

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee



Held on Monday 7 March 2022 at 7.00 pm

First Floor Meeting Space, 135 Eastern Avenue,
Milton Park, OX14 4SB

Present in the meeting room:

Councillors: Ron Batstone (Chair), Sarah Medley (Vice-Chair), Paul Barrow, Alison Jenner, Mike Pighills and Janet Shelley
Officers: Susan Baker (Electoral Services Team Leader) and Steven Corrigan (Democratic Services Manager)

Remote attendance:

Officers: Michael Flowers (Democratic Services Officer), Jordan Kennedy (Electoral Services Officer), Jeremy Lloyd (Broadcasting Officer), and Chris McMullin (Electoral Services Officer)

16 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

17 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2021 as a correct record and agree that the chair signs them as such.

Following the adoption of the minutes, a committee member asked for an update on the status of a new parish council in Harwell. The democratic services manager replied with the update and first provided the context that the council had agreed to create a new parish for Harwell East in 2014. However, due to a lack of housing prior to the last local elections, a review for the creation of a parish was deferred by this committee. The democratic services manager explained that a new parish was now feasible. As a result, the committee would be receiving reports and asked to make decisions in the summer of the current year regarding a new parish which would then be in place in time for the next local elections in May 2023.

18 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

19 Urgent business and chair's announcements

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

20 Public participation

The chair confirmed that three speakers had registered to address the committee for item six on the agenda.

21 Community Governance Review - terms of reference

Councillor Colin Weyer, representing Sunningwell Parish Council, sought clarification on the procedure for the community governance review in relation to the timing of the consultation and how decisions would be made. The chair responded and explained that the committee were meeting to approve the terms of reference, and after approval, the review would proceed to the consultation stage with a further meeting at the end of May where they would consider the results of the consultation. The democratic services manager also added that the first stage was an engagement exercise to seek views from interest parties. The committee would then see the responses and agree a draft proposal for a further consultation with a July date estimated for the final decision on the review.

Councillor Stephen Dexter, representing Grove Parish Council, spoke on the item. Councillor Dexter expressed that Grove Parish Council sought the de-warding of the parish as they felt the warding was arbitrary and not representative of the parish. He explained that hundreds of new houses had been built and were no longer represented properly by the current warding system. Additionally, the parish sought the transfer of Grove Business Park to the parish of Grove as they felt the business park should be involved in the Grove community.

Councillor Christine Chater, representing South Hinksey Parish Council, spoke to the item. Ms Chater stated that South Hinksey Parish Council were asking for Westwood Hotel and the surrounding woodland to be included in their parish area. She explained that the footpath had been maintained continuously by the parish and the hotel had been an important facility for the parish before its closure. The new development at the site would rely on Hinksey Hill for public transport and they felt it appropriate the new housing development therefore be incorporated into their parish. The proposed southern boundary subsequently supported by the parish ran along a watercourse and the A34 which they saw as an appropriate geographical boundary.

Following the conclusion of public speaking, the democratic services manager introduced the report and provided a summary of its contents. The report formally introduced the commencement of the community governance review for 2019-2023 election cycle. The officer added that in November 2021, all parish and town councils had been invited to submit matters for review. The committee were therefore being asked to agree the terms of reference for review, which once published, would begin the twelve month period for the review. The committee would subsequently be meeting in late May to consider the initial feedback received from relevant stakeholders and agree the formal proposals for consultation. The democratic services manager confirmed that any responses received would be circulated to members.

A motion moved and seconded, to support the officer's recommendations was declared carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to agree the terms of reference for the review set out in Appendix 8 of the report of the head of legal and democratic to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 7 March 2022.

The meeting closed at 7.24 pm