

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on
15th July 2024 held at Tackley Village Hall**

Present: Councillors Liz Marshall (LM) Chair), Andrew Lines (AL) (Vice Chair), Sue Lygo (SL), Steve Hill (SH), Angus Paxton (AP), John Gibbins (JG).
Cherie Carruthers (CC) (Clerk to the Council).
Councillors Tim Sumners (TS) (WODC) and Genny Early (GE) (WODC).
10 Members of the public

24/023:Public Participation:

a) **Jin Langstone** – Read out the following statement:

TWAO inquiry into the closing of Tackley Crossing – TRAC Objection (OBJ-02)

Background I have been involved as a witness for British Horse Society (BHS) at the recent Inquiry into the closing of the Tackley level crossing. There are three possible outcomes to the Inquiry – agree closure of the crossing and NR’s proposals in their entirety; agree the closure of the crossing, but with modification(s) to NR’s proposals and, lastly, not agree the closure of the crossing. This is what the Inquiry was about and is due to the number of objections (79 written into the Inquiry – of which OBJ-02 is from TRAC). Nearly all 79 of those objections were in part regarding the safety of the length of bridleway running next to the railway.

My involvement with the inquiry has taken up considerable personal time and loss of income to myself in preparing, reading (hence I read OBJ-02) and attending the Inquiry, It has been stressful and well out of my comfort zone as is talking to you now.

I was one of the highest attendee objectors at the Inquiry hearing so think I do have significant understanding of the content, process, and importance of the hearing and how to and it was conducted. It is difficult to express the shock and disgust the submitted OBJ-02 from TRAC is- its last two paragraphs are diatribe and illustrate an attitude that makes a mockery of TRAC, the TPC and therefore Tackley as a village.

That documents submitted by TPC and its representaives included reference to TRAC and the fact that TRAC is a subcommittee of TPC. Documents of interest include Objection TPC (OBJ-63), Statement of Case TPC (SOC-OBJ-63), opening statement TPC (INQ-03), JC statement on behalf of TPC (INQ-13) and closings statement TPC (INQ-25). Also, many of the NR documents and Proof of Evidence (POE) cite TRAC and TRAC in relationship to TPC. (<https://gateleyhamer-pi.com/en-gb/tackley-level-crossing/inquirydocuments/>).

I would like to point out that relatively recently appointed Councillor Lygo did a good job in very difficult circumstances at the inquiry.

I would like to assume that those paragraphs are not the view of the TPC or the greater majority of TRAC - however they are now on the public record. Everyone on the TPC and TRAC therefore is linked to them. As the Inquiry is completed and awaiting a decision, they probably cannot be redacted.

At the very least an acknowledgement, apology, and explanation to the residents of Tackley, the Inspector, NR, inquiry attendees and beyond as to how such paragraphs ever got into the inquiry is required and justified.

This I hope though, especially for the person(s) who wrote those words, is not going to becoming a witch hunt. They no doubt did not realise they would become public – all I can say is more fool them.

I have been asked to bring a further related matter to the TPC attention by number of people. To date there has been an undercurrent of coercion and pressurising many villagers into not expressing their views. I have been afraid to voice my views since 2018/2019 and what was said about me then. I would rather have a footbridge/lift, a safe ‘for all users’ bridleway than many of the other options or, worse case for Tackley and all its residents, no station.

The optioneering process has been conducted and comprehensively explained in the inquiry about the viability and validity of these many options – the details are evidence not emotions and include compliance by station users, cost, user accessibility to cite just a few. One to consider to is the

length of trackside bridleway which many of these options would concur as noted above this was the main reason for objections to this inquiry.

So Questions for the TPC

How can the TPC better manage its subcommittees and affiliates so as they act in Tackley village's best interest, so avoiding the deliberate misrepresentation and falsehood as illustrated from this incident– this needs to be addressed urgently?

With the greatest respect to all parties, has the TPC and NR had a blinkered focus or lack of engagement and this in part sadly blighted the ability to develop a coherent and reasoned dialogue with NR of which all involved should be saddened? I dread to think what this has all cost the public purse – our money.

Does the TPC truly represent the 500 households of Tackley or a minority of those whose loud voice has derailed the whole process with NR?

Can the TPC engage and work with NR, BHS, TE and OCC Ede holdings etc going forward for the best outcome for the village – all of the village? This will be a compromise, but it needs to be a negotiation for all parties, the village, bridleway users, the vulnerable and encumbered, those with disability as well as those whose properties may be affected by the footbridge for which I do have sympathy and other residents' landowners who are directly affected.

I implore the TPC to move forward from all this and reengage with all interested parties. I know that much of what you do is out of your care, compassion and love for this village but please be mindful you represent the whole of the village, you have a public facing role and need to be professional and due diligent in your dealings.

b) James Wild – Read out the following:

I have been following the Public Inquiry into the proposed re-routing of the public bridleway following the closure of the Tackley railway crossing.

