

Approved Minutes FOR MEETING HELD ON

8<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 6.45pm

In the Village Hall

1. Welcome from the Chair of the Council including new Councillor (unopposed election) Mike Sibthorpe
2. Attendance recorded as Parish Councillor Paula Marchant, Mark Ziles, Amanda Kimpton, Mike Sibthorpe and 8 members of the public
3. Apologies for absences recorded County Councillor Paul Hodgkinson and District Councillor Keeling
4. Council noted the resignation of Greg Pearce – Council thanked him for his hard work, attention to detail and wide knowledge he brought to the Council and it was agreed that the Council was sorry that a second councillor has resigned
5. There were no Declaration of interests by Councillors for matters on the agenda
6. Public session – upto 15 minutes at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting- Resident A & B requested that their comments be minuted:

Resident A spoke “Referring to the recent election and speaking as Previous Councillor, I WAS thinking of standing again. But at least 10 people had requested an election so I assumed that at 2 would want to stand, so I decided against putting myself forward. Those 10 plus people should know that they have now cost the Parish at least £2000 for this non-event. Perhaps each of those 10 plus people would like to contribute £200 towards the cost of this "election". Is this not the second time this has happened in recent months?

It stands to reason that at least one person who requests an election will stand. In this case one person did but he had already put himself forward!

This exercise has been such a waste of time, effort and money and these 10 people should realise that Parish Councillors are UNPAID servants of this parish and should be treated with the consideration and respect that they rightly deserve.

To continue this point, the manner in which Parish Councillors have been criticised recently is unjust and reprehensible in the extreme and I would urge those people to reconsider their approach to village matters. Please can we stop this confrontation and act like sensible people living quietly in a small community and talk to each other”

The Chair of the Council gave an update on the election/co-option process and explained that the costs involved to the District Council, which at the present time are not going to be passed onto the Parish Council, means that the Council Tax-payers have incurred costs that could have been used for other schemes. The waste of everyone’s time was also highlighted.

Resident B spoke on behalf of her husband, and read out a prepared statement which stated: Reading through the minutes and correspondence there seems to be a considerable amount of criticism of the Parish Council for not following correct procedures and not fulfilling the duties of office to the satisfaction of some Parishioners. At least 10 people signed a petition demanding that councillors are elected and yet none of them have been willing to stand for office. I would like to remind the community that for at least the last 10 years all the Parish Councillors have agreed to become a councillor because no one else was willing to do it and they are only there out of a sense of duty. Because of the critical comments the council has been facing recently we have already had 2 councillors resign and if this criticism continues others will probably follow. If no one in our community is willing to be a councillor then CDC will give us random people who will run the council for us, the

consequence being that our parish will be administered by people with no interest in the village. It is a thankless task and I would ask that those who are being critical of the Council to either volunteer to become a councillor and improve matters from within or consider who these people actually are, your neighbours just trying to help the community, and give them your support”

The Chair invited further comments from the public -none - Public session closed at 18.52

7. Correspondence from residents was discussed by Council -

correspondence from Diana Ray bfwd from previous meeting as attached in the pack. Response to this communication will as part of the published minutes

see also item 16

**Highways- Parking in the Village feedback from Cllr Ziles**

Whilst the concerns raised about safety in Cold Aston are valid, their enforcement is beyond the remit of the Parish Council. The safety zone information is sent to new pupils every start of the academic year and is clearly displayed on the school noticeboard. This serves as a daily reminder of where and where not to park. School websites are the remit of the school whose resources are continually being stretched. The Parish Council does not want to be considered as a cost incurring institution to the school especially when budgets are constantly under pressure. Delivery lorries and vans are under tight timings to make as many drops as possible in a day. We can all do more to give delivery instructions to suppliers and online order companies.

There is little appetite in the village to urbanise the space with yellow lines or hatched areas, so there is no easy solution to improve the situation

**Glebe land** feedback from Cllr Marchant

The Glebe Land is a private matter between school and church commissioners and is not a matter for the Parish Council. This matter was discussed 20+ years ago and any discussions between the school and the Church Commissioners were private and it is not something that the Parish Council feel there is an appetite or demand for. Regarding the suggestion of having a safe play area for children was discussed as a means of celebrating the millennium. It wasn't carried out then or in the intervening years, the Parish Council have seen no appetite to reinstate the plan

**Allotment boundaries** are well maintained and the Parish Council agreed it does not think it to be an issue

**Allegation of bullying behaviour** statement has been asked for clarification. A response has been received but it did not specify the incidents. Cllr Mike sibthorpe felt that as the allegation is serious it cannot be left unresolved- it should either be retracted or explained so the Council can take appropriate action. – Proposed/seconded/agreed that Clerk writes to resident to ask for clarification or if on reflection, she wishes to rescind her allegation

