

RAMSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17th June 2009 at 8.00pm in St James' Church Meeting Room

Members Present: Mr Clive Cowen (CC), Mrs Holly Deans (HD), Mrs Sally Miller (SM),
Mrs Sarah Wiggins (SW), Mr Tony Shuker (TS)

Others Present: Cllr Simon Hoare (SH) and the Clerk

Item	Subject	Action
24.	Apologies None.	
25.	Declaration of interests with regard to items on the agenda HD declared a prejudicial interest in item 9a as a member of the Domesday Committee.	
26.	Public participation session HD informed the PC that the Domesday Committee (DC) did not need and was not seeking any financial support from the PC, but wanted to use the PC name as publisher.	
27.	Approval of minutes of Annual Council Meeting held Wed 20th May 2009 at 7pm The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and signed.	
28.	Matters of report arising, not elsewhere on the agenda There was nothing to report.	
29.	Report from Councillor Simon Hoare A recent WODC Cabinet meeting had awarded a generous grant to the TCC for repairs to the tennis court. Following re-election to OCC, Cllr Rodney Rose had been promoted to Cabinet and given responsibility for highways. 5 members of WODC were on the OCC Cabinet this year. The date for dialogue between the PFC, TCC and PC with SH facilitating was 26 th June.	
30.	Flooding Update The site visit in May had established that changing the camber of the road in Lower End would be prohibitively expensive as it would need major alterations to the drains. Work done at Hilltop Garden Centre and cutting the grips on the B4022 seemed to be having a beneficial effect, with less water entering Ramsden from the upper end of the village.	
31.	Planning a) No applications had been received from West Oxfordshire District Council b) No decisions had been received from West Oxfordshire District Council c) Affordable Housing (AH) Cllrs had been shown round the site at 6pm and were impressed with the quality of build and the many environmentally-friendly features. The scope of work for the replacement of the hedge was approved. The new trees would be planted in the next planting-season.	Clerk
32.	Committees a) Domesday Committee – to consider publication of the Ramsden Book (<i>HD left the meeting at this point</i>) A letter from Mr Peter Saugman in response to the PC's questions had been circulated before the meeting. The PC was very supportive of the project. Various points were discussed. CC would write to the DC for clarification on several matters. The Clerk had spoken to the editor of the Stonesfield book who was happy to give advice. The Insurers drew the PC's attention to Page 109 of the Aviva Parish Council Insurance Policy Document and to the definition under "Cover" section (1), (i) and (iii). The PC agreed that this seemed clear, and that to obtain further	CC

professional legal advice would be prohibitively expensive. (*HD returned to the room*)

b) Memorial Hall – to clarify roles of Custodian and Management Trustees

A copy of the trust document had been obtained from the solicitor. Responsibility for financial matters and management and of the hall was vested with the MHC as management trustees. A copy of the trust deed would be given to the MHC.

The minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Tennis Court Committee had been circulated before the meeting and were noted.

33. Financial matters

a) Financial Summary

There was a new layout contra budget to help with decision-making and including last year's figures. WODC Loan a/c rate was 0.43%, Project Funds considerably lower.

b) Consideration of the Internal Audit Report

The independent auditor's report was considered and the cash book examined. The bank reconciliation had been dealt with in May, and all was satisfactory. Point A: the RFO was doing dual accounting for 09/10 (manual and computerised) as a step towards fully computerised accounts. Point H: with the change of insurer to Aviva, the Fidelity Guarantee cover was now £100,000. The table of significant variances compiled for the external audit was considered and approved. The PC thanked the Clerk for her thorough work as RFO.

d) New Noticeboard

The PC agreed that it was not necessary to display the Newsletter on the notice board as it was delivered free of charge to every home. The space this would free up would make it unnecessary to spend at least £400 on a new notice board at this stage.

d) VAT update

The Clerk had attended a full day course run by HMRC. The situation with reclaiming VAT is complex. VAT can only be reclaimed on purchases made with funds that actually belong to the PC, and which have not donated (directly or through fund-raising activities) by those who will benefit directly from them. The PC can then order, purchase, receive and donate individual items to the relevant committee. For the MHEP Fund, it is important that the village coffee mornings are organised by / under the auspices of the PC, and not by the MHC, and that the PC does not benefit from being the Custodian Trustee of the MH by receiving preferential rates when hiring the building for meetings. The PFC should note that any grants for the PFP Fund must be applied for by the PC, and that no monies raised by the PFC can go into the Fund. The VAT on the expenditure for the large TCC project could only be recovered if the PC were responsible for the fundraising and management of the entire project. The PC does not have the resources to take on such a project. Because of the sums involved, the PC would have to register for VAT (and apply to de-register afterwards), and would incur significantly larger annual audit fees. Further advice on VAT is awaited.

It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the MHC, PFC and TCC to draw their attention to these matters to enable proper budgeting. Having to repay VAT that had been reclaimed without due entitlement would create a very significant financial liability. The PC will do anything it can to support these village committees but cannot breach VAT regulations.

Clerk

e) Accounts for Payment

KopyRite (Newsletter) £40; Clerk salary & expenses (June) £339.98. Three fete sponsorship cheques of £50 each had been made payable to the PC instead of the PCC.

It was agreed to pass the cheques through the PC's bank account, and to write a cheque for £150 to the Ramsden PCC.

Clerk

- 34. Churchyard and Cemetery**
 a) Amendment to wording on Cemetery charges sheet relating to tablets
 It was agreed that the wording of Section 3 b. should be amended to:
 b. A tablet (with inscription and to be laid flat) not exceeding 900 sq.mm. (1 sq.ft.) in area and 150mm. (6in.) in height **Clerk**
 b) Tree and hedge maintenance
 It was agreed that:
 - CJ Whitehall would cut the cemetery hedge as usual.
 - HD would draw up a schedule of work for cutting the churchyard hedge and the yew trees and two quotations would be obtained. **HD Clerk**
 - The Clerk would obtain 2 quotations for maintenance of the lime trees.
- 35. Highways and Footpaths**
 a) To consider re-surfacing Little Lane
 80 tons of crushed concrete no longer required by the Water Board was available for the cost of the labour. The Footpaths Officer would be asked to make a site visit with SM and HD to advise on the suitability of the material for Little Lane and also to advise on the footpath round the edge of Skippett Pool. **Clerk SM HD**
 b) Speeding
 Speed watch signs had gone up but there was still a problem. The PC would see if it was possible to get a Police speed check done. **CC Clerk**
 c) Dog-fouling
 The situation had improved in some parts of the village but was still not satisfactory. Some local people were using the Playing Field for dog walking. An notice would be drafted for the Newsletter. The Clerk was asked to follow up the removal of the dog bin opposite Park Cottage and get it replaced. **CC Clerk**
 d) To consider the condition of the telephone box, High Street
 A complaint had been received. The telephone box was a listed structure, so there was no danger of it being removed. The Clerk would contact the relevant contractors to ask for it to be repainted. **Clerk**
- 36. Correspondence**
 a) Regarding the War Memorial
 A letter had been received on behalf of Royal British Legion expressing concern at the state of the war memorial. The PC agreed that this was important and would investigate methods of restoration. **HD Clerk**
 b) Regarding Public Sector Equality Duties
 The PC noted the information received.
 Other information was tabled.
- 37. Any Other Business**
 The Partial Review Of The Regional Spatial Strategy For The South East was noted.
 The meeting closed at.10.08 pm.
- Dates of Next Meetings:**
 Wednesday 15th July in Church Meeting Room **All**
 Wednesday 16th September in Ramsden Memorial Hall
 No meeting in August.