

The Duntisbournes Parish Council
Annual General Meeting and Parish Council Meeting
Minutes of the 164th Meeting on Wednesday 23rd May 2018 at 7pm in
Duntisbourne Abbots Village Hall.

Present: Mr R. Lane (Chairman), Mrs E. Whitaker, Mr R. Carver, Mrs J.R. Edwards, Mr J. Weston, Mr R. Bliss, Mr W.J. Eykyn, Mrs C. Cuthbert (Clerk).

Also present: Mr N. Robbins, Mr N. Parsons, (Councillors), Mr J. Birchall & Mr J. Jewett (representing Rectory Farm) and 14 residents of the Parish

The Chairman welcomed the Councillors and residents to the meeting.

Report from Mr N Robbins: County Councillor Beeches Ward

Market Place

The newly pedestrianised market place has been deemed a success for the town. There are plans to extend the pedestrianised area to include Cricklade Street, which will exclude all but delivery traffic.

Chesterton Development

The Bathurst application to build 2,350 new homes at Chesterton has been approved. This will lead to approximately 5-6,000 additional people living in Cirencester. Councillor Robbins is very concerned that the infrastructure of the town will not be able to cope with this surge in the population. His concerns relate to the slow speed at which infrastructure is implemented in comparison to the speed at which houses are built, and that Cirencester will be subjected to years of problems as a result. As an example, he quoted the long-standing plans for a cinema and a multi storey car park, which have yet to make any real progress after more than a decade. Suggestions for a park and ride system have been rejected by the District Council. There are talks ongoing regarding the site of the old Watermoor School being made available for additional parking, but no decision has yet been made. The Parish Council all agreed that parking in Cirencester is already a major issue, and that the Chesterton development will compound the problem immeasurably.

Social Welfare

- The Councillor was very pleased to report that a good many charities in the ward have been operating with huge success, and making a positive impact on those concerned.
- The GCC council tax precept has been raised by 2% to protect rising adult social care provision, in addition to central grants, also up 2%.
- The NHS Hospital Trust performance during the winter has been a success. After greatly improved service collaboration and a new winter plan, last year's black spot performance has seen a reduction in bed-blocking and in the number of elective operations being cancelled. This has resulted in the trust moving from grade 4 to grade 2.

Entertainment

The Councillor acknowledged the success of the new 'Barn Theatre', which has been set up in Beeches Road, opposite the car park, and is receiving very positive reviews.

Highways

- A417 link road. Highways UK are expected to endorse the Route 30 option through Stockwell. Tunnel options have been dismissed, largely on cost grounds. It was stressed that we should continue to lobby for extensive noise-mitigation measures, including variable speed limits.
- From 2019 Tarmac will take over from Amey Plc as the main County highways contractor. GCC will take back the design capability for major schemes and attempts will be made to improve local responsiveness. Concerns over the quality of repairs to roads remain, and we were asked to continue reporting problem potholes both individually and as a PC, via the complaint hotline.

Grants

The Councillor wanted to draw attention to the availability of grants through a "Growing our Communities" scheme. £30,000 will be made available over a 3-year period. Examples of funding mentioned were the upgrading of amenities in village halls or churches. Details can be found by searching 'Growing our Communities' website at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk>.

Report from Mr. N Parsons: District Councillor for Ermin Ward

Finance

Despite further reductions in Central Government funding, CDC has frozen Council Tax again for 2018-19, mainly as a result of continued efficiencies made in the operation of Council services and the establishment of the not for profit Company, Publica. Publica is owned by Cotswold, West Oxfordshire and Tewksbury District Councils and Cheltenham Borough Council. The forecast Budget surplus will enable the Council to invest in/maintain:

Enhancements to Planning Services (£195,000) The New Waterloo Car Park (£260,000) Electric Car Charging (£300,000), while Green Waste charges remain **frozen and** "Free after 3" Parking will be **extended again**.

CDC remains debt free with net assets of over £30 million.

