

BARRINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 20 MARCH 2017
IN THE READING ROOM, LITTLE BARRINGTON
AT 7.00 P.M.

Present: Cllr Paul Porter - Chairman
Cllr James Bainbridge - Vice Chairman

Cllr Robin Stow

Officer: Mrs Tan Marchant, Parish Clerk

Apologies: Cllr Dr Simon Bennett, Cllr Jan de Haldevang

In attendance: Cllr Ray Theodoulou, Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Chris Hancock, Cotswold District Council

Public: Philippa de Haldevang and Sue Cleal.

1 WELCOME FROM PARISH CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, Guest Speakers and Residents to the meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL MEETING

The Minutes of Annual Meeting held on 21 March 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr Porter presented the Chairman's Report. A copy of the Report is attached to these Minutes. See below.

4 CHARITY REPORT

Cllr Bainbridge gave a report on the Barrington Charity over the last year.

He said that there had been a number of resignations among the Trustees, namely Richard Wingfield, a Trustee for more than 15 years, Sir Philip Otten, Laura Watts and Tory Marsh. These Trustees had been replaced by Robin Matthew (the Parochial Church Council nominee), Venetia Crosby-Dawson of Great Barrington, and Reverend Nick Fisher.

Cllr Bainbridge explained that the Charity supports the learning support of both Sherborne School and Burford School, and will actively continue to do so with Sherborne (Burford School has other financial options to access). The Charity also supports local people in the parishes with education, hospital visits, etc.

Cllr Bainbridge said there have been problems with The Reading Room, which is owned by the Charity, and it will be closed from 28th March 2017 for several months for necessary refurbishment. He said there is also a lot of maintenance and repair issues in the Minnow Lane cottages which need addressing.

The Clerk asked if Cllr Bainbridge could supply details of how to apply for Charity funding, so that this information could be publicised. She also pointed out that The Reading Room may still be unavailable for the May Parish Council meeting, in which case an alternative venue will need to be organised.

Cllr Bainbridge was thanked for his report.

5. REPORT FROM THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Thames Valley Police had not submitted a report.

6 GUEST SPEAKER – CLLR RAY THEODOULOU

Cllr Ray Theodoulou is the Deputy Leader of Gloucestershire County Council and Cabinet Member responsible for Finance, the Budget, Procurement for large projects, property assets, and domestic issues such as IT, computers, HR and archives.

Cllr Theodoulou said that Gloucestershire County Council will make a balanced budget, 60% of which will be spent on the care of adults and vulnerable children – as part of a total budget of £410m. The adult social care precept has been set at 2% with a general precept of 1.99%, resulting in an overall 3.99% increase. He also said that the present situation of the most responsibility lying with the local authority cannot continue, with the answer being more collaboration between authorities – the NHS, Council and others responsible for elderly care. 430 cases of vulnerable children going through legal formalities last year now exceeds 600 which is quite alarming. These statistics are not just for Gloucestershire - it's a national issue. One of the main problems is the recruitment of enough social workers.

Cllr Theodoulou said that potholes continue to be a problem but the £120m backlog has now been reduced to £80m.

Broadband is the County Council's responsibility and Cllr Theodoulou said he would be pleased to be advised of any meeting or feedback received from Barrington residents.

Cllr Theodoulou was thanked for his presentation.

7 GUEST SPEAKER – CLLR CHRIS HANCOCK

Cllr Hancock reported that unlike many local authorities, the District Council is not increasing its portion of the 2017-18 council tax bill. This price freeze follows on from a previous freeze for 2016-17, a 5% cut in 2015-16, a 3% cut in 2014-15 and a 5% reduction in 2013-14. This means that the actual amount being charged for a Band D council tax payer has been reduced by about £18 per year (13%) since 2010-2011. This puts CDC sixteenth lowest for council tax and some thanks must go to the Leader, Cllr Lynden Stowe, who is stepping down in May after eleven years.

Cllr Hancock said there are various funds which might be helpful to the parish council. He has a fund of £2,000 towards the provision of defibrillators across local parishes, amounting to £400 for each parish. This news was particularly welcomed. Cllr Hancock said he also has the sum of £750 to split between the five parishes to mark the end of WW1.

In response to the item in the Charity Report about the refurbishment of The Reading Room, Cllr Hancock said that the District Council's Community Facilities Grant could be applied to for this upgrade, and the Clerk said she would advise Mrs de Haldevang, as Chairman of the Charity, of the details.

Cllr Hancock finished by saying that free parking in Cirencester is set to continue.

Cllr Hancock was thanked for his report.

