

GRETTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Gretton Parish Meeting held at The Village Hall, on Wednesday 11th May 2022 starting at 7.00pm.

1. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11th May 2022.
The minutes had already been agreed and signed by the chairman.
2. Report of the Chairman of Gretton Parish Council 2022/2023.
Appended.

GRETTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Gretton Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10th May 2023 following on from the Annual Parish Meeting.

Present: Cllr's David Butcher, Richard Green, Geoff Hanson (Chair) and Mark Oliver
In attendance: J Shields (Clerk) and 1 parishioner

Councillors to sign their Declaration of Office.

1. Election of Chairman.

Cllr Green proposed, Cllr Oliver seconded and it was agreed to elect Cllr Hanson as Chairman, who signed the declaration of acceptance.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Grey (Borough and County).

3. Declarations of Interest.

a) Councillors were reminded to complete and return their registers of interest to TBC and to declare any personal or prejudicial interest in items on the agenda and their nature.

d) To Consider Application for Dispensation.

The council agreed applications for dispensation to be accepted, enabling them to be part of the discussion and vote on the precept until the end of April 2024.

4. To Consider The Adoption Of The Minutes Of The Council Meeting Held On Wednesday 8th March 2023.

The minutes were approved and signed as a true record.

The minutes from 11th January 2023 and 16th November 2022, having been already approved, were signed.

5. Election of Vice-Chairman.

It was agreed to elect Cllr Green as Vice Chairman.

6. To Appoint The Following:-

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| a. Finance Officer. | Cllr Hanson |
| b. Village Hall Committee Representative. | Cllr Oliver |

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| c. Tower Trust. | No longer required |
| d. Staffing Group. | Will be agreed when needed |
| e. School | Cllr Oliver |
| f. Flood group | TBA – may be external to GPC |

7. To Review the Councils

Financial Regulations. (Deferred to July)

Standing Orders. (Deferred to July)

Risk Assessment. (Deferred to July) – Cllr Green to review before meeting

Code of Conduct. (Deferred to July)

8. To Receive the Report from the Internal Auditor 2022/2023.

Mr A Rhodes had carried an audit of the Council's Governance and Accountability, some minor comments had been made, which had been addressed by the Clerk.

9. To Approve the Governance Statement For 2022/2023.

The council agreed the Annual Governance Statement, the relevant document was signed by the Chairman.

10. To Approve the Accounts for 2022/2023.

The Council agreed the Accounting Statement, the relevant document was signed by the Chairman.

11. Planning Matters.

- a. Planning applications for consideration.
 - 23/00291/FUL - Land at Stanley Cottages Gretton Cheltenham GL54 5HA
 - A public meeting was held – 26th April. Key concerns summarised by the Council at the meeting are:-
 - Flooding; Layout / design; Housing mix; Proximity to neighbouring house; 30 mph zone, traffic and pavement to village
 - The applicants – Centaur Homes, have committed to try to address these concerns. GPC will remain in consultation with Centaur and expect a follow-up village meeting in June.
- b. Ratify comments on planning applications received that required a response before the next scheduled Council Meeting.
 - I. 23/00117/FUL - 4 Close Field Gretton Cheltenham. 'The council has no planning reason to object'
 - II. 23/00040/FUL - Outbuildings at Gretton Fields. 'Gretton Parish Council remains concerned at the development intensity on this site. However, with regard to this particular application, it has No Objection'.
 - III. 22/01384/FUL Part Parcel 1546 Gretton Road Gretton. 'The parish council has no planning reasons to object however it would like to make the following comments:-
 - a. It is requested that construction traffic is routed to the site via the Winchcombe approach only. This is necessary to prevent additional traffic congestion, which will be a particularly dangerous problem outside the primary school.
 - b. GPC is pleased to note, that this appears to be a well-designed development, which addresses many of the concerns previously expressed by the Village.

- c. Also note that Gretton (Glos) does not have all of the facilities described in the 'Design and Access Statement', but Gretton (Northants) does.'
- c. Planning decisions.
Approved by TBC
 - 22/01383/LBC - Pink Cottage Gretton Road Gretton
 - 22/01382/FUL - Pink Cottage Gretton Road Gretton
 - 22/01303/LBC - Orchard Cottage Duglynch Lane Gretton
 - 22/01302/FUL - Orchard Cottage Duglynch Lane Gretton
 - 23/00150/TCA - Abbotswyck Gretton Road Gretton
 - 23/00159/TCA - Gretton House Duglynch Lane Gretton
 - 23/00040/FUL - Outbuildings At Gretton Fields.
- Appeal Dismissed
Planning Inspectorate APP/G1630/W/22/3307174: Siwa Gretton Fields, GL54 5HH

12. Financial Matters.

- a. To consider invoices for payment.

