

Parish of Bourton-on-the-Water

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 7pm on Wednesday 22nd March 2023 in the Windrush Room, The George Moore Community Centre

Those Present: Parish Councillors B Hadley (Chairman), S Coventry, A Davis, J Jowitt, L Launchbury, M Macklin, A Roberts, L Wilkins, J Wareing and B Wragge. Assistant Clerk J Herbert, County Cllr P Hodgkinson, District Cllr R Keeling, M Samuel-Member of Youth Parliament for the Cotswolds and Stroud, the Police, representatives from North Cotswolds Scouts and Cubs, North Cotswold Rotary, Cotswold Wardens, Bourton Primary School, Bourton Baptist Church, St Lawrence Church, Cotswold District Council Clean and Green Team, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Bourton Business Network, North Cotswolds Rotary, Bourton Information Centre. 17 members of public.

1. Apologies for absence: Cllr L Hicks, District Cllr N Maunder, Village Warden S Cotton,
2. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 30th March 2022. APPROVED.
3. To receive the following reports:
 - a. **Chairman and Committee Chairmen of the Parish Council**

Chairman's Report by Cllr Bob Hadley: The Chairman started by urging all to be aware of volunteering opportunities for The Big Help Out for King's Coronation on Monday 8th May. The Big Lunch was an outdoor picnic event being organised by a Parish Council Working Group on Sunday 7th May on the field between the two schools.

Over the year the Council had seen the resignation of Cllr Piers Millett and the co-option of Cllr Jon Wareing. Bryan Sumner and Nigel Randall had stepped down from the Council and both had been instrumental in organising the purchase and set-up of the George Moore Community Centre. This created two additional vacancies to which Jonathan Jowitt and Leanne Launchbury were co-opted until the May 2023 elections. The elections were being organised by Cotswold District Council and Nomination Forms could be obtained from the Clerk or from the CDC website for submission to CDC by 4th April.

The Youth and Wellbeing, Village Environment and Highways Committees were now meeting 6 weekly rather than monthly. Councillors also sat as representatives on various outside organisations. A new Environmental Action Working Group had been formed to discuss various projects for recommendation to the Council.

The Finance Officer had resigned and a new Committee Clerk, Julie Catlow, was in post. CDC's Tourist Levy at the Rissington Road car park had generated income of 50p per car with funds to be generated back into the village. Some funds were being used for additional parking enforcement by Gloucestershire County Council, works to the riverbank and a new Traffic Regulation Order for the village.

Highways Committee: Committee Chairman Cllr Andy Roberts reported. There was regular contact with GCC Highways to discuss traffic volume and flow, signage to car parks, pavements, road repairs and yellow lines. GCC had completed path repairs by the school and outside the Waterfront tearooms, hedges had been cut back by property owners and the Cotswold Wardens had completed footpath repairs. Discussions were continuing on future coach parking provision for the village.

A new Speedwatch team was in place – please contact Andy if you are interested. A successful bid had been made for a mobile Vehicle Activated Sign. Wheelie bin stickers were available to

parishioners to encourage drivers to slow down. Tourist Levy monies would enable various projects to be completed. A village accessibility audit highlighted various works and money had been set aside for their completion. Residents were urged to contact GCC Highways to report problems via their website or on www.fixmystreet.com

Youth & Wellbeing Committee: Vice Chairman Cllr Bob Hadley reported. The Committee had been working closely with Cotswold District Council's Clean and Green team along with Steve Cotton our Village Warden. Projects included the sowing of wildflower seeds. Cllr Hicks and Steve Cotton supplied the young people who attended Play Rangers in Melville Playing field food donated by the Chestnut Restaurant, Cornish Bakery and Bakery on the Water.

The Monday evening Youth Club was still well attended and growing in numbers. Melville and The Naight play areas had new play equipment which suited all ages, and it was hoped to replace old equipment at Rye Crescent play area.

Wellbeing: The accessibility audit highlighted actions including training which had been completed. BoWPC was seen as a major lead for wellbeing in the county. Wellbeing information was available on the district council's website.

Planning Committee: Chairman Amanda Davis reported that the Committee now meet every three weeks at 6pm on a Wednesday and member of public can raise issues for 3 minutes during the meeting. CDC are the planning and licensing authority and the Parish Council give their views to the district council. The Committee have responded to consultations on various plans including Thames Water and National and Local planning policies as well as considering and commenting on individual planning applications and licensing, tree preservation orders. It was hoped that the next Council would work on a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Village Environment Committee: Committee Chairman Cllr Bob Hadley reported that the Christmas tree had previously been purchased by a local donor but for this year they were working with Bourton Business Network for help with funding. There had been input to CDC's discussion on coach parking issues and ongoing maintenance works to the village green.

Finance & General Purposes Committee: Chairman Bob Hadley advised that the precept for 2023-24 had been set at £182,241, a rise of 2.42%. A small increase had been necessary in view of rising costs in various areas and there had also been a decrease in the number of households paying council tax in the parish.

George Moore Community Centre Committee: Committee Chairman Cllr Andy Roberts had taken over from Bryan Sumner during the year. He thanked Bryan for his work on the committee and his work on the acquisition of the building and as part of the committee over many years. The building was in reasonable health with a minor roof leak, replacement boiler and bathroom required during the year. A lot of work had been done on statutory health and safety checks and related staff training. The old boilers and asbestos were removed from the basement. The building was now more disabled and dementia friendly and changes had been made to offer assistance with visual impairment.

