

WYCK RISSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on Monday 4th March 2019 at the Village Hall.

Present: Tim Simon (Chairman), James Ross, Andrew Fifield, Brian Finnimore, Richard Wheeler, Louise Fifield (Clerk), Councillor Dr Nigel Moor, Councillor Mark Mackenzie-Charrington and 3 residents.

There was an apology from Robert Montague and one resident.

1. Declarations of interest

Brian Finnimore declared an interest in the Pear Tree Planning discussion

2. Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting on 3rd December 2018.

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed.

3. Matters arising:

TS reminded the meeting that 3 major projects have been achieved since the last meeting – the re-surfacing of the road outside Laurence House and fencing either side of the old railway bridge, both completed in December, and the Thames Water project, in the final stages, is scheduled to finish before 8th March

- The section of the drainpipe which catches the underside of smaller cars was not done with the road repairs and will need chasing up
- The New English Oak, gifted by Andrew and Elizabeth Ransom, has been planted. Many thanks to them both.

4. Thames Water Update

TS is to arrange a snagging meeting with Thames Water, including RW, once the project is finished. One resident felt that Thames Water had been very good during the time they have been here (since 7th January), very hard working and extremely pleasant to have in the village. This was generally agreed by the meeting. We have been fortunate in having a reasonably dry period. TS told us that all the redundant hydrants marked with a red X will be removed. There are now 2 collapsed drain covers which will eventually be replaced, but at a later date as they are not part of the contract. The original Thames Water plan to run the new main under the road was at our instigation revised so as to avoid too many excavations in the road. This became possible after we reminded them that Thames Water already had Secretary of State approval to lay new pipes under the registered Common. The section in front of the houses from the Village Hall to the Diamond Way, originally scheduled to be re-lined, have now been replaced – an easier and more sustainable option.

5. Maintenance of the Green

TS has now had a quote from Meadows for re-grading the soil around 2 manholes (near Heythrop Cottage and Highfield) for £183.60 inc VAT to include topsoil, compaction and seeding. This was agreed. It is hoped to do this in the next couple of months – well before July when the green will be cut. JR commented that hopefully this would not be an annual expense.

6. County Council News: report by Councillor Dr Nigel Moor

Councillor Moor distributed a summary of the 2019/20 budget approved by GCC. The sum of £428 million – up by £16 million from the current year – includes £178 million of new investment for schools, community facilities and highways. Among new initiatives are:

- £150,000 for maintaining bus services
- A Highways budget of £25,000 for each county member. Councillor Moor encouraged us to think about any further work we might need.
- £10,000 for youth activities
- £30,000 to map existing cycleways
- £24 million to convert lamp standards to LED, thus reducing carbon emissions
- To further promote the Apprentice Travel Card

- To continue the Lengthsman's scheme, organised by new contractor – Ringway.

The budget is based on a 2.99% increase in Council Tax to be invested in Children's services. The number of children in care has risen by 39%. Gloucestershire is in the bottom 25% of council tax levels. The national social care precept of 2 % will also be applied, which will be ring-fenced to manage the increased demand for adult care service. The number of older people has grown by 28% since 2007. The Average Band D taxpayer will see a £5.13 monthly increase.

Finally, Councillor Moor told us about the forthcoming road closure at Upper Rissington (on the main road through, towards Great Rissington and the Barringtons) for a complete resurfacing between Monday 18th March and Friday 22nd March

7. Maintenance of the Pond

TS reported that Cotswold Drains had been very efficient in clearing out and replacing the cover for 2 blocked gullies leading into the pond. They are now working efficiently, particularly the top one and the work had been completed at the quoted figure.

TS thanked Robert Montague for his report on the pond, following a meeting with Jack Smith, which included some recommendations:

- The key issue is whether to replant. It is still the view of the council not to replant. BF commented that it had previously been decided to allow natural species to develop. The problem is that the bulrushes will dominate, evidenced by the fact that for the last 5/6 years, it has been a major task to remove them. Jack Smith feels that the Water Primrose is likely to re-appear and we are obliged to kill it. Roundup is appropriate as it acts on the leaf and will not kill the fish. It will be important to check this with the Environment Agency. RW quoted another case in Norfolk where Roundup was used successfully. AF commented that you need a licence to use a weed killer in public places. This needs looking into to establish if the pond itself is a public place.
- Overhanging trees – After discussion it was decided that they should be left for the moment. If we do trim them, approval needs to be sought from CDC. Monthly contract – Jack Smith has a monthly contract with 3 other villages for summer maintenance. He has quoted us £75/month between May and October (totalling £600 per annum) to keep the pond surround maintained and tidy. This would include tree trimming, but not chalk – something he also felt was necessary on an annual basis to control the silt. There is a good 3' of silt at the bottom of our pond. There followed a discussion, and it was decided that we should try to negotiate a lower monthly amount (to include the addition of chalk), given that we don't want to trim the trees at the moment and there is not much tidying this year apart from checking the recurrence of the water primrose. The aim would be to try and achieve a figure that is on a par with what we are paying now. BF felt it was important to clarify the wording of what this contract would include.

8. District Council News: Councillor Mark Mackenzie-Charrington

The County Council has increased the share of council tax by 2% for the first time in 7/8 years. This barely covers inflation and it is prudent to do this.

There are 2 nasty speed cameras locally – one on the Rissington Road entering Bourton from Little Rissington. It is very high up and in a 30mph zone. The second is in Lansdowne when leaving Bourton in a 20mph zone and is less obvious. In the first week, 300 people were caught speeding!