The Council agreed the following items for payment;

- | | | |
|---------|---|---------|
| GAPTC | Subs | £129.81 |
| b. | To ratify payments paid between meetings. | |
| GVA | Hall | £30.00 |
| R Green | Plants for War memorial | £20.00 |

- c. Financial report.

A receipt had been received from:-

- | | | |
|-----|---------|------------|
| TBC | Precept | £11,100.00 |
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- d. GVA Funding.

The clerk to transfer £1,000.00, as agreed at the meeting held on the 8th March 2023, using section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

13. Reports.

- a. Clerk

E mailed Election information to all

E mailed details of community litter pick scheme to all.

Applied for VAT refund

- b. Greening and Environment Group.

Some of the plants at the village gateway by the Oak did not survive the winter and are being replaced.

Dual-use bins. Cllr Green to follow-up progress with Unico's approval of 2-off new dual-use bins.

Additional dog-bin has been requested by residents in Duglynch lane. Cllr Green to consider re-locating bin from the Green.

- c. Traffic and Road Safety.

Our community Speedwatch continues to deter speeding morning traffic. To date we have recorded 1055 vehicles over 30 mph (49% of total) with 149 people receiving letters for travelling over 35 mph (7% of total). It is encouraging to see that the "school run" is now less of a problem. The evidence shows that the main "offenders" appear to be tradespeople heading to work between 7 – 8.00am.

The morning team will be out approx. every two weeks. It was agreed a 2nd team should try to cover 5 - 6.00pm period, outside the Church.

We have applied for a Vehicle Activated Sign under the second tranche of Community Speedwatch Fund. An initial call has been held with a visit being the next stage. No further news.

We have agreed to trial moving the existing signs and this will be done soon.

GPC met with Glos CC Highways (2nd May) to walk through and review all Village highway issues. Glos CC Highways have confirmed:-

- Review and improve the filled-in ditch, opposite 'White Cottage' on the Gotherington Road. Also, other blocked gullies / grips in the village.
- Improvements to the School Safety Zone. GPC has asked for further consultation, before implementation.
- Complete re-surfacing of the Winchcombe – Gretton Road, later this f/year.

d. GVA.

The GVA is re-building community engagement in the Village. Both the Murder Mystery Night in April and the recent Coronation Celebrations were successful, with many new faces.

The Gretton Hub will restart 14th May and run monthly over the Summer.

GPC will consider using the Hub to increase dialogue with the Village.

Next planned events are a Quiz Night on 9th June and the Apple Rock/Harvest Festival on 7th October.

The GVA thanked GPC for it's support of the GVA agenda.

The Church are fully engaged with GVA but support from the School is a bit limited.

GVA has been successful with recent funding applications. The Community Health and Wellbeing fund has provided a new PA/Sound System and GVA are progressing Build Back Better funding, with the support of Cllr Gray, for a projector.

Plans for the enhancement of the Hall and Playing Field are progressing. The work packages to refresh the Play Equipment and Improve Accessibility are now moving to seek funding. The improvements to the rear of the Hall to provide a more flexible space are running a little slower. Support from Cllr Hanson and TBC is excellent. Overall, in excess of £100k is being sought. Next steps, alongside funding applications, include seeking letters of support from stakeholders including GPC, a local fundraising campaign and finalising options for the rear of the Hall.

e. Flood Group.

No report. Group will need to be reformed, with external membership.

This is particularly important to manage possible problems associated with, (i) the filled-in ditch on Gotherington Rd, (ii) the new Centaur Homes development, in the same location, and (iii) ongoing problems in Gretton Fields.

f. Cotswold Warden.

No major news. Gretton continues to get priority for regular jobs.

The footpath above Green Lane remains a problem. Cllr Oliver will check ownership/liability, so GPC can decide action plan.

Note that it is the Winchcombe Walking Festival 19th – 21st May with some routes passing through the Village.

g. Communication and Engagement

The "Gretton Village Notices" Facebook Page has 98 "Followers" and is achieving reasonable Reach and Reaction.

GPC usage of the Page could be improved. Cllrs are reminded that more regular posts on topics of interest is the way to increase the audience.

h. Gretton Primary School.

No issues. The new Headmaster (Mr Adam Sallis) is now beginning a familiarisation period.

14. Tewksbury Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council Update.

Cllr Gray's annual report is appended.

