

## BLAISDON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council: Jonathan Martin, Whitecliff House, Newland Street, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 8NB, Tel. 01594 834345 E-mail: [blaisdonclerk@gmail.com](mailto:blaisdonclerk@gmail.com)

### **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at Blaisdon Village Hall. Wednesday 15th November 2023 @ 8.30pm**

In attendance:

Cllr. Richard Boyles.

Cllr. Nicola Atkinson.

Cllr. Tony Brady.

Cllr. Nathalie Magnotte.

District Cllr. Simon Phelps.

Clerk. Jonathan Martin.

#### **529. Welcome and Health and Safety procedure. Members of the public will be requested to declare if they intend to record the meeting.**

The welcome was given to all members present and attention was drawn to the location of the fire exits and the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **530. Apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from Cllr. Spencer who has had to tend to a family emergency.

Apologies had been previously received from County Cllr Robinson at the last meeting, lasting until January 2024.

#### **531. Declarations of Interest & Public Forum.**

Cllr. Mignotte declared a possible conflict of interest in that she is an employee of one of the planning applications. The effect of this would be determined in that item.

#### **Public Forum.**

Cllr Phelps gave a report on local issues.

A recent report on Publico (a public service management company) had highlighted that the outsourcing of services by various Gloucestershire councils had not been as money and labour saving as intended. It is likely that many of these services previously outsourced by the foddc will gradually be returned to 'in-house' departments. However, IT will likely remain outsourced.

The foddc now has a new chief executive officer, a Mr Nigel Brinn, who's experience will be advantageous to the district council. Cllr Phelps commented that at the six-

month interval, the new ruling green party bloc at the District Council had yet to undertake or achieve anything of note.

Cllr Mignotte inquired as to the prospect of a large new housing development in or around Westbury-on-Severn. So far there is no such real prospect of this. Previous district plans of an eco-village and a new settlement at Churcham had been set aside. The current program consists of increasing the construction load onto the three main towns of Lydney, Cinderford and Coleford. The foddc has to yet to propose a new district plan and so the current measure will continue until this.

Cllr Brady asked if the developments in Lydney would include social housing. This would fall to the foddc, as opposed to the county council.

Cllr Boyles returned to the Publico report, asking the reasons given for the lack of value for money. It was found that Publico had too many high-cost managers. The quality of services had also been seen as deteriorating. Questions remained in what the new costs would be to restore services in-house and who's responsibility this ultimately was. A likely scenario being that overlapping responsibility caused no action to be taken to prevent this. Cllr Phelps would provide the council a copy of this report for the Clerk to forward to the Chairman.

### **532. Minutes of the Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and matters arising.**

The Clerk reported that the request from a local resident to have new salt bins set up nearer to their home has been made, and further progress on this will hopefully be received from Highways.

Emails sent from the council website were still being received into the spam folder. There seems to be no other way to resolve this than checking the spam folder and relocating the emails into the main account, as this will eventually correct the gmail algorithm.

Regarding the parish council's plan to set up accurate and publicly visible public rights of way maps. So far no reply had been received from Flaxley village hall if they would be interested in joining this. Cllr Phelps would chase this reply up.

Quotes for these noticeboards have not yet been received. The Clerk would pursue these.

**Resolved.**

### **533. Clerk's report and correspondence.**

The Clerk reported that a FOI (Freedom of Information) request had been submitted to Gloucestershire County Council and an application number had been received. The request is for a copy of the report over the flooding in the village. The recipient's time to reply will soon elapse and the Clerk will press for the report to be delivered.

### **534. To discuss the recent flooding in the village and resolve on appropriate responses.**

Recent flooding in the village was reported as being too deep for cars to traverse the flooded roads. A heavy amount of soil was also deposited on the roads after the water had run off. Some of the drains were blocked whilst others remained functioning, yet could process the volume of water. Discussion was had on the

historic changes to the local water table and the flood management systems. Most of these having been removed or neglected.

**535. To discuss the progress of the review of the Council's Standing Orders.**

The Clerk had only recently received the updated template from GAPTC and would forward this to Cllr Atkinson for review.

**536. Planning:**

Applications P1306 and P1307 were seen as conjoined applications.

**Resolved.**

The Council had no objection to any of these. Because there were no objections, Cllr Mignotte's declaration was not deemed to be relevant.

**537. Financial report – October 2023.**

The report was given with no activity out of the ordinary.

**538. Clerk to present the second draft of the new budget for discussion and alteration.**

The need to increase the precept was generally accepted as necessary to develop self-sufficiency from the Council's reserves. This would tentatively be set at about £4,000.00 a year. Moreover, a significant fraction of the Council's remaining grant funds would be reallocated into a separate item reserved for the notice board project. This would be dependent on the awaited quotes for the overall cost of the project. An increase in the Council's insurance from the addition of these assets would also need to be accommodated for.

**539. Invoices for payment.**

**Resolved.**

**540. To discuss and resolve on a new meeting schedule for the remainder of the financial year.**

Regarding the sudden scheduling of the present meeting. The council was disappointed by the Village Hall's failure to give adequate notice of this change, as well as the decision to force the council to adapt to newer customers. It was stressed that the Parish meetings have been held at long standing times to perform necessary public services. Also, the Council is under strict requirements for its meetings and agendas to be publicized well in advance. Therefore, the council would ask the Village Hall management to reconsider this cancellation of our standing meeting schedule.

**541. Any other urgent business.**

The need to repair the engravings to the Blaisdon war memorial was raised. This is a Parish Council responsibility, so quotes will be sought, and this issue will be placed on the next agenda.

Cllr Mignotte asked if the local neighborhood watch organization could be incorporated into standard council business. It was felt that this was not necessary as management improvements to this would suffice.

Cllr Phelps reported that a proposed development of anywhere from 12 to 35 new houses at Longhope was being considered. This would affect Blaisdon as these

houses would impact the already present flooding issues in the Village. The Clerk will ask for foddc planning to send the council applications on this development from now on.

Meeting commenced: 8.30 p.m. Meeting finished: 10.02 p.m. Signed:

..... Date: .....2023

BPC Minutes 2023 15 11