

BRIMPSFIELD

MINUTES: of the Annual Parish meeting held in Brimpsfield Village Hall on Tuesday 19th April 2016 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Parish Councillors: Roger Lock, Jane Parsons, Emma Ryan, Heather Eaton, Tom Overbury and Andrew Ward

IN ATTENDANCE: Kate Sales, Clerk

District Councillor N J W Parsons

1 Parishioner

Chairman: Tom Overbury

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence** – Apologies were noted from County Councillor Nigel Robbins. It was noted that Parish Councillors regretted that Cllr Robbins was unable to attend as he had also been unavailable last year to attend.
- 2. Report from the Chairman of Brimpsfield Parish Council – Tom Overbury**
The minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 20th April 2015 were duly signed as an accurate record. Tom Overbury then presented the following report.

I would like welcome all here tonight.

At the beginning of our council year, we had a number of changes to the Council. My thanks to the existing councillors for their provision of continuity and also to our new councillors, for their enthusiasm and ability to bring new skills and talents. My particular thanks to Kate Sales, our Clerk, for her experience, efficiency and knowledge of procedures and regulation. Katie's experience in these matters has been invaluable.

Our precept. At our January meeting we outlined our budget for the financial year 2016-17. We were informed that the County Council would, after five years of frozen rates be increasing their part of the Council Tax by around 1.99% plus the 2% ring-fenced social care addition that the Government had allowed. The Police had also indicated that they too would be adding an increase. With this in mind the Parish Council felt it needed to be prudent with its budget and after discussions the Parish Council set the precept for 2016/17 to £4524, an increase of £111.00 or 2.5%, compared to the 5% increase the previous year.

Major variations compared to the previous year were savings from not needing to buy another lap top for the Clerk, which was offset by increases in the grass cutting budget (£70) and the Clerk's salary (£150). We have budgeted £200 for the training of new, or old, councillors, £50 less than last year. Other budgeted costs were very similar to the previous year.

Moving on to other matters.

We discussed all planning applications, as they came forward. I do sometimes feel that any comments that we make carry very little weight, which I believe is an opinion held by other council members and other parish councils, but that is a separate issue.

The state of the local roads, and various other traffic issues continue to take up a large proportion of our time. We have recently had a Speed Data Recorder installed for a time in the village. Over the period of five days (Wednesday to Sunday), 815 vehicles were recorded with 85% keeping below 30mph. 14% were between 31 and 40, 1.5% over 40 with a top speed of 57mph. Predictably, early mornings and Thursday and Friday afternoons were the worst times for speeding. Details will be published on our web site.

We now have our own Parish Council website - www.brimpsfieldpc.org, with full details of meetings, minutes, etc and all the publishable data that we, as a Parish Council, need to publish. My thanks go to Kate for organizing and managing that. There is also a Brimpsfield village website, organized by Roger Lock, which is a great asset, and I'm sure will grow as time goes on and will become a focal point for the Village and its visitors. Thanks also due to Roger Lock for the continued work on the telephone box.

I dare say that we might have comments about the roll out of Gigaclear and the state of the verges. Please bear in mind that adoption of the verge is at your own risk, with regards to reinstatement.

I would like to thank Mark Foyn and Parish Councillor Mrs Jane Parsons for their continued support as our Snow Wardens, and I would also like to thank our Tree Warden, Emma Ryan.

Cllr Lock raised the point that as we had had a mild winter the Parish Council had a large excess of salt from Amey. The Clerk made a note that no further stocks would be requested from Highways this year.

3. Report from District Councillor – Cllr N Parsons

Finance

CDC has managed to freeze Council Tax for 2016-17, mainly as a result of further efficiencies made in the operation of Council Services. This is combined with the projected savings coming from the Council's 2020 Vision Programme, involving further pooling of back office functions between neighbouring Councils. In particular:

- The efficient use of Ubico in dealing with waste services has resulted in further savings and
- The cost of providing car parking and planning services has reduced.

