

PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 11 MAY 2023

PRESENT: Cllr Mrs J Tomblin, Cllr Mrs S Cameron, Cllr Mrs C Elson, Cllr N Price, Cllr A Stone, Cllr M Evemy (CDC), Cllr L Spivey (GCC)
Chris Sutton, Tony Warren, Dot Warren, Joy Canton, Stephen Lynas, Helen Lynas, David Rose, Ken Tomblin, Ollie Tomblin, Sue Gulliford, Rev Jennifer McKenzie, Elisabeth Cooper, Alex Beadle
Also in Attendance: Mrs C Braidwood (Parish Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

Ioan & Rosie Jones and Anne Swain

2. Minutes of the last Parish Meeting held on 5 May 2022

It was agreed that the Minutes were a true and accurate record of the previous meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

3. Annual Report of Preston Parish Council

Cllr Julie Tomblin gave the Council's report as attached. There was then a vote of thanks to Mrs Tomblin for chairing and leading the Parish Council.

4. Annual Reports from County and District Councillors

Cllr Mike Evemy (CDC) - report attached.
Cllr Lisa Spivey (GCC) – report attached.

5. The Future of the Village

Village Hall Management Committee

The Chairman, Mrs C Sutton, confirmed that the Hall is in good repair and well used by everyone in the Village. There are currently 8 members of the committee, but more would be welcome especially to organise events.

Mrs Warren stated that it is always the same people in the Village who get involved and asked how do we get more people to come forward especially new people in the Village? It would be good to see more children's events, crafts, and dancing.

Rev Jennifer

Said how important Mrs Chester-Master and Col Lyndsay had been to the PCC and that they would be sadly missed. Scilla was key to the Village Fete which this year will have to be re-shaped. It's likely that a Street party model will be used with collections stored in the Village Hall on Saturday, 9 September. A provisional date for the planning meeting is 20 June in the Hall.

It was suggested that people are more likely to help if approached but generally won't volunteer and that people may help with the fete and can then be attracted to join other things.

In the past, people have come to fete from outside the Village so if it is a different format we will need to ensure that they will still be attracted to come.

Tony Warren said that the community needs to have a sense of responsibility for itself and that the rest of the Village needs to be brought into that. We need to identify what needs doing and the people who could best help and then approach them as they are unlikely to come forward by themselves.

6. Comments from the Public

Email from Anne Swain – attached.

7. Any Other Business

None

The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for attending

The Meeting Closed at 20.03

My intention with my report today is to give everyone an idea of what the Parish Council does and the difference we make.

Our annual income from the precept covers several ongoing financial commitments.....

Public works loan for vital work carried out on the village hall.

Grass and hedge cutting

Contribution to churchyard grass cutting

Playing field maintenance

Newsletter

Finance...Insurance and audit

Clerks's salary

We can then look at where else money can be used to benefit the village....

New notice boards

Poo bins

We've contributed to the church fundraising appeal to pollard the trees.

Most recently we've invested in the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Following its completion we are entitled to 15% of cil (community infrastructure levy) on any new development and have just received £5,586.96.

During the past year we've seen the completion of the solar park. When the park was first proposed Regine spent a lot of time researching community benefits and worked tirelessly to make sure Preston did not miss out. I'm pleased to say that her hard work and commitment was not in vain, as the village has now received £30,000 from Gridserve.

We are in no rush to spend this money and would like to see it provide a lasting legacy for the village. We are currently looking at the possibility of buying land for the playing field.

Last year saw a proposal by Pegasus to build housing on the land to the west of Kingshill Lane. We know from the work carried out on the NDP that maintaining our village identity with a green wedge between Preston and Cirencester is of great importance to everyone.

Whilst the Parish Council has no desire to see housing on this site we recognise the importance of engaging with the developer at the earliest opportunity. Should this development go ahead it's vital the village and wider community benefits from it in some way.

The Parish Council and village hall committee were delighted to organise and provide drinks for both the jubilee and coronation street parties. I'd like to thank everyone who made them happen, the ladies who made the miles of new bunting, the team that hung it, those who chilled drinks and those who helped with tables and chairs. Also Sophie for face painting and organising crafts for the children. Most importantly, there wouldn't be a party if everyone stayed at home, I really appreciate the support for both events.

In December, Dot retired from editing the newsletter. Her contribution and commitment over so many years cannot be underestimated. I would like to thank her most sincerely and wish her well.

The newsletter is an important means of sharing village news and events; however, the editor is keen to include your articles. So don't be shy, send in your recipes, gardening tips, recommend a pub/day out or walk. Have a think, what can you share?

Over the last few months we have lost Scilla, Helen, Howard, Mary and Alexander, they have all contributed to village life in different ways over many years and will be much missed.

