

# Cowley (& Birdlip) Parish Council

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Clerk: Mrs. E. Lavington | 07941258052 | cowleypc@hotmail.co.uk

## MINUTES

**Minutes of the Annual Public Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022 Deer Park Guide HQ Cowley 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Cllrs. Julian Lavington, Eileen McKay, Peter Ritchie, Dawn Collings, Linda Dawson, Jo Pearce and District Councillor Judd

- 1. Apologies** Councillor Knox, and apology from Cllr Ritchie for late arrival.
- 2. Minutes of last meeting** Minutes of meetings held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022 were agreed and signed.
- 3. Declarations of Interest** None
- 4. Matters arising not included as an agenda item**
  - i) Boundary Review - Chairman confirmed he had received and distributed the most recent information regarding the Parish Council Split and new Parish Boundary maps. The Parish Council voted unanimously to support the split creating two new Parishes being Parish of Cowley and Parish of Birdlip as per map "Option 2" which would also include properties at the Parsons Pitch/Hawcote Hill area of Birdlip relocating from Brimpsfield Parish to the proposed new Birdlip Parish. This proposal will now be put forward to CDC for approval.
  - ii) Clerk confirmed she has been liaising with Cllr Judd regarding Councillor training – more details to follow.
  - iii) Cllr Collings has been approached by a number of residents who have expressed concerns regarding the cost of printing and mailing out a newsletter to residents from Cotswold District Council. They were of the opinion the newsletter would be more cost effective if distributed electronically.
  - iv) Cllr Collings advised that nine large sacks of rubbish had been collected at the recent litter pick in Birdlip. Volunteers had stated they did not feel safe collecting at Barrow Wake due to the nature of the litter and the antisocial behavior. Cllr Judd will raise with appropriate agencies.
  - v) Potholes Birdlip Hill – encourage residents to use the online portal to report these.
  - vi) Community Speed Watch – Parish Council wished to thank Neil McTaggart and the speed watch volunteers for all their hard work.
- 5. Agree GAPTC Annual Subscription** Agreed
- 6. Bus Shelters and Defibrillators:** To note that the three bus shelters, defibrillators and kiosks have been inspected since last meeting. Noted
- 7. Planning**

**22/00964/FUL** | Erection of single storey rear extension to the village hall | Birdlip Village Hall Birdlip Gloucester Gloucestershire GL4 8JH **SUPPORTED**

**22/01160/FUL** | Erection of car port with associated storage area and ancillary room above | The Forge Birdlip Gloucester Gloucestershire GL4 8JH **SUPPORTED**

**8. Finance**

- I. **Clerk Salary** Cllr Dawson proposed Clerks pay to be increased to current scale rate. Supported.
- II. **Agree Annual Accounts** Approved and signed
- III. **Agree and Sign Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2021/22 (part 2)** Approved and signed
- IV. **Issue cheque to GAPTC £103.92** Issued
- V. **Review Insurance and Issue Cheque Zurich Insurance £310.19** Reviewed and Issued
- VI. **Issue Cheque Guide HQ Room Hire £26.00** Issued
- VII. **To note the cheque payments for Clerks pay and expenses March 2021 £200.80 and £26.00** Noted
- VIII. **To note cheque payment to Community HeartBeat Trust Defibrillator maintenance £302.40** Noted

**9. To take any questions from the public.** None

**10. Items for next agenda, Standing Orders, Risk assessment, Internal Audit,**

**11. Date of next meeting which will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May St Mary’s Church Birdlip**

**Chairman Read his Annual Report below**

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

Signed..... Date.....

Welcome to this Annual Parish meeting. In accordance with the custom as Chairman I will take the opportunity to reflect on the activities of the Parish Council over the past year and look forward to the coming year.

Our last Annual Parish Meeting was in June 2021 and was the first ‘face to face’ meeting after the many months of virtual meetings as a result of the pandemic. Some of you may remember we held it at the brewery in Birdlip as we were still not allowed to meet indoors.

So looking back the PC has still been restricted heavily by the pandemic and has not been able to consider any long term objectives, but despite this we have been consulted on and responded to 18 planning applications some of which were significant local developments and it is worth noting that the quantity of planning applications is some 50% higher than the year before the pandemic which is perhaps a crude measure of the increased demand for quality property in the Cotswolds.

One issue that did arise was the decision by CDC to withdraw funding for any contested local election costs for Parish Councils. I personally lobbied against this as it will result in a disproportionate increase in the Parish Council element of Council Tax paid by residents. This is solely to build up a sum of money (circa. £2000) which will sit in our bank account and may never be used. It has been at least 40 years since there has been a contested election in this Parish but the principle of being able to have local elections are necessary for democratic purposes and I have a further worry that this change in policy may discourage residents for applying to be a Parish Councillor if they realise that it could cost every person on the electoral role around £10 for every contested election.

However, on a positive note we completed some outstanding maintenance such as the painting of the phone box in Birdlip, the purchase of a speed gun to be used by Community Speedwatch Group and a grant to set up a VETS emergency response volunteer service in Cowley. We also made grants two further community groups in Birdlip and Cowley.

In terms of your Councillors, I sadly accepted the resignation of Paul Vogel who was a well-respected and mainly moderate voice on this council for some 4 years. Paul has now been replaced by Jo Pearce who was co-opted last month and has been welcomed on to the Council.

So looking forward .....

I have been the Chairman for 8 years now and if I am elected again for next year, I will have the dubious honour of possibly being the last chairman of this council since the Parish Council records commenced in 1904.

I do think that CDC will vote in May to dissolve this Parish Council in favour of two new Parish Council's each representing separately the communities of Birdlip and Cowley. This is the preferred forward that has been agreed by this Parish Council and has been confirmed by the outcome of the CDC Community Governance Review which concluded yesterday. I think each community needs to embrace this opportunity to manage their own local issues and opportunities and we should not continue to reflect on our difficulties in the past but look forward to a brighter future.

So for the first time I do not have any specific plans to present for the coming year; save to say that if CDC vote as expected next month then the work of this existing Parish Council and particularly that of Elaine, our clerk, will be immense to ensure that both new Parish Councils are established and functioning in time for the financial year 2023/24 and in time for the election of two new sets of Parish Councillor's in May next year.

Finally, I would like to thank all Parish Councillor's past and present for their service to this community and I would like to thank our Clerk, Elaine for her continued endeavours and above all her knowledge and integrity in keeping us all on the straight and narrow and working in accordance with our legal obligations.

DRAFT