I was appalled to listen to and read the submission from the Tackley Railway Action Committee (TRAC). Specifically the last two paragraphs.

"The consequences of the deliberate hoax pandemic in 2020 has been intentionally used by government, local authorities and large infrastructure bodies to push through unacceptable societal change with little consultation and minimal objection. The clue to the fakery always lies in the loss and infringement of our rights and exorbitant cost to us as tax payers.

The implementation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, draconian anti-car measures including unnecessary widespread 20 mph zones and the closure of major roads like Botley Road for bridge replacement and the proposed closure of Sandy Lane and Yarnton level crossings along with the overrunning of major road works locally and nationally have happened in the wake of a long-planned and globally orchestrated fake pandemic. Thankfully people are now awake to the con. Your move, scumbags."

As a publicly submitted document to a formal Public Inquiry, this document is now available for broader scrutiny for the long term.

I am frankly appalled at TRAC's statement and language which bear no relevance to the Public Inquiry and create a detrimental external and public view of the Tackley community.

Since this deposition was supposedly issued on behalf of the Tackley village, I believe the views expressed are not representative of the wider Tackley community and citizens.

Specifically, the TRAC deposition ridicules a key TPC positive initiative for the village, the 20mph speed limit.

I would like to ask the Parish Council's thoughts on the views, sentiments and language used by TRAC in the closing paragraphs of its submission?

I have asked the PC specific questions regarding the relationship between the PC and TRAC? I understand from the TPC Parish Clerk that TRAC is not formally affiliated to the TPC, but:

- a) *TRAC representatives have been routinely invited to provide updates to TPC meetings over the past 3 years according to TPC meeting minutes*
- b) *Two current TPC councillors are recorded as being members of TRAC, as noted from TPC meeting minutes and depositions from NR*

On this basis, under provision 3.8 PC code of conduct

“You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or the Council into disrepute.”

So my questions are:

1. *Who from TPC is a member of TRAC?*
2. *Why was the TRAC deposition allowed to be submitted without due scrutiny? Who approved the deposition to be submitted?*
3. *Is TRAC the most appropriate group to be the main contact with NR?*
 - *They evidently hold some strong views which are not held by the majority of Tackley*

The members thanked both for attending the meeting. CC confirmed that TPC had no knowledge whatsoever of the submitted objection, the PC had also contacted a representative of TRAC, who confirmed they were not aware of the document.

CC has contacted Joanna Vincent of the Public Inquiry asking for confirmation of who the author of the document is and how it was allowed to be submitted due to the content of the paper. She confirmed she had sent our request onto the DfT Infrastructure Unit who registered the Objection. CC will report back once a response has been received.

CC confirmed TRAC was not a sub-committee of the PC although June Collier was a member of both, and the PC were in communication with TRAC. TRAC were representing themselves regarding the bridleway, the PC's position was to represent everyone to make sure, whatever happens with the bridge, we'll end up with a safe bridleway at the least.

24/024:Apologise of absence: CCllr Andy Graham and Cllr Richard Holland-Oates – were noted.

24/025:Declaration of interest: LM in item 11.i – a family member is a recipient of a payment.

24/026: Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 17th June 2024 were approved as a fair and true record: Proposer AL, seconder SL.

24/027:Matters Arising from June meeting:

- i. Metalwork for hardcourt: CC confirmed no quote received, SL to chase.
- ii. Bench in new playground Barwood Estate: outstanding CC, LM will send a contact. Dead trees were also reported on this site, CC to report these.
- iii. S106: Await Village Hall's final drawings / presentation and arrange a date for public consultation.

24/028: To consider District Council matters:

TS: Advised that there is a Capital Fund for Projects of £160,000, any project ideas will be considered, applications can be made via the WODC website.

Woodstock outdoor pool will be open again this year, it has café facilities and is a great day out.

GE: Noted that Stonefield Neighbourhood Plan and policies are on their village website, and that TPC may wish to look at it as an example.

LM noted that the drains are not clearing away quick enough, the clearing of these should be on a 2 year rotation, this has not happened, can it be chased.

24/029: To consider County Council matters: AG sent apologies.

24/030: Network Rail Public Inquiry: The members discussed this under minute ref 24/023, but noted June Collier commented that there were no representatives, other than SL, present at the inquiry. CC confirmed that TRAC were not a sub-committee of the council and that the council received regular updates from the group, but never involved in any formal submissions of correspondence with them.

24/031: Footpaths report: the members received and noted the footpaths report, they expressed their thanks to Neil Wilson who walked the paths and prepared the report. SL has sent report for posting on the website.
SL has reported all problems on the Public Rights of Way website and will keep on eye on progress. The bridge at Northbrook has been reported to Canal and River Trust.