The Council's budget continues to provide £100,000 towards flood defence projects and the Council has also allocated £500,000 to support the provision of rural broadband across the District. It is worth noting that these savings and the freeze of Council Tax have been possible despite a cut in Central Government grants and reduced receipts from Business Rates.

Cotswold District Council remains debt free with net assets of over £34.8 million.

Planning

The preparation of the new Local plan has advanced to the stage where the final public consultation will be made during June/July 2016. The Council will then send the proposed Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate. A Public Examination will then follow and, when approved by the inspectorate, the new Local plan should be adopted in 2017. The current version of the new Local Plan includes a policy to enable small scale development outside the main towns, provided that it can be accommodated without harm to the countryside and can be shown to be in the best interests of the particular settlement or village.

Environmental Schemes

The Council has allocated funds for environmental works within each Councillor's Ward. The scope of this scheme is very broad and, in the majority of cases, the award will be made if supported by the Ward Councillor. To date awards have covered litter picking, litter bins and flood protection/prevention.

Youth Projects

The Council is still able to support youth projects for those aged between 11-17. Such projects tend to be run during the school holidays, but any project will be considered. In the past, in Ermin Ward, the Council has managed to support diverse projects such as cricket coaching, theatre production and the provision of play equipment. Again, the Council will support most projects which are endorsed by the Ward Councillor.

Community Projects

The Council will continue to support local/community projects with the provision of fund matching with other organisations, such as GRCC and the Heritage Lottery Fund. Within the Cotswolds, this scheme has been particularly useful in the provision of, or maintenance of, village halls and other community facilities

Questions were raised regarding the future of the A417 road link scheme. District Cllr N Parsons informed the meeting that this fell under the County Council's remit. The project was not going forward as quickly as possible due to the fact it was not as a high priority as it had been previously under the coalition government. However, the project was still written into the programme of works. Planning applications are due to be submitted later this year but it might be another five years before any actual roadworks commence.

Questions were raised about the sort of projects that were suitable for the environmental and youth funding. Cllr Parsons confirmed clearance of girders was acceptable for the flood relief work under the environmental fund, and that community litter picking in Brimpsfield would be acceptable. Youth projects had to be aimed at the 11 to 17 age bracket and he had a total fund of £1.5k for youth projects. Applications for both funds needed to be sent to him outlining the project's aims and costings. District Cllr N Parsons also informed the meeting that the District Council had an online reporting tool on its website a link for reporting fly-tipping and he encouraged it to be used.

It was noted that concerns were also raised around the fact that the village suffered badly from fast moving traffic from the A417 due to it being used as a 'rat-run'. Careless driving and litter tipping from these vehicles caused the village serious concerns especially in light of young families in the area out walking as there were no pavements.

4. Report from Gloucestershire County Councillor Nigel Robbins (read by Kate Sales)

In securing a promise of funding to solve The Missing Link (A417) we have to realise that a new government might renege on this commitment. We received verbal assurances when we signed up to the plan that the question of noise (high speed wheel noise compounded by concrete surfaces) would be addressed at the same time as the construction of new carriageways. The Highways Agency (or whatever they now call themselves) have started to scope the issues. I doubt if they will depart from the Brown Route proposal.

Again, we had assurances that the old Birdlip High Street would not be re-opened for construction traffic. I suppose we need to safeguard your roads against that possibility. Despite what has been asserted, getting this project on to the short-list was a collective effort (the LEP put in the final proposal) and I am sure that suggesting the closure of the right turn to Leckhampton would not have assisted the process.

Contracts for the 2nd stage of the Fastershire project for better broadband are to be awarded by May 13th. The key contacts at Shire Hall are Clare Edwards on 01452 328303 or Dawn Thompson. I would have to guess their e-mails. For those who continue to have a poor service there is a sense that patience will be required because the plan is to have everybody eventually on high speed access.