I hope my fellow councillors will agree that whilst it is a commitment, taking on the role of councillor is not an onerous task. There are six meetings a year and some emails to look at in between. Without a Parish Council decisions on how the finances are allocated would likely be made by councillors from outside the village. Responses to planning applications written by someone who doesn't have the knowledge of a resident.

We are currently in need of two councillors. I know you're busy, or you may think you don't have the knowledge or experience to be a councillor but, can I please ask that you give it some thought. A small amount of your time could make a great deal of difference to our community.

Finally, I'd like to thank Sue, Nick, Alan, Alex, Chris and Caroline. To wish Alan well with his continued recovery and to give Chris my very best wishes for her move and future adventures.

District Councillor's Report to the Preston Annual Parish Meeting - Thursday 11 May 2023

Thanks to all residents who took part in the election on 4 May for Cotswold District Council. I was re-elected as your district councillor with 530 votes with my opponent securing 274.

During the last year I have continued in my role as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance in addition to my role as a ward councillor.

The Council has been focussed on providing support for residents most affected by the cost of living crisis. This was a result of the war in Ukraine and the consequent rise in inflation which has also had a major impact on the Council's finances. Nationally agreed salary increases were much higher than budgeted for whilst fuel and other input costs also rose significantly. Due to the unprecedented pressure on its finances, the Council has set a budget for 2023/24 that requires the use of reserves to balance despite budgeting for £1.1 million in savings and £400,000 in additional revenue from fees and charges. A Financial Resilience Reserve of over £3 million has been set up to enable the Council to continue to deliver the services residents rely on whilst bringing expenditure in line with the lower levels of income anticipated in future due to expected reductions in government funding.

Key developments/achievements for the District Council in 2022/23:

- Ran campaigns and supported warm hubs to help people worst affected by the cost of living crisis to get the support that's available
- Raised £500,000 from residents and others to support our work on the climate emergency through our Cotswold Climate initiative
- Over £600,000 has now been raised to support local projects through our Crowdfund Cotswold portal which won a national award in 2022
- Replaced the gym equipment at Cirencester and Bourton Leisure Centres and made them more attractive places to visit
- Set up a flood warden scheme to help residents prepare for and deal with flood events
- Worked with partners to deliver four new Changing Places toilets in the District
- Refurbished the Rissington Road car park at Bourton-on-the-Water to bring it up to modern standards including a bank of electric vehicle charging points

And over the last four years:

- Delivered a total of 441 affordable homes including social rented homes in Cirencester, Tetbury and Moreton
- Supported the creation of 500 new jobs in the District through our Green Economic Growth Strategy including providing apprenticeships and training for young people

Over the last year I have regularly attended meetings of the Parish Council to inform myself of matters of local concern and provide advice and support when requested, most often on planning matters.

I'd be happy to answer any questions residents may have by email or telephone.

Mike Evely

Councillor for Siddington and Cerney Rural

Cotswold District Council

Mike.evely@cotswold.gov.uk

Tel: 07850 373022

Cllr Lisa Spivey, County Councillor for the South Cerney Division
Gloucestershire County Council
Annual Report 2022/2023

In the last year I have attended all Full Council meetings and continued to sit on the Adult Social Care and Communities committee which I also vice-chair, and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee which gives me an excellent insight into the overall performance of the Council and highlights areas of concern. All those committees sit 6 times a year.

I have also been involved in 2 joint scrutiny meetings with ASCC and Health Overview Scrutiny Committee which were looking specifically at the crisis in emergency care over the winter period which saw our category 2 (life threatening or seriously injured) ambulance response times go from the 18minutes guidelines to over 4 hours.

I am also currently sitting on a task and finish working group looking at Bus services in the county and how we could improve them.

As a member of the Corporate scrutiny committee I took part in a whole day scrutiny session in January where we interrogated the Council's proposed budget for this financial year. The budget set this year was £560million. This was presented as a growth budget but in reality a vast amount of the "growth" was inflationary costs and in year staff pay award costs (due to the fact that the 22/23 staff pay award was budgeted at 2% and the settlement was 6.1%).

It made for a sobering day, as over two thirds of the Council's entire budget is taken up by just 2 directorates – Adult Social care and Children's Care. This means that everything else the council has to do and deliver all has to be squeezed into a scant one third of the overall budget. Until these demand led services are under control, this means that many of the things that you contact me about, mostly in Highways - the appalling state of ours roads, the inability to get speed limits reduced and the clearing of verges etc- are simply not possible to deliver due to lack of resources.

I also feel acutely that for the County Council based in Gloucester, the Cotswolds and this division in particular being on the very southern part of the County doesn't get the attention it should. This is something that I do my very best to reverse and I ensure that I always bring up questions and issues relevant to our part of the county.

