60mph within the 30mph limit just coming into Watlington.

Steve Harrod said that when this was looked at Howe Hill did not meet the criteria for a 30mph. Therefore, previously it was a 60mph and OCC changed it to a 40mph as it could not become a 30mph. However, it can be looked at again. It was stated that the whole stretch from Howe Hill to Watlington should be looked at as there are some very narrow bends.

Steve Harrod stated that the best thing to do would be to have some speed surveys done and then the results can be assessed against the criteria. He said if the Parish Council request this he would be happy to fund it from his County Councillors fund.

Carol James said that between Watlington and Cuxham there is a 50mph speed limit even though there are several properties along this road. However, it does depend on what happens to the NP and if the Edge Road is forthcoming.

Steve Harrod said that there is a new leadership team at SODC following the District Elections and the team will be raising questions about the Local Plan. OCC have raised funding and if they decide to re-look at the Local Plan the funding could be lost.

4. Open discussion on topics raised by residents with reports from Councillors where relevant and possible

Cycling

A resident raised the issue of cyclists frequently doing more than 30mph through Christmas Common and the cyclists are very inconvenient especially on Sundays. Steve Harrod said that this would be an issue to take up with John Howell. It was also stated that the organisers who set up the very many races that come through this area do not have to pay anything towards the roads.

Steve Harrod reported that the OVO Women's Race will be coming through Christmas Common and Watlington on Wednesday 12th June and there will be a rolling roadblock. This is a big media event

A resident from Pishill said that he has noticed an increase in cyclists but thinks this is a wonderful thing, but they need to be safe. He also stated that the B480 is in a very dangerous state especially for cyclists and OCC should take a good look at it. He suggested that perhaps at weekends it could be made one way only. The Government are promoting Health and Well-Being and motorists much learn to live with cyclists on the roads and vice-versa.

Judy Crockett asked if there are any regulations that state how many cycle events can take place? Steve Harrod said that most events do not include road closures and therefore OCC do not know the number of events taking place.

A complaint was also made about the number of signs, arrows etc put up and then never taken down. The organisers should be made to take them down as they are a type of flyposting. Steve Harrod said that this would be very difficult for OCC to police and monitor and is not one of OCC's main priorities.

Broadband

PR said that he would like information on people's current broadband status. The Parish Council voted at a recent meeting to support the proposal to approach the Faster to the Premises (FTTP) Team to be able to get the whole town faster broadband. The first meeting will take place on the 19th June to discuss the best way to move forward. Openreach, GigiClear and Swish Fibre will be contacted to give quotes at the appropriate time. There is funding available, businesses can get up to £2500/£3000 and each business can link up with 10 houses who can each get £500. There are two different funding schemes.

A resident from Pishill had basic internet speed and a group of residents got together and now have FTTP which was funded through Openreach. It was noted that fibre optic can now be put overhead as well as underground. Cuxham also have an on-going project on this.

Climate Change

WPC declared a Climate Emergency in March 2019 and a Facebook group 'Watlington Climate Action' has been formed. There will be a public meeting at the Granary shortly to discuss putting together a list of what things we can do. Robert Barber said that there are a lot of people who do not use Facebook. SvP will be putting up relevant posts on her [sosustainable.weebly.com](https://www.sosustainable.weebly.com) website.

4. Review of actions arising from discussions at the meeting.

1. OCC – Vanessa Buckley to progress the road and verge scheme at Christmas Common. She first needs to obtain permission for materials to be used by the Chiltern Conservation Board.

2. WPC – Commission a speed survey for Howe Hill. An appropriate site or sites will need to be identified between the top of Howe Hill and the Watlington speed limit.

5. Close

Matt Reid thanked everyone for attending and gave special thanks to Reiner for his letting us use the Fox and Hounds for this meeting.

End of Meeting 8.50pm