15. Information and Correspondence.

- Chair of GVA formally thanked GPC for its support of the Village Coronation Celebrations. The weather on Sunday was kind and the event was well supported by a good cross section of the community. Several new residents joined us, and all remarked what a desirable place Gretton was so live. These headline events coupled with the 'Hub' and other social events, help us to improve reach and secure the Hall and Field for the future.
- GVA report dog mess issues in the Playing Field. New signs are being installed and residents reminded of the no dog policy.
- Cllr Butcher was thanked for organising the successful Village Litter Pick.
- Cllrs Oliver & Green joined a Citizens Advice Bureau presentation. This emphasised the need not to forget the less fortunate in our community, who may need both qualified (CAB) and community support.

16. Items For Future Agenda.

- Meeting dates. Clerk – to find out dates of Winchcombe Town Council Meetings to check GPC meetings do not conflict.
- Review plans for a Newsletter. Thinking at the meeting was to try to maintain two per year, keeping it broad, informative and if necessary, less 'glossy'. Maybe seeking external assistance.
- Mobile phone reception. Should GPC consider campaigning for improved mobile-phone service in Gretton? Per the initiative suggested by Rural Services Network (9/5/23).
- Green Lane footpath plan.
- Village archive. Discuss whether the Council and maybe the Village (GVA) in general, should establish a central archive, so that material collected by different councils and other organisations, over the years, can be kept centrally. Both for historical interest and to help new organisations understand something of Gretton's history, both past mistakes and successes.

17. To Agree Dates and Times Of Future Meetings

All Wednesdays – 12th July, 6th Sept, 15th Nov 2023. 10th Jan, 13th March 2024.

Signed

Date

Gretton Parish Council

Report from the Chair Apr '22 – '23

It has been a busy year, with changes to the Council membership and some great initiatives in the Village, several facilitated directly by the Council, others supported by the Council.

This is my first report as the new Chair, taking over from Cllr John Hurley. We are very grateful for John's 8 years of service, he has been a source of wisdom and knowledge, and is no doubt leaving the Council and Gretton a better place.

We continue to be ably supported by our Clerk – Mrs Jackie Shields, and three existing Cllrs; Mark Oliver, Dick Green, and the most recent recruit - David Butcher. This year we have also said goodbye and thank you to Andrew Steward.

Following the elections in May '23, we will start the year with a refreshed Council, and a vacancy for a new member, to be co-opted.

The Council closed the financial-year with spend under-budget and we continue to maintain a reasonable reserve, for the future. Audited accounts are available upon request.

Improving the Village appearance

This year, as part of a 'greening-up' initiative, we have added verge and gateway planting, a Jubilee oak tree, and some re-wilding in larger areas. We have upgraded and replaced the Village Green bench and Noticeboard; both with 'Queen's Jubilee' messaging. We have also installed some new dog bins and improved signage.

Highway safety

We have continued a pro-active initiative to reduce speeding traffic, with 'speed-watch' teams on the roadside (working with the Police), recording vehicle speeds with our new 'radar gun'. This does appear to be working to increase awareness and reduce speeding.

In addition, the Council has worked with the Glos CC highways, the Police and School to seek improvements in parking and traffic safety outside the School. After much campaigning (over 2 years) the pavement outside the Bugatti Inn has been re-established. We also now expect to see an improved School Safety Zone in '23-'24

We have jointly and successfully campaigned with Winchcombe Council, to get the Gretton-Winchcombe Road re-surfaced. The schedule has now been pulled-forward and is expected 2nd quarter '23.

We have continued to manage 2-off speed activated road-signs and have established funding for a new village gateway on the approach from Alderton.

Flooding

It's been a difficult year for flooding. The Council's flood-group has worked with homeowners and authorities, to improve awareness, and take some local action. But more needs to be done, to increase awareness of this problem, to co-ordinate and drive actions across multiple authorities and developers, to reduce the impact of flood events.

Building a Vibrant & Engaged community – Supporting the GVA

A viable, useful Village Hall and Field is very important to the community and the Council has continued to support the GVA in its role at the heart of the community, as both custodian of the Hall and driving the Village social agenda. The council already pays the 'works loan' repayment (from the original hall refurbishment) and contributes towards field maintenance.

In addition, the Council has provided direct financial support for the very successful Jubilee and Apple Rock celebrations, run by a rejuvenated GVA committee.

The council is also supporting an on-going project to improve the hall and field facilities.

Building a Vibrant & Engaged community – Supporting community engagement.