8 COMMUNITY EVENTS

- a. Broadband Meetings – Saturday 25th March. Details of the meetings, at 10.30 and 12.30 am on the 25th and attended by representatives of both Gigaclear and BT, have been distributed to every household in the parish.
- b. Parish Clean-Up – It was confirmed that the Parish Clean Up this year will be held on Saturday 1st April commencing at 10.00 a.m. Volunteers to meet at The Fox Inn, Great Barrington, where equipment will be supplied and bacon butties will be available to early arrivals. Refreshments will be available at the end of the event, which is expected to finish at about midday.
- c. Windrush Valley Fete - Saturday 22nd July 2017
- d. Strim and Supper - 23 September or 4 October 2017
- e. Advent Drinks - 2 December 2017

9. LOCAL ISSUES

Mrs de Haldevang said that she had reported to the district council an old land drain across the village green which had been blocked for some time, and she now wished to extend a thank you to Bob Skillen of CDC who came out to inspect the drain and arranged for it to be cleared.

The meeting ended at 7.55 p.m.

Refreshments were served.

Chairman

Barrington Parish Council Chairman's Report 2017

Thank you to everyone for turning out tonight and, just to show bribery and corruption is alive in the parishes as well as higher levels of politics, there will be light refreshments for all at the end of the meeting.

Our year in the parish began in early April with the village clean-up, which was a huge success. This year's is on Saturday 1st April. Due to the well documented increase in fly tipping, we are hoping for a large turnout and, to follow the bribery theme, we are all meeting at the Fox Inn where I will provide bacon and sausage sandwiches and coffee and tea to fuel the day. A District Council prize of £1,000 to the most successful parish clean-up is another worthy incentive/bribe!

Later in the year, the Windrush Valley Fete, held in July, goes from strength to strength and a special thanks to all those who put in hours of unpaid labour to keep this historical village event not only a success but thriving and growing.

Apart from this, the Great Barrington Christmas Carol Service moved to the church from the village hall this year and blossomed for the move and hard work of the people organising it. Advent drinks was a great night out for the villagers too.

It's brilliant all these things that bring our village people together. We face a challenging time when lots of our villagers are transient weekenders and any event which brings soul to the community must be positively encouraged and supported.

The addition of our Barrington website is another huge boost to local news and events and huge thanks must go to Tan, our Parish Clerk, for the hours of work she put in to bring this to fruition.

We are all only custodians of these beautiful villages but I must praise Cllr Jan de Haldevang for his initiative on planning thoughts. We need to preserve these villages. It is no good turning everything into high rental-return holiday homes and weekend retreats, when if Monday to Friday and most of the winter it is like walking through a ghost town.

How do we get young back in the villages? Fund some affordable housing space, maybe like I hear the new Cornish idea of restricting holiday weekend home numbers, only so many in a village, to prohibit the loss of all to the locals.

Also, as Jan says, limiting extensions, the knocking of houses together, making sure all development and alterations are in keeping – this is where your local parish council can come to the fore. Our District Council budgets are so stretched that we have to become the true policemen of our own villages. Let's set out guidelines like Cllr de Haldevang has proposed and get proactive in maintaining and rejuvenating our villages.

The other main issues concerning our villages is the incredible growth of traffic, especially early morning work and evening home time. It has almost become a stream of traffic past my pub now at certain times of day, traffic speed and volume are obviously going to haunt us for a while so we would love to hear any initiatives or ideas to either send them the way they are supposed to go or slow them down enough for us to all feel safer and perhaps force them back to the main road. We can all hope!

The exciting part of this year for us is the arrival of superfast broadband, so let's all hope we have a big turnout from everyone this Saturday so we can assess the benefits of both Gigaclear and BT on who should bring us dragging and kicking into 21st Britain. Please attend the Great Barrington Village Hall on Saturday - 10.30 for Gigaclear and 12.30 for BT. After this weekend we should have a clearer picture of commencing dates and who ultimately has the 'to the door' best option.

Also I hear they may be some very exciting news as we can potentially gain access to more grants we did not know we could - as any village with a school, and we have our wonderful Montessori School in Great Barrington - can qualify for these. Great news if we can.

Just a couple of thank yous to finish – firstly to Tan, our Parish Clerk, for all her sterling work in keeping us all in order at the parish meetings and constantly updating us with any email planning and news.

Also a big thank you to Sebastian Gorst who unfortunately has moved out of the village so has had to vacate his parish council seat - a sad loss to us but a big thank you to him for all his efforts.

Finally, a big hello and welcome to our new councillor, taking up the Great Barrington mantle from Sebastian, Dr Simon Bennett who I believe will be a fantastic addition to Barrington Parish Council. Simon has started with a bang by volunteering to update the Parish emergency plan – definitely the way to endear yourself to your fellow councillors and parishioners too!

Cllr Paul Porter
Parish Chairman
20 March 2017