



Minutes of the Ewelme Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 8th January 2025

Parish Councillors present: David Solomon (DS/Chair)

Barry Tindall (BT) Nigel Layton (NL) Rebecca Lanigan (RB)

District Councillors present: Andrea Powell (AP)

Joanna Brock (Clerk) 0 members of the public

1/25 **Apologies for absence:** Paul Stillaway (PS), Sally Stockings (SS) and Sue Cooper (SC) who is attending another PC meeting.

2/25 **Declarations of interest:** None.

3/25 **Minutes of last meeting 11/12/2024:** These were agreed and signed.

4/25 **Public session:** No members of the public attended.

5/25 **County & District Councillor reports:** SC & AP sent a monthly report before the meeting. AP attended the meeting and discussed local government reform which could see district and county councils abolished to create new unitary authorities. County councils are being consulted and must respond by the 10th January. AP reminded the PC that a thermal heating camera is available to identify heat loss in buildings. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have submitted their Joint Local Plan for independent examination. A new Performing Arts Grant Scheme was approved by the cabinet, which will enable community and voluntary organisations to apply for up to £5,000.

6/25 **Planning:**

P24/S3782/HH: Spring View, Ewelme, OX10 6HQ. Two storey side extension and replacement of the existing rear conservatory with a single storey rear extension. RESOLVED EPC wishes to lodge an objection to this planning application. This is based upon the size of the proposed extension with respect to the existing building and the site, and the proximity of the proposed new parts of the property to the Ewelme Brook/Ewelme Watercress Beds.

This is a sensitive and restricted site, with major potential impact upon the picturesque village of Ewelme. Given that:-

- the property lies within the Chilterns National Landscape;
- the property is within the Ewelme Conservation Area;
- the property borders the old Ewelme Watercress Beds, which are important in heritage terms;
- the property borders a Local Nature Reserve and a Local Wildlife Site;
- the plot is of very restricted depth; only 15 m and 10 m at each end of the proposed footprint of the house;
- the existing building, and the proposed extension, lie within a few metres of, and would be in full view of, the main thoroughfare in the village and the cress beds Nature Reserve;

we feel that a two-storey extension is inappropriate for this site, and that any approval for an extension should be restricted to a single-storey.

Both the current Ewelme Neighbourhood Plan and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (SOLP) include a policy stating that there should be no development permitted within 10 m of a watercourse. Both plans refer to the potential problem where an existing building, for which an application is submitted for an extension, already lies within 10 m of a watercourse; this is the case for this application. In the pre-application advice letter the Countryside Officer is quoted as recommending that no development should be allowed in this case that approaches the watercourse closer than

does the existing conservatory.

However, given the factors listed in the bullet points above, and that the existing conservatory impinges to within about 3 m of the bank of the watercourse, we consider that the suggested restriction is insufficient to address the issues raised in the Neighbourhood Plan and the SOLP. This latter plan includes the wording “*where a 10 m wide buffer strip is not considered possible by the local planning authority (for example.....where existing development comes closer to the watercourse) a smaller buffer zone may be allowed, but this should still be accompanied by detailed plans showing how the land will be used to promote biodiversity Wherever possible within settlements a minimum 10 m buffer zone should be maintained.*”

We believe that in order to incorporate the spirit as well as the wording of this policy, greater protection is needed. We are particularly concerned that the approach suggested by the Countryside Officer would allow full-height (ie two storey plus pitched roof) development even closer to the bank of the watercourse than it presently exists. If SODC is minded to approve a two-storey extension, we suggest that the decision should allow single-storey development no closer than currently exists, and any two-storey development no closer to the bank than two-storey development currently exists.

Detailed consideration of this issue has been made harder by the lack of adequately dimensioned plans. The applicant suggests that the proposed single-storey development has the same footprint as the existing conservatory. However, drawing FD20 shows the new extension approaching closer to the bank of the watercourse than the existing conservatory shown on FD19. All the drawings are qualified by a “do not scale” instruction; this is unsatisfactory for plans which have no dimensions, covering such an important policy issue as this.

The proposed development goes to within about 1 metre of the property line (according to Drawing FD20); the Chiltern Society, who own the cress beds, also own a strip of land along the bank about 5 feet (1.5 metres) width. Given that the Chiltern Society have responsibility for managing the cress beds including the heritage aspects and Local Nature Reserve, and do so very actively, it would appear to be a significant oversight by SODC to have not included them in the list of consultees. It is suggested that this is rectified before this application is determined.

The pre-application advice issued to the applicant by SODC raised other issues regarding the overall size of the proposed extension, the fenestration and the design of the proposed garden office. We note that the application plans have been modified somewhat since the advice letter was issued. We would be reassured if SODC could confirm that the modifications to the application have satisfied all SODC concerns raised in the advice letter.

7/25 Accounts and Administration:

(a) RESOLVED finance report accepted.

(b) RESOLVED new income and expenditure authorised. *See appendix.*

RESOLVED all invoices to date authorised.

8/25 Common flooding: There has been no action taken on this yet. It is believed there is a pipe running the length of the recreation ground. DS will contact the drainage engineer at SODC and will look to get some quotes before the next meeting.

9/25 Car park expansion: BT will obtain two new quotes, one for the extension of the car park and one for improving the verge for parking. BT will write an article for the EN asking for feedback from villagers.

10/25 Bus shelter refurbishment: The new roof is on. The Clerk will check whether EPC has been successful with their application for a grant for display boards within the shelter.

11/25 Traffic: OCC will make a decision on the application for the new Wallington bypass by 20th January. Currently no HGVs will be allowed to use this new road. This was discussed and agreed it was a good idea to prevent more HGVs using local roads.

There is no update on the Hazell & Jefferies CLEUD.

- 12/25 **Green Spaces:** A new community orchard in the grounds of the Manor house was discussed. AP mentioned the 'Right to Roam' organisation which is contacting farmers and campaigning to use fields for walking on instead of having to use roads.
- 13/25 **Health & safety issues:** It was agreed to let J. Martin do the repairs on the play area at a cost of approx. £285. The gang mowers are still in for repair, BT will chase this up.
- 14/25 **Village maintenance:** The grant to replace the gates on Cow Common has been successful, this should be started in the next few months.
- 15/25 **Reports from meetings and training courses:** Nothing to report.
- 16/25 **Correspondence.** Nothing of note.
- 17/25 **Other items of interest.** The editorship of the EN was discussed again and it was decided it needs a succession plan. DS will discuss this with the current editor.
 Benson Lions FC will not be using the pavilion or sports field this year. The Clerk will turn off the water heater and drain the system.
 It was decided to hold a finance meeting on 17th February at 7pm, half an hour before the public meeting begins.

The meeting closed at 2100

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting – 12th February 2025

Appendix

Ewelme PC Payments & Receipts January 2025

Ref	Payments for authorisation:	
	Administration costs	1,223.68
DD	E-On	85.50
DD	Grundon	16.24
	A. Sayer - EN editor	75.00
	Debit card purchases (below)	0.00
		1,400.42

Date	Receipts since last meeting:	
06/01/2025	Fords Farm grazing & water	1,438.00
		1,438.00

EPC debit card purchases

Date	Item	Cost
	Nil	
		0.00