Recognising that good communication is essential for improving community cohesion and engagement, the Council has completely redesigned and refreshed its website and has also established a 'Gretton Village Notices' Facebook page for Council and wider village notices, working in conjunction with GVA.

It is planned that the website will be extended to also represent other village organisations, to provide more coordinated communications.

We published two newsletters, in Apr and Dec '22. These are busy and informative, with input from across the community. They are well received but are a very demanding task to produce.

Planning activities

The council has sought to take a more pro-active role in the communication of planning issues and in its representations to the Planning Dept, on behalf of the village. The website now hosts a local planning application database, and a paper which explains the process and how GPC will address different types of planning applications.

Some planning applications have required special meetings / consultations and through this, the Council is pleased to have achieved improved outcomes for all parties.

The new Facebook page is now used to notify residents of planning issues, together with direct e-mailing / contact of those impacted.

Next year - '23 – '24

For next year, in addition to our statutory obligations, our key initiatives remain fundamentally unchanged. Continuing to improve communications and engagement across the community, supporting the GVA (in particular, its project to improve access and facilities), addressing traffic and parking concerns and improving the Gretton environment – keeping it rural, greener and safe.

Geoff Hanson May '23.

Annual report 2022/23 – May 2023
Councillor David Gray – Winchcombe and Woodmancote Division
Gloucestershire County Council

This has been my second year in post on the County Council. As a cabinet member responsible for Environment and Planning, I oversee a number of the important areas for which the County Council has responsibility, including:

- new road schemes, such as the changes on the A417 to address the “missing link”, improvements to junction 10 on the M5, the upgrade of the Arle Court “park and ride” facility and the development of proposals for a new junction 9 to relieve congestion at the existing junction and on the A46
- the implementation of the County’s ambitious plans to construct a 26 mile segregated “cycle spine”, together with additional local connections
- oversight of waste management service, including recycling facilities and the Javelin Park “energy from waste” plant
- plans to help address climate change through planting 1 million trees, rolling out 1,000 public e-charging points and the development of a mass rapid transit scheme

I am also, of course, a busy councillor representing the interests on the residents in my division.

The last two years have been a very difficult time for the Council, as they have been for many residents. The impact of the covid pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the associated cost of living crisis, and the continued escalation in the pressures on social services, and in particular on adult social care and children’s services, have placed the Council under significant strain, not least financially.

Gloucestershire County Council has been conservatively managed, in both senses of that word, for many years. Unlike some, we have not invested in risky assets that, however well intentioned, expose residents to financial risks. One of our few true investments, the Javelin Park energy from waste scheme, has in fact generated a large surplus this year, which has helped us to balance the books.

As a result of our prudence, our financial position has remained strong, despite the severe challenges faced. Very strong when compared to many other local authorities. This has meant that we have been able to stick to the manifesto commitments made back in 2021, including towards funding efforts to address climate change, but also to increase funding to tackle the backlog in road maintenance.

Nevertheless, with inflation above 10% and the demand for key service continuing to rise, the Council approved a budget that sees an uplift in council tax of 2.99% for next year which, together with a nationally mandated 2% Adult Social care Levy, resulted in a total increase of 4.99%. That is less than half the rate of inflation and is also well below the rate at which both pensions and wages are rising, but is nonetheless an uncomfortable necessity.

Our ability to limit the rise in council tax to under 5% is in part due to the increase in central government of 11%, a pragmatic settlement and the biggest increase for 10 years.

Gloucestershire is an ambitious county with exciting plans to improve our connectivity and address climate change. It should be recognised that much of the work done in these areas has actually been funded from grants won in competition with other authorities, not least thanks to our record on delivering schemes. For example, the 26 mile cycle spine, the construction of which is well under way, is almost wholly funded from Active Travel and other grant funding from central government, rather than out of the local council tax.

Of course, we have to be very careful how we spend residents' money, whether funded directly from the council tax or via grant funding from central government, and difficult choices have to be made. It is not possible to simply throw money at issues and spending in one area can come at the cost of having to find savings in others.

I wanted to highlight a few areas that relate to the division, and in particular areas that I have been active in addressing as the County councillor.

Roads

Because I know that it is a topic close to everyone's heart, I specifically wish to highlight one specific area in the council's budget and that is Highways.

For 2023/24 that budget there is an increase on the Highways Maintenance base-budgets of 22%. As far as I know, that is the biggest annual increase on that budget ever. This money is in addition to our current Major-scheme Resurfacing Budget of £100 million, and is further enhanced by £3.9m of additional roads funding from central government. Hopefully that increase in budget can help keep up with more maintenance locally.