**Conservation issues** re Trees and wildlife issues raised were noted. The Holly Tree situation was explained fully and the Chair of the Parish Council had taken immediate action when they learnt that the legal process was not being followed

**Ash dieback** comments noted and it was agreed it is not the responsibility of Parish Council as it is the responsibility of Glos Highways, who had sent detailed policy

documents. It was not within the budget or remit of the Parish Council to challenge GCC. The Parish Council is not responsible for trees on unclassified roads, only on Parish Council land including the allotments. Glos CC have offered lots of trees to replace trees taken down and Diana Ray has requested trees on behalf of the Parish Council. It was proposed/seconded/agreed that any new trees go to land owners. However if it was felt that if any parishioner had a specific location on Parish Council land, the Parish Council would consider it taking into account future responsibilities/cost. Glos Highways has indicated it will replace trees that have been taken down (specifically Bang up Lane) and the Parish Council remain interested in this plan.

**Communication with Parishioners:** The Parish Council did a letter drop to all Parishioners a few years ago and will repeat at the start of each "4 year Council" cycle to inform parishioners

**Clarification of Nature/Nature** group was sought by Councillor Sibthorpe and it was stated that it is not an official group, charitable group, committee or subcommittee of the Parish Council

#### Other Correspondence

- a) correspondence regarding Glebe Land – requesting a share of costs for survey of the Glebe Land which could include the Allotment land. The Parish Council felt that it has the information on the lizards that it required and would decline the offer
  - b) A further Freedom of Information request has been received. The Clerk is seeking advice from Information Commissioner in order to respond appropriately. It was felt that verbal conversations which are not minuted, especially those taking place outside of meetings are not part of the legal framework of the ICO Freedom of Information Act. It was also felt that the Parish Council should look at the detailed criteria for complying with FOI requests and permissible exemptions which will be dealt with later on in the agenda
8. Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021- matter arising- response from Planning officer including 20/02144/CLUED and 20/04371/CLOPUD the officers report for 20/02144/CLEUD. This sets out the evidence the case officer considered at the time of that application. Please note that this is also available on the online planning application documents. It appears from the electronic case file that the consultation undertaken for that application was in the form of notification to the parish council and ward member and internal consultation with the Council's legal department.
- In relation to 20/04371/CLOPUD consultation was undertaken as per the previous application, with the addition of neighbour letters sent directly to Ross House and Aston Farm. This application has not yet been determined as we are awaiting a response from the agent in relation to the new photographic evidence provided in relation to the 20/02144/CLEUD, which was originally permitted but if the evidence is substantiated may require the council to seek to revoke that permission and therefore has an implication on the ability to determine the CLOPUD. Please note there is no 3<sup>rd</sup> party right of appeal.
9. Report from County Councillor Paul Hodgkinson – read out

1. Covid - the latest figures show increasing cases in the Cotswolds following a fall in late September. The latest rate of positivity per 100k population is 310. Gloucestershire is lower at 236. The majority of new cases are amongst the 1019 year old and 40-59 year old age groups. Hospitalisations due to Covid in the county are at 38 (up from 26 last month).
2. The river pollution task group at GCC which I called for has now met twice and has taken evidence from 'WASP' amongst others. The River Windrush is of particular concern due to repeated discharges of raw sewage into it by Thames Water.
3. Whiteshoots Hill - another accident occurred last month. As confirmed previously, the proposal to cut the speed limit to 40mph is with Dan Tiffney and the Road Safety Team at Shire Hall. I have allocated some of my Highways Local fund this year to moving this forward. Highways are looking to combine a number of speed limit reductions in our area to save costs and time.
4. Faster broadband - Whiteshoots Hill - Fastershire has committed to finding a solution here

10. Report from District Councillor Richard Keeling – read out

Councillor Keeling was keen to give an update about Valley View planning. "The Case Officer Amy Hill has passed the case to Alison Williams. She advises that the Applicant will be submitting a response to the submissions made by Whiteshoots Hill Management Co Ltd. As soon as it is lodged on the portal she will let interested parties know so that comments may be made as appropriate. I will keep all up to date with developments

Council considered the following updates and agreed any further actions

11. Highways updates– Cllr Ziles
  - a. Stream of water outside the Plough Inn has been reported and response from Glos Highways is awaited
  - b. Village Map working party agreed objective was to give delivery drivers full information and a strategy of "what 3 words" (there is also an app available) could be made available on the website. It was proposed/seconded /agreed that Cllr Ziles lead on the project –
  - c. information pack is on the website- task completed
  - d. Parking issues regarding shooting party correspondence was noted. The organisation has stated it will comply with the parking regulations within the village and are aware of the offer from the resident of alternative parking availability.
12. Trees – Cllr Pearce is no longer on the Council and Council will consider at a later date if it wishes to appoint a lead Councillor.
13. Verges – No Mow May proposal will be sent out to Public Consultation, using the website. Council to agree format at next meeting. The public were asked to email the Clerk if they feel strongly either way
14. Council considered allotment issues
  - a. Registering of land update from Chair of Council – reply from Tanners (solicitors) have responded to Diana Ray on behalf of the Council
  - b. Update from meeting held with Allotment Holders as attached - noted
  - c. Council agreed it wishes to offer plot 7 as an allotment plot, if not accepted it will stay as a wild flower area. Plot size to remain as per the plan.