Planning

The Draft new Local Plan has been examined in public. CDC has just finished consulting on the changes required by the Inspector. The present intention is to have the plan adopted during the summer. For the **Duntisbournes**, the proposed Local Plan includes a policy to enable small-scale local development outside the main towns, provided that it can be accommodated without harm to the countryside and is supported by the particular settlement or village

Youth Projects

The Council is still able to support youth projects for those aged between 11 - 19. Funding from the County Council has been withdrawn, but each District ward Councillor has an allocation of £1,000 available. Youth projects tend to be run during school holidays, but any project will be considered. In the past, in the 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 has increased the capital allocation available and will continue to support local/community projects with the provision of match funding with other organisations, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. Within the Cotswolds, this scheme has been particularly useful in the provision of, or repair of, village halls and other community facilities.

1st World War

The allocation announced last year remains available through Ward Councillors. The Fund is available to assist communities to commemorate the ending of the 1st World War. Please let him know if you may need support for a project.

Defibrillators

Funds remain available to support parishes with the installation of Defibrillators. Within Ermin Ward we have already used the initial allocation of £2,000, but he has been able to extract funds from other Ward Councillors.

From the floor:

The PC raised concerns over the new local planning scheme. Councillor Parsons responded by saying that any new homes had to be in the interest of the community; they must be philanthropic and meet proven needs in the community. He stated that last year 249 homes in the district met the requirements.

The PC asked for an update on the provision of sites for travellers. Councillor Parsons stated that the council only needs to provide 2 or 3 sites, so the previously raised issue of cameras being installed in Cobberley was no longer relevant.

The PC thanked Councillor Parsons for supplying the funding of £500 towards the cost of the defibrillator due to be installed at our village hall.

The Chairman thanked both Councillors for their reports, who then left the meeting.

The Parish Council AGM

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting: - Were approved by the PC.

2. Matters arising:

State of Roads/Bridle Paths: - Following a number of complaints from residents regarding the state of road and public paths near land belonging to Rectory Farm, John Birchall (owner) and John Jewett (Farm Manager) were invited to attend the meeting for an open discussion. The Chair introduced them, and asked **Mr J. Eykyn (Parish Councillor)** to itemise the issues of concern, which had already been emailed to Mr Birchall earlier in the year. These were;

- Desecration of Greenpits Lane by RF vehicles, and unauthorised widening of both lanes past Abbots Hill.
- Flailing of the hedges, without picking up debris, and consequent spreading of blackthorns and risk to horses' hooves.
- Haulage of cow manure at the wettest time (probably using contract trailers).
- Failure to clean up mud from roads (legal requirement); rain then causing fouling of waterways and environmental damage.
- Dangerously high speed of heavily laden vehicles (often with young drivers) round the blind bends of the village.

He cited as possible remedies:

- Installing a new track infrastructure, using hardcore (cp Long Furlong);
- Re-opening and widening of the Rectory Farm concrete track;
- Use of contractors with smaller vehicles.

He felt that this had not been an exceptionally wet winter, but that use of contractors with huge vehicles was making the situation much worse than in former years, and he expressed the hope that this winter's problems would never be repeated.

Comments from the floor additionally mentioned overgrown hedges, diminishing verges, and excessive mud at the end of Greenpits Lane.

Mr. John Birchall (Rectory Farm) apologised for the tensions and concerns that have occurred. He was keen for the Rectory/Cotswold farm partnership to work together with the village to find common ground towards resolving at least some of the problems raised. It was mentioned that last winter was a particularly wet one, which further compounded some of the problems discussed. Items agreed upon by Rectory Farm:

- A number of signs have already been made for use during harvest to alert contractors to slow down on the 3 sharp bends in the village.
- John Jewett will also speak with contractors requesting them to drive more considerately through the village. He also mentioned that the concrete track had been in greater use since the drier weather had arrived.
- John Jewett offered to place some hardcore on the lanes to help alleviate the problem of excessively deep mud.
- That when muck from over full trailers spilled onto the roads, Rectory Farm would do their best to clear it up.

The Chairman hoped that the discussion would lead to a measure of mutual understanding and respect for the concerns.

3. Planning:

Dutch Barn (MD) 17/01320/OPANOT - Refused, Appeal pending. App/F1610/W/17/3188502 Approved.

The Rectory (DL) 18/01455/TCONR Tree work - No Objections

Elm Cottage (DA) 18/00764/LBC - Permitted

Spring Cottage (DA) 18/00807/FUL - Awaiting Decision – Objections received

Trustrams Cottage (DL) 18/00639/FUL - Permitted

The Following items were received post Agenda submission:

The Laurels (DA) 18/01370/FUL – Awaiting Decision – Objections received.