In the past year GCC undertook 39,000 repairs to the road network. We now have 39 teams working on pothole repairs.

However, the task never stands still.

Last December was the coldest December for over 100 years with 50% more grit runs than the previous year. Inevitably we expected the worst in respect of potholes. A glimmer of good news is that pothole numbers are down on those major roads where we've invested in re-surfacing - so that's encouraging for the long-term. However, we all know there remain many potholes that need fixing in the coming weeks on our local roads, especially in the more rural areas of the county, including our own local area.

Can I urge anyone who sees a pothole or other road safety defect to report it on the very good online map at: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/reportit This interactive map helps pinpoint the exact location and lets you know if it has previously been reported or not.

I think it is fair to say that the roads our area have not been a priority for the resurfacing schemes in the last few years and neither has the pothole fixing been keeping up with problems locally. Looking beyond the immediate circumstances of the recent winter, I am hopeful that this pattern is changing, it is certainly something on which I spend a lot of time lobbying with council leadership and Highways. I recently, for example, persuaded the most senior Director responsible for Highways in the county to come for a drive around the division to highlight the many issues; he made a lot of notes!

There have already been a number of resurfacing projects across the division, including most recently on the Broadway Road in Winchcombe and between Gretton and Gotherington, and there has been an uptick in the number of pothole teams out and about. I have also been successful in lobbying for the Gretton Road resurfacing to be brought forward from 24/25 to 23/24, so this should be complete in 2023, and a lot more patching is scheduled across the division, including on the Broadway Road. Nevertheless, a lot more needs to be done, so this will be a focus for my work going forward.

Buses

Although it does pay subsidies to support certain routes and compensate operators for certain concessionary fares, County Council does not run bus services. They are in general run by commercial operators such as Stagecoach and Pulhams Coaches as commercial services.

The bus industry has been hit by a number of problems which have negatively impacted the ability of the operators to run their services profitably, or indeed at all. Much higher costs have not helped, but a bigger problem has been a shortage of drivers as people left the job during the covid pandemic to take up work on home delivery services which were booming, or simply retired, and never come back. Further, passenger volumes fell significantly in many areas over that period and have yet to recover.

In the face of these problems the reliability of bus services fell. Stagecoach took the decision to cut their services to meet the challenges they faced and improve reliability on routes operated. This was their decision to make and was not something which the County Council could change, despite lobbying for the cuts to be reversed or limited.

The County Council did retender the dropped routes to try and find alternative suppliers, but, as many other bus operators faced the same problems as Stagecoach, it was not always possible to find another operator willing to step in.

The biggest impact in my division was the loss of the E service through Woodmancote which had been operated by Stagecoach.

The county council fully understands that the loss of this service is a major concern and inconvenience for residents, and recognises that access to a reliable bus service is both socially important and a great way to address climate change. I have spoken extensively to both the senior officers and the Cabinet member with oversight over the county councils' interactions with the bus companies. Great efforts were made to find an alternative supplier, but no one came forward.

Pulhams have come forward with an extension of their 656 service, which is a help, but offers only a much reduced provision. It is to be hoped that this will prove popular, but this is nothing like a full replacement. Dialogue continues on either an expansion of that alternative service or various other work around solutions to try and further fill the gap left by Stagecoach. The success of the new service through high usage is likely to be the greatest incentive to additional services being provided.

A longer term solution to the poor availability and uncommercial nature of rural public transport may lie in the “on-demand” type services currently being trialled in Forest of Dean and North Cotswolds under the Robin scheme. These are part of national trials for which Gloucestershire won the right to participate. So far results are encouraging, but it is still early days.

Build Back Better funding projects

As part of the County Council’s efforts to help the county to recover from the impact of covid, which saw much of our community life severely constrained, each county councillor was allocated £40,000 to spend over the course of the council on community projects that would help to stimulate local community life and improve the social infrastructure.

I have so far spent about 65% of that allowance.

Amongst the schemes which have benefited from grants under the scheme have been:

- refurbishment of the Winchcombe Museum
- refurbishment of Gretton Tower
- purchase of snowplough equipment for Snowhill
- restoration of the triangulation point on Cleeve Common
- purchase of cricket equipment for Wodmancote youth cricket team
- conversion of a village call box in Hawling
- village gates in Toddington
- upgrading of the village hall heating system in Dumbleton
- various kissing gates, village signs and youth club equipment

If parishes have ideas and needs they believe will help us to build back better, then please do contact me with them.

It is a privilege to be your county councillor. Please do get in touch if you have any ideas or issues you wish to discuss or which you believe I might be able to help with.

David Gray