

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

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held
at Blaisdon Village Hall. Tuesday 27th
February 2024 @ 7.00pm**

In attendance:

Cllr. Richard Boyles.

Cllr. Tony Brady.

Cllr. Jane Spencer.

Cllr. Nathalie Mignotte

County Cllr. Philip Robertson.

District Cllr. Simon Phelps.

Clerk. Jonathan Martin.

548. 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.

549. Apologies for Absence.

All Parish but one Councillor and guest Councillors were present.

550. Declarations of Interest & Public Forum.

No declarations of interest or dispensations were made.

Public Forum.

Several local residents attended to discuss the Home Farm development in Flaxley. The new development would be a large restaurant, winery, training centre and shopping area. Their concerns were as follows:

The development would increase the traffic load on the local roads and, with it, the likelihood of accidents. Other conjoined concerns are the lack of parking places, passing areas in narrow lanes, and reversing areas. There may also be an issue with the improper change of the land use in setting up the restaurant/commercial functions for the new site.

The Parish Council was asked if it could voice these points when the site's application comes back up for resubmission. The Council agreed with this.

Developing from this, another issue raised by members of the public was that of reducing the local speed down to 30mph, away from the current 60mph.

Cllr Robertson gave his advice on this, explaining that changing the speeding limit is a slow, expensive bureaucratic process. This would cost in the tens of thousands of pounds, perhaps around fifteen thousand pounds. However, what is usually done is that a batch of ten or more applications is conjoined, and the fees are divided amongst each party. When this comes, the Parish Council may be available to provide some grant money towards this.

A local resident informed the Council that he had been trying to get a trackway in Chesnutt Wood recognised as a public footpath for many years. This process had been instigated twenty years ago. Because the landowner had protested, it required the determination of an inspector, and this officer had a significant backlog. The resident asked if the Parish Council would follow up on the progress of this application to have it ruled upon. The Council confirmed that it would be happy to undertake this and report back on it.

Report from District Councillor Phelps.

The FODDC plans to raise the fees on all its public car parks. The first hour will remain free, then the second hour will cost £1. Four hours will cost £3, and a day will cost £4. An annual fee would cost £190. There would also be charges for overnight parking. The hope is that it will flush the District Council with income instead of its previous losses. Council tax in the District will also rise by 2.99%. Cllr Boyles asked if a blind ticket was needed and how much income was expected from the new Carpark charges. It was unknown what the precise ticket regime was. Any profits from the scheme will be directed back to repairing and upgrading the car park.

The use of Publica as a contractor for various internal services was confirmed as being rolled back. Many of these operations previously run by Publica will be returned to 'in-house' staff. This shift was made because the former arrangement was felt to not represent value for money. No other neighbouring councils were seen as interested in the company as well.

Biffa's control of waste collection in the District ends in August and will be replaced by Ubico. This company is a publicly owned waste collection company.

County Cllr Robertson was asked if the public had any questions for him. There were none.

Report from County Councillor Philip Robertson.

Cllr Robertson reiterated that the Gloucestershire County Council had agreed on its budget of £600 million. Glos Council has not struggled to achieve its budget. This is due to the extra income from a council-owned waste disposal centre. The profits of around £15 million. That said, Council taxes will be increased by 2.99%. This is significantly lower than the national average and relates to £6.34 on average for Band D.

School places have increased due to demand, and around one-third of the county's approximately 1,000 Ukrainian refugees have returned home. Should an application

be submitted, the Build Back Better grant scheme was also available for the Parish Council.

A member of the public asked if local special schools were being closed. This was not planned. Another question was presented on the funding of local adult social care, specifically, what will replace the household fund. Cllr Robertson was not knowledgeable on this issue, as it is not part of his portfolio. However, he recommended that the member of the public to email County Councillor Carole Martin, who is the Councillor with oversight on this.

7:44 pm The County Councillor and the members of the public leave.

551. Minutes of Meetings 17th January 2024 and matters arising.

Resolved.

The District Council had declined the stables application. The reason for this was reported to be on environmental issues of Newts, Bats and SSI.

552. Clerk's Report and Correspondence.

There was nothing out of the ordinary to report.

The Clerk confirmed that the precept forms had been submitted to the District Council.

553. To resolve on the acceptance of the Council's new Standing Orders for 2024-25

Resolved.

554. To resolve on the new;

- **Complaints procedure.**
- **Equality and Diversity policy.**

Point 2.2 will be corrected.

The Clerk will examine if the Council has a bullying policy and if it needs updating.

Resolved.

555. To discuss the progress of the local walks map project.

Cllr Boyles reported that he had contacted the Ordnance Survey company to use their maps for the local walking map. The map will likely require permission from the FODDC in the form of a contract or a license. It was mentioned that OS maps carry a disclaimer for their accuracy, as it is believed that a few trackways in the Parish still need to be added to the maps. The Council may need to go out to tender if the map production exceeds a specific price. Flaxley Schoolroom had conveyed its concerns about what the map installation might have on traffic.

556. To discuss and resolve where appropriate on the quotes gathered for the restoration work on the Blaisdon Village war memorial.

Cllr Brady reported that the project is moving slowly. Yet inquiries are being made with various companies that can repair the engraving.

557. To discuss the findings from the reviews of the recently acquired Gloucestershire County Council reports on local flooding and drainage issues.

Cllr Mignotte reported that she had checked the drains and gullies in the Parish. Most of which were either blocked or overgrown.

8:04-06 pm Cllr Leaves and returns.

Cleaning and repairing these systems would be a complex undertaking. Gloucestershire Highways would have to be made aware of these and Cllr Mignotte with Cllr Mignotte's report attached as evidence in support.

558. Planning

a. To discuss any updates on the 'Stables' development and resolve on any appropriate action.

See above. It is being appealed.

b. To resolve on the following applications: P0226/24/AG Prior notification for the upgrade of existing access tracks to enable woodland management under a Forestry Commission England approved Woodland Management Plan.

The Parish Council has no objections. Resolved.

559. Financial Report(s) – January 2024.

This was delivered, but there were no issues.

560. Invoice(s) for payment.

- **Blaisdon Village Hall Hire – £30.00**
- **Printer Ink, black and tri-colour - £22.27**
- **Defibrillator battery pad replacement - £423.83**
- **Clerk Wages – Jan 19hrs x £11.06 = £210.14**

Resolved.

561. Resolve on meeting schedule for 2024-25.

The Clerk will try to organise the new standing meeting times for the last Tuesday of the month.

562. Any other urgent business.

A recently received grant application from Blaisdon Village Hall was discussed. It would be for the purchase of various items for the D-day 80-year celebrations. The Council was generally not keen on purchasing and acquiring new property for the benefit of another, but a simple financial grant would be agreeable.

This application will be considered a formal item on the agenda for the next meeting.

Cllr Boyles stated that a local roadside hedge had not been cut. However, who owned the land and was responsible for its upkeep was still being determined. The Clerk would investigate this.

Meeting commenced: 7:00 p.m. Meeting finished: 8:35 p.m. Signed:

..... Date:2024

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