It has been decided to retain the garden waste collection - previously due to stop during the winter. The current waste collections will be retained up to November this year when there will be a new fleet of vehicles. We will then be asked to separate food and garden waste. There will be a new bigger food bin and these will continue to be collected on a weekly

basis. The green garden waste bins will be collected fortnightly, and can be composted using an anaerobic digester, which in turn will generate income. At the end of the first year of the new arrangements, there will be a survey. If people want a weekly service they will have to pay for it! RW commented that it was surprising that the annual green bin licence has not increased. There will also be a new, bigger blue bag for cardboard. The new arrangements coming into force in November will include the collection and recycling of small electrical appliances, clothing etc. Tetrapaks can be placed in the blue cardboard bags.

Finally, MMC asked that we encourage people to vote in the elections on 2nd May.

9. Planning

- Greenfields: change of use of land to residential and erection of garage/store. This has been consented
- Pear Tree Cottage: application for higher flues. This has been consented
- Pear Tree Cottage: outbuildings application. BF reminded the meeting that this was included in his pre-application a year ago, and then removed from the main building's application. It is to convert 2 stables into a guest annexe, providing a level access, and including a pitched roof over the stables and existing garage. There had also been concern over the choice between a gable or a hipped end, and the planning authority having shown preference for a gable but BF felt that as there were plenty of instances locally of a hipped end, they may not insist. BF then left the meeting while the PC discussed his application. The PC felt that it was important to ensure that it be for ancillary use in order to support the application. RW felt that parking was always an issue and whilst BF had no intention to use it to create income, if future owners of Pear Tree Cottage wanted to let it, it could mean parking on the green. Therefore, the PC should encourage the planning authority to impose a condition to prevent this. MMC asked if there was a kitchen planned in the outbuildings. There is a very small kitchen facility, which he warned was a possible way around it. It was proposed to support the application, using the following suggested by RW '*In the light of the limited parking area on the site and that the adjoining land is a registered common on which parking is not permitted, the support of the PC is conditional upon the CDC writing a condition in any planning consent granted that the guest accommodation be used only as ancillary to the main dwelling and so will not be used for lettings of any kind or by paying guests*'. In the light of some further comments, it was agreed that the wording might be amended before submission to the Planning Officer. This was agreed.
- Hill House (Wyck Hill): Demolition of conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension
- Electric car charging at Gilders – there has been no further news on this. MMC has spoken to Richard Keeling who is equally uncertain and conscious of the large number of objections.
- Pre-planning – Fosseway Gravel Pits for a fishery with ancillary development
- Court Hayes Farm – extend shop. Consented but only for sale of horse feed.

10. Finance Report

JR distributed the Finance Report for the period 1 October – 31 December 2018.

The main income from the period relates to the bench: the CDC contribution of £200 and further donations from residents to whom the PC is very grateful. The extraordinary expenses relate to the clearing of the water primrose in the pond - £1,750. Looking ahead, there should be no surprises before the end of the tax year leaving us with a deficit of around £1,000, having budgeted for a deficit of £624. This will leave us £6,250, equivalent to 21 months of underlying expenditure, excluding any extraordinary expenses. Therefore, for the 6th year in a row we have managed to keep a precept of £3,200. This may need to be raised next year as we should aim to keep around 2 years of underlying expenditure in reserve.

3 new payments were authorised:

- GAPTC Subscription £ 35.00
- Clerk's honorarium £ 60.00
- Token for Annette £ 35.00

11. Elections Update

There will be Parish Council as well as District Council elections in May. TS told the meeting that Richard Wheeler had said that he would not be standing for election this time and TS wished to reiterate the enormous thanks to him for all the work he has put in during the last five years as a Councillor and in particular for his time, effort and success in the Registration of the PC as owners of the Green. He will be greatly missed. This was endorsed by everyone. TS told us that Richard has kindly offered to continue to store files and archive papers and will be willing to offer advice on an informal basis, which will be very valuable. TS has approached Robert Montague, co-opted at the December meeting to have special responsibility for the pond, who is happy to put his name forward for election. The notice of Election will be posted on the website and the notice board when it becomes available after 11th March, and further nomination papers are available if needed on the CDC website. Anyone wishing to stand as a candidate must submit completed nomination papers to the Returning Officer by no later than Wednesday 3rd April. These papers have to be hand delivered. AF is happy to take them to the Council Offices. If there are more nominations than seats (we are allowed 5), there will be an election on 2nd May. If there are the same number of candidates as seats, we will be sent a notice of uncontested election.

12. Letters and Emails received by the Clerk

- Shire Hall update on X-Ray reduction to 2 days at North Cotswold Hospital. This is due to a shortage of radiographers. Anyone wishing to sign a petition can find it on the 'change.org' website.
- Email from REACH group (Restore Emergency at Cheltenham Hospital) including a letter signed by 58 consultants to the Directors of Gloucestershire Hospitals which states that because of a shortage of consultants, they are supporting the A&E continuing at Gloucester Royal, but Cheltenham General will be focussing more on Gastrointestinal medicine and surgery as well as advanced surgery in pelvic and abdominal cancers.
- Email from a company offering to create a parish map at a cost of £500. This was considered beyond our budget.
- It was agreed that the North Cotswold Cluster Group meetings to which we are invited were not really relevant to Wyck Rissington

13. A. O. B.

- The annual litter pick will take place on Saturday 23rd March at 11.30 am. All volunteers are welcome as usual!
- Adding the drainpipe to next year's salting scheme. We had asked if this could be done but were too late for this year. We will need to keep asking and it was noted that it was gritted following the snowfall in early February.
- TS will be re-gravelling the drive at Maces Cottage and produced a sample of the stone to be used. This was agreed.
- MMC reminded the meeting about the Youth Activities Fund. In previous years we have donated our share to Upper Rissington who arrange for a company specialising in holiday activities during the summer holidays. It was agreed to repeat this.

Next Parish Council Meeting/AGM: Date in June will be confirmed as soon as possible.