Parcel of Land in Duntisbourne Leer – An application has been received to **build a Horse Exercise Yard Bounded by Post & Rail Fence (DL) 18/01450/FUL** - Awaiting Decision – Objections received by a majority of Parish Councillors, therefore a formal letter of objection will be issued to the Council via the Chairman of the PC.
Shepherd Hut on same land: The shepherd hut on this land is being used on a commercial basis as an **Airb&b**, for which planning permission has not been granted. The PC has raised the issue with CDC, who are looking into the matter.

4. Highways:

Longford Wall – The wall has now been repaired. Bill Griffin wished to thank those involved for ensuring this repair was carried out, allowing the footpath linking DA to DL to re-open.

Grit Bin DL – Mr. Thomas will fit the new grit bin in due course.

A417 Link Road – Progress as mentioned above by Councillor Nigel Robbins.

Pot Holes – The Clerk confirmed that the pot holes on the road from Jack Barrow to Winstone had been filled.

Hedges – A number of residents raised concern over the overgrown hedges from the allotments out to the end of Brewers Cottage. Church Farm have cut back their shrubs, but it was considered that they should be cut back more severely as they were still too overgrown and causing damage to paintwork of passing vehicles. It was also suggested that the debris produced be cleared away rather than left on the road to avoid punctures from the thorns. The Clerk will write to the owners of the hedges mentioned and request that they are clipped more severely this autumn, once the birds are no longer breeding.

Manhole cover at the bottom of Ealy Hill – Residents living near the manhole cover are concerned that with the heavy traffic now traveling through the village on a daily basis, a total collapse of the cover will occur. The Clerk will contact Highways to discover when this will be repaired.

Diminishing verges – A number of complaints were raised about the state of grass verges, which are being completely destroyed by vans and inconsiderate drivers. The Highways are under no obligation to maintain the grass verges, so they are unlikely to be repaired unless residents are prepared carry out the work themselves.

Damage to wall at Longford – A delivery vehicle has damaged a section of the wall at Longford. The Company concerned has accepted liability. The Clerk has agreed to contact the Highways to enquire about the repair.

Repair to Ford in Leer – A resident living near the Ford has complained that Amey repaired damage to the area by filling it with tarmac instead of reinstating the sets. The Clerk will raise the matter with Highways.

Post Repairs at Crabtree Lane – JRE wanted to acknowledge and thank Bob Gittins for carrying out repairs to the posts at the top of Crabtree lane near the A417.

Flooding under the A417 Bridge – A number of people complained that excessive flooding has been occurring under the A417 bridge at the top of Crabtree Lane. It is thought that the drain is insufficient for the job or blocked. The Clerk will raise this with the Highways.

5. Finance:

Following new legislation regarding the auditing process of Parish Councils, the Clerk presented the annual figures to the PC for approval, and explained that our Parish Council falls into a category that allows us exception from the formal external audit process. This is due to us falling below the £25,000 transaction threshold. The new process for us is:

- Clerk to complete accounts.
- Accounts audited and signed off by local accountant. Our 2017/18 Accounts, approved in Feb '18 were duly audited.
- Exemption Certificate completed and signed by the Clerk and the Chair - at this meeting.
- Present the figures to the PC and 'minute' at meeting. 2017/18 figures minuted.
- Clerk to send the completed certificate to the allotted external audit company. 17/18 Certificate to be sent forthwith.
- Clerk to keep copies of all documents in PC files.

The auditors can request our documents for checking at any time.

5(b) Defibrillator.

Happily, and thanks to the CDC grant and numerous generous contributions from parishioners, our defibrillator has arrived and is ready for installation.

Many residents have asked if training will be offered on use of the defibrillator. It is hoped that this will be available later in the year.

6. Neighbourhood Co-ordination Meeting: - The previous meeting was cancelled due to bad weather and has been re-scheduled to take place on 17th July 2018. JRE has agreed to attend and report back to the PC at the next meeting.

- 7. Meetings:**
- Tuesday 4th September 2018 at 7pm
 - Further meeting on Tuesday 20th November 2018 tbc.