24/032: Parish amenities:

- i. **Safety Railings:** CC received notification from OCC S106 team that there are no funds to draw down, and that the £8,000 was spent by OCC on a new bus stop in Tackley. CC has challenged this as it is misinformation, TPC has already received £4,000, leaving £4,000 in the pot, she has also asked where the new bus stop is, as it is not in the village. CC has contacted John Cook for help with this matter. CC to update at next meeting.
- ii. **Drain Clearance:** LM noted that a resident had emailed to say they had had to clear around a blocked drain. LM had previously been informed that drains were inspected and cleared on a 2 year rotation, but this is nowhere near frequent enough considering how many drains become blocked. LM asked if TS and GE could look into how the frequency could be increased considering the flooding problems in the village.
- iii. **Nature Spaces Report:** Rachel Strachan updated on the following:
 - Jubilee Garden. Follow up of Tree safety survey report - to arrange inspection this summer to check if JG2 has ash dieback. This was noted by TPC.
 - There have been 2 working parties to cut back the bracken on the Heath with 8 people for 2 hours.
 - Trees on the Cherwell Rise estate are in a terrible state, LM to contact the maintenance company and ask why they were not replaced over winter as they had suggested would happen when contacted last year.
- iv. **Crecy Hill** – June Collier (JC) wrote to TPC on 7 July about controlling ragwort on Crecy Hill Nature Reserve (CHNR), asking it be dealt with as a matter of urgency to avoid it seeding onto her neighbouring horse paddocks. LM pointed out it is only possible to pull the ragwort on CHNR when it is in flower, so is visible amongst the tall vegetation. LM organised 2 volunteers to do an hour's session on 10 July; but they found little in flower (as JC had already got someone to do it). On 28 July Oxford Conservation Volunteers (OCV) have a

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work party on CHNR, with ragwort pulling their priority; this was arranged early May, with JC notified.

JC felt the Nature Spaces group did more volunteer practical work on the Heath and Jubilee Garden than on CHNR. Rachel Strachan (Nature Spaces Chair) reported in 2023 over 200 volunteer-hours were done on CHNR; including three 6-hour OCV work parties, each with ca. 10-15 volunteers. In March 2024 an OCV work party gave 78 volunteer-hours: as well as 28 July, another is planned this autumn. Whereas practical work on the Heath in 2023 was about 60 volunteer-hours and in 2024 to date 40 hours. Jubilee Garden is much less than this.

It was suggested the Council hire someone to visit Crecy Hill reserve throughout the ragwort flowering season to pull up those plants in flower.

The PC to write to Network Rail to ask they take steps to control the trackside ragwort by Crecy Hill to avoid it seeding both into the nature reserve and the adjoining fields, both of which are grazed by livestock (the latter including horses).

- v. **Football pitch use:** Heyford Park Football team – AL updated that he had met with a representative of Heyford Park and confirmed many residents of Tackley played for the team, he proposed that the PC support this request.

Proposed: AL, Seconded: JG – All in favour – permission given.

24/033: To consider matters of finance and policies:

- i. Ratification of Payments – invoices to be emailed beforehand: It was approved that the following payments were ratified and the impact the payment would have on the budget and reserves. Proposed: AL, seconded: SH: **APPROVED**

Gross Amount (£)	VAT Value (£)	Payee	Details	Power
840.66		Clerks Pay	June Salary	LGA 1972 S111
50.00		A Marshall	June bin emptying	LGA 1972 S112
906.00	151.00	Greenscythe	June Green spaces maintenance	Open Spaces Act
5.99		L Marshall	Bin Liners reimbursement	Open Spaces Act
508.57		Clear Councils	Annual Insurance Policy	LGA 1972 S112
140.00		Tackley Village Hall	Inv 240007 - £60.00 Inv 240025 - £80.00 Meeting room hire	LGA 1972 S112

24/034: To consider other matters:

- i. Airport: JG has contacted David Betts from Kidlington Parish Council who also sits as an airport rep. He is happy to share information.
- ii. Green Spaces: SL noted that the grass is being left behind rather than taken away when cut, when the contract is renewed could this be looked at. She also noted Cherwell Rise and the lack of maintenance.
- iii. Squatters Rights: AL advised that anything concerning squatters, anti-social behaviour, dangerous dogs, should be reported direct to Crimestoppers.

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- iv. St Johns – Nethercote footpath: LM advised that the occupier of the house should cut these hedges. the village hall bus stop also needs clearing of vegetation.

- v. Robin Gibbins thanked AL for his support on the squatter’s situation and the advice to contact Crimestoppers.

- vi. Website: It was noted that the website was still showing Richard Jackson as a Cllr, and a note about no dogs on the playing field.

- vii. Judy Robson thanked Jin Langstone for her work and attendance at the Bridleway Inquiry, she also noted that the stinging nettle along the school path had now been cleared.

Next meeting: 16th September 2024 at 7pm.

Meeting closed at 8:30pm.

Signed as a true record of the Tackley Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 15th July 2024.

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Date.....