- d. Council agreed to adopt plan of numbered allotments – paths are indicated and plan will be sent out with every TA for this year with 12 months’ notice that plot 2a and 2b will be as marked including the common path.
- e. Council agreed draft Policy with additional changes to include under termination of plot “unless asked by next tenant and agreed by Parish Council” --- Change “sublet” to share – proposed and seconded - agreed
- f. Council agreed draft Tenancy agreements as attached- to be accompanied with numbered plan. Highlight 2a/2b with confirmation 12 months notice that the path will be a common path
- g. Request for Greenhouse b/w from previous meeting -specifically 10x8ft greenhouse on plot 2b – the Council (seconded and proposed and agreed) that it refuses the request
- h. Ecology policy agreed as proposed at Allotment meeting minutes except to change to “wildflowers on the verges “and plot 8 will be left as it is as part of Ecological project

### **Policy**

- a) is to allow flowers to bloom and set seed on the verges. Local seeds /native to the area and not cultivated plugs are recommended. Self-pollinators on verges could be encouraged.
  - b) the lizards have survived for many years without intervention and that regular strimming should be avoided.
  - c) pathways stops encroachment and should be maintained around plots
  - d) a COMFREY CLEARING PARTY (volunteers) would remove comfrey by hand by in sq m areas
  - e) Plot 8 will remain as part of ecology project
- i. Update on waiting list- 2 current with potential of 3<sup>rd</sup> – nobody has given written notice. It was agreed that Waiting list number 1 does not want plot 7, and waiting list number 2 is waiting to share plot 1
  - j. Report from a formal independent source to identify the species of lizards – Council does not wish to go forward with a formal independent report and Council will continue to use the advice given by the Wildlife Trust– Proposed and seconded - agreed
  - k. Review of plot fees – Clerk report circulated to Councillors which Council considered. It was agreed that as the fee has been held for over 10 years and based on a forecast of expenditure, Council agreed to increase to £15 per plot effective from Oct 22 and £18 per plot effective from October 2023 – Clerk to inform when sending out T Agreement. Council to earmark any surplus within reserves.
15. Council considered planning matters applications outstanding
- a) 21/03474/FUL Blank Cottage – oak framed garage/car port – resident attended the meeting and gave feedback. It was also noted that Conservation Officer has submitted a report raising concerns over the materials and size for the plot. Parish Council agreed that Clerk to support with noting the Conservation officer comments but the Parish Council support the applicant with the proviso that the residents maintain any verges and reinstate any damage
  - b) 21/03405/TCONR – Willows – Grove Farm House – approved by CDC

16. Council policy document to outline the role of Parish Councillors as attached with amendments agreed at meeting
17. Council approved financial reports/payment list as attached –
18. Council approved changes to bank mandate – all Councillors to be included in mandate.
19. Council approved changes to Fuel Poverty Trustees – an explanation on the Fuel Poverty fund was given and it was agreed all Councillors to be included in mandate
20. Council agreed it wishes to introduce charges for FOI requests – Council agreed to charge for £25 admin/time going forward. It was felt that the recent requests are not in the spirit of the legislation (a view also expressed in the public session) but the Parish Council will comply with its legal responsibilities as far as they have to. However the Parish Council wanted more detail as to its obligations under FOI requirements and any exemption which would be applicable. Clerk suggested that a policy was drafted to cover legalities. (Cllr Sibthorpe and Clerk to prepare) It was noted FOI only covers written, electronic records and not verbal conversations
21. Council noted that the independent auditor report for 19/20 has been completed
22. Council agreed that review of standing orders and other policies be carried forward for next meeting including:  
Communication policy (draft distributed) and after approval it will be linked with item 16  
bullying policy (draft distributed) and after approval it will be linked with item 16  
criteria for co-option and after approval it will be linked with item 16
23. Date of next meeting agreed as 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 18.45pm
24. Any other business for information purposes only  
Town and Parish Forum at CDC is being attended by Councillors  
Parish Council Parish Plan to be updated at next meeting.  
Footpath at old Shop has been completed to a very high standard
25. Close of meeting 20.18