However, as the decisions on how the connections are to be made and where the new contractors are going to concentrate their energies for the Cotswold project will be made by the firm, not by GCC I see no harm in lobbying the appointed company, with evidence of significant business needs (home-based self-employed, for example) which, if not satisfied, will frustrate employment growth.

I was advised a month ago by Highways staff that a review had been launched by GCC into the contract with Amey, which is now 12 months old. To be conducted by a former respected Highways Manager. This was contradicted in the Chamber when I raised it recently; apparently they were helping Amey out, not reviewing their progress! Given the widespread concern about their performance it would do no harm for the BPC to write asking why there has been no full-scale review of the Amey contract now that a year has passed.

The School Place lottery is underway. If local demand greatly exceeds capacity, please advise me. I cannot influence the allocation process but I am willing to press for capital grants to expand capacity in popular primary & secondary schools.

5. Report from the Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee – Roger Lock

When last year this Annual Report was written it was believed that the Village Hall was an asset and the responsibility of the Parish Council. That position has since been clarified with the assistance of GRCC. The Trustees of the Management Committee are responsible for this Community asset. The Parish Council does however have a role in disposing of the asset(s) should the Management Committee become dysfunctional and/or the Trust become bankrupt.

Last year the Committee established the need to identify issues and set short, medium and long term goals.

I am pleased to report that the short term issues have been addressed and although the Village Hall itself needs replacing in the very near future, the essential maintenance problems have been largely corrected thanks to the efforts of members of various working parties who have given their time freely. All Health and Safety issues have been addressed and the Hall is now fully licensed for all its events and this includes a license to sell alcohol.

In addressing the medium term issues last year, the Committee began promoting the Hall as a regular meeting place for the village and in so doing developing community cohesion as well as helping to raise funds. Last Spring a 'Historical Day' with old

photographs from the village was held and was well received. This was followed by a 'Family Fun Day' on August Bank Holiday which, despite the weather was very well attended. In October, the Harvest Supper was resurrected and was well attended. Finally, just before Christmas we enjoyed Carols around the Christmas tree with the tree in its rightful position in the centre of the village. All these events were promoted at cost price in order to establish momentum and interest in the Hall. Because of the interest and the successful nature of the events however, we more than covered our costs. This year we hope to build upon the number of events including a Quiz Night and later in the year a Street Party on June 12th to commemorate the Queen's 90th birthday.

The long-term position remains the same and is to an extent addressed under the paragraph regarding the financial position. The building will need replacing within the next five to six years. To this end, the Committee is currently seeking possible sources of funding. Any funding and proposed development will need to be helped and supported by people who have the skill-set to promote the project. Plans have already been drawn up and we are in consultation with the Village Community as to their views on and needs for a new building.

Financially, during the course of 2015-2016 the Village Hall has put itself into the black and is able to cover its costs. That having been said, it is still not in a position to hire a regular cleaner and has to rely on both the willingness of people who hire the hall to leave the hall in a clean and tidy state but also the volunteers on the Committee who endeavour to keep the building in a presentable condition. We have received some donations and these have been allocated to a Building Fund account unless otherwise stated by the donor. The Committee feels strongly that donations should not be used to fund "everyday" expenses or maintenance. We are however a long way short of the £250,000 that we believe we need to construct a once in a generation hall that will serve the requirements of all of the Community.

Cllr Lock took the opportunity to thank Cllr Parsons for all his help and support for sources of funding and information.

6. Report from the Brimpsfield Parish Charitable Trust (read by Kate Sales)

Two grants were made by the Trust in 2015, one to the Parochial Church Council towards refurbishment of the churchyard, and one to Brimpsfield Village Hall towards a replacement building. Funds having been exhausted, and with no prospect of further income the Trust has been wound up and the bank accounts closed. A final financial statement was prepared and audited by Martin Smith. All records of significance are held by the Parish Council.

7. Any other business

No items were raised.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.20pm.