Over the last year, I have continued to focus on the 4 main issues which are the local issues residents contact me about most frequently.

They are:

1. Highway Maintenance issues
2. Road safety, especially speeding
3. River pollution
4. GP waiting times/access to healthcare services

Most parishes have a very good system of logging highway maintenance issues and have a working relationship with the Local Highways manager, Richard Gray. In the last year, I have had regular meetings with Richard (every few weeks) to keep abreast of these issues and to assist in seeing action on them.

I have actively encouraged residents and PCs to make use of the very easy to use "report it" function of the County Council website. This tool ensures that any road defects are logged in the system and will be dealt with (eventually!).

Despite motions and questions brought to Full Council, I continue to be frustrated by the lack of proper highway maintenance, including pavements and footpaths, which I do not think is delivering for

residents. Residents email me on a near daily basis, telling me about road repairs either not carried out or shoddy repairs, uncut vegetation which creates safety issues, fallen down signs, abandoned road works signs cluttering the verge, debris filling gullies, potholes wrecking tyres- the list goes on. It is clear that the Local Highways managers are not able to do all the work they would like to do and are financially constrained each year. This could be eased if the contractor, was doing a consistently good standard of work and if the maintenance schedule was overhauled. I have tried to use my Highways Local funding to best effect, doing some patching work on some villages, helping with speed surveys, and contributing towards making walking and cycling safer and easier. I will be doing the same again in this coming year.

The adoption of a policy on ANPR systems has also been painfully slow, and the Traffic Regulation Order team are way behind on dealing with requests due to staff shortages. In many cases in this rural part of the County, we are just given a flat “no” when asked to look at speed reductions through our villages because we do not tick the boxes by national criteria which would necessitate a speed reduction. This is disappointing because the speed reduction would not only make our villages safer, it would also improve health and wellbeing for residents.

The new PCC has made tackling speeding a priority and has been very supportive of community speed watch initiatives and the police have been out and about with their speed guns, but they can't be everywhere and so we need to affect a culture change where speeding is seen as unacceptable.

The legal dumping of raw sewage into our local rivers and waterways is a scandal which is gathering national attention. According to recent figures there were over 2000 incidents of raw sewage being poured out into Cotswold rivers in 2021 and there are no rivers deemed to be healthy in the whole of England. This must stop and I have been actively campaigning on this issue. I will continue to campaign for this practise to be disallowed, for water companies to be made to increase infrastructure funding and for the Environment Agency to be built back up to be equipped to deal with this terrible situation.

The Council continues to support post pandemic recovery in communities via the Build Back Better fund which is open until 2025, please get in touch if you have a project you think appropriate for funding.

Brexit and the pandemic has had a very big impact on care home staffing, and this remains an issue for concern, with the closure of 4 care homes in the County. This is true of nearly all areas of healthcare, especially dentistry which we brought a motion about in March's Council meeting.

Children's services finally moved out of Special measures after the inspection in February 2022 but continues to Require Improvement and is an enormous drain on the Council's finances largely due to out of county placements and the requirement to use agency staff to fill social worker roles.

As ever, if there are particular issues you would like to discuss, I am available on the phone or email.

Best wishes,

Lisa

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Email: lisa.spivey@gloucestershire.gov.uk

From: Anne Swain anglobyte@googlemail.com
Subject: from A. Swain.
Date: 10 May 2023 at 20:33
To: Caroline Braidwood clerk@prestonpc.org.uk



Hello Caroline,

Unfortunately, due to another commitment I will not be able to attend the A. G. M. on Thursday evening....but, I would like the following comments raised!

- (1) A big thank you to Julie Tomlinson and her "team" for organising the Coronation Lunch. Without people like her/them the village would have have no personal connection.
- (2) Speaking to a new (about to be) resident he asked what services/activities happened in the village.....So, I wondered in the next newsletter if, current residents were asked to mention "their involvement in the village"...bus service, Fete, Church, Coffee morning etc. and collection dates of rubbish etc. (these are things I have been involved in but there may be others. Then, if a list is made perhaps, a note could be put through the letterbox of the house for sale/sold or given to the estate agent which might help the new resident integrate more quickly!.
- (3) Unfortunately, on a few occasions recently I have walked into horse faeces on the footpath by the Lime trees opposite Forty Farm.....Is it possible to contact the owners of the horses (from horses of the rented field at the other end of the village) and tell them to clean the path a bit faster than at times three days later!.
- (4) On the same Lime tree path the roots have broken the tarmac surface so makes "tripping over" easier and even worse when it's dark. Many years ago the council (not sure which one) did a resurface with tarmac and so "undulated" the surface which until recently worked well. Is it possible to get them to do the same again.

Thank you,

Anne Swain.