Room hire was now back to pre-covid levels, possibly higher, and income had increased.

b. County and Ward District Councillors

County Cllr Paul Hodgkinson: The County Council approved a budget of £560m for the next year, the largest amounts being for adult and child social care, and highways. Cllr Hodgkinson assisted with highways projects in the parish including resurfacing of pavements. Members of the community, parish council & GCC highways had been looking at traffic flow through village and options for restricting traffic in residential streets at peak

times. GCC Highways approved plans in principle and these would go out to public consultation. The new 'missing link' road project at the Air Balloon roundabout was being started this year.

There was a new on-demand bus service for the North Cotswolds called The Robin which could be booked by phone or on-line and the cost was £2.50. Cllr Hodgkinson approved grants for playground equipment at Melville and Platinum Jubilee Celebrations.

Ambulance response times had been poor but had got better over last 4-5 weeks. NHS dentists difficult were difficult to find and he was working with the NHS for more availability.

District Cllr Richard Keeling: Report is available at Appendix 1.

- c. **Member of Youth Parliament for the Cotswolds & Stroud** – Maya Samuel was elected last March to represent the area in parliament. She was working with Bishop Rachel particularly in relation to her work with charities in India. In addition, Maya was working with a pregnancy loss charity, focussing on young people's mental health and speaking to her own school year about living in the Cotswolds and their aspirations for the future. She campaigned on behalf of the LGBGTQ+ sector to have relevant education in secondary schools.
- d. **The Police - PCSO Kim Graham** has been working from Stow Police Station for the last 12 months as part of the Neighbourhood Policing Team. The mobile police station would be sited outside the Bourton Co-Op this Saturday for crime prevention. His team had accompanied the HMRC and Environment Agency on a local site investigation. They regularly undertake safety talks at schools and run Police Information Points, including at the Community Centre with Village Warden, Steve Cotton. Last Monday they held a North Cotswolds Network Day, working with various local agencies.
- e. **Headspace – Jon Wareing** outlined details about the Bourton charity who provide counselling for mental health crisis, especially in young people. The charity offers wellbeing activities and are looking for more volunteers to assist. They are also looking to employ an additional counsellor this year.
- f. **Bourton Business Network - Andrew Lund-Yates.** The group grew out of the pandemic from local businesses who were keen to support the village in collaboration with the parish and district council. It was based loosely on the old Chamber of Commerce. The group was open to any local business owners to work on projects such as sustainable food and energy sources and to work with the parish and district council to find a solution to coach parking.
- g. **North Cotswolds Rotary – President, Kevan Taylor:** The Rotary is open to anyone over the age of 18 who can volunteer their time for fundraising and tackling local issues. They meet twice a month in person and once a month on Zoom and organise events such as the annual Cotswold Festival of Motoring event at the Cricket Club, to be held on 24th September 2023. In the last 12 months they had given £150,000 to local groups and projects, including aid to Ukrainian people.
- h. **North Cotswold Scouts - Ricky Campbell** has been Scouting for over 50 years in various roles and is currently one of county district commissioners for the North Cotswolds. The organisation had lost members during Covid but just got back 500 new young people and 47 new leaders. There were waiting lists for most groups and new leaders were needed. It was hoped to start a scout group in Bourton from older cubs with a parent and over 18 young person to provide leadership.
- i. **Cotswold Wardens - John Foster.** The Wardens are the voluntary arm of Cotswold National Landscape (previously Cotswold AONB). They lead walks, carry out school visits and aim for a warden in each parish to survey rights of way and establish a relationship

with the Parish Council, landowners and local people. Work parties maintain footpaths, install and repair stiles, gates and bridges and do hedge laying and dry-stone walling. Work has recently been completed at Greystones. Two circular walks were developed in support of a CDC initiative to move people away from the village centre. Any rights of way issues should be reported through the Gloucestershire County Council's Rights of Way website, by phone, via local wardens or through the Parish Council.

- j. **Bourton Primary School – Headteacher John Jones:** It is John's final year before retiring, and the number of pupils on the role has grown significantly over the last 10 years. A Year 6 project had been completed with the History Society and pupils were helping out with the Coronation Picnic. Funding was an issue, especially for Special Educational Needs and mental health and therapy sessions are now done by the school. They also provide a food bank. They work closely with local police and Headspace on mental health issues for pupils and Moore Friends have kindly provided funding. In addition, there are drug and alcohol issues for some pupils too.
- k. **Bourton Baptist Church - Revd Susan Woodley** is a new minister since just prior to Christmas. Activities at the church include: Open4u on Thursdays from 10am to 4pm, including a food bank for families, computer club for fixing computers, homemade soup and cake, knitting for shoeboxes and painting. All for no charge but donations welcome. On Wednesday afternoons there is currently a toddler group which finishes next week but the church will continue to assess the need. On the second Saturday of every month a coffee morning is held for charity fundraising. They have donated £2,000 to the Ukraine and £2,000 to Headspace.
- i. **St Lawrence Church - Revd Rowena King:** Over the winter they have offered the church as a warm space in partnership with Bourton Primary School. Together on Tuesdays Team offer a soup lunch for a donation. Toddler Group on a Thursday morning is for parents and carers of pre-school children. Living with Loss course for grief counselling is held once a year. The older section of the churchyard will continue to be allowed to grow wild and a survey will be carried out on plants and wildlife. St Lawrence is available for hire for events as it can offer a larger space with facilities.
- l. **Cotswold District Council Clean & Green Team - Millie Lawlor:** The team works alongside Steve Cotton, Village Warden. Projects include working with the Primary School and cubs/scouts on wildflower planting. It was hoped to take forward a Community Composting initiative. The team donated a planter to the WI and other community projects. Please contact the team if you have any community projects.
- m. **Information Centre - Jackie Faulkner, Manager:** An information provision has been in Bourton for well over 30 years, with a dedicated information centre in Victoria Street for 23 years. As well as visitors they also help local residents with photocopying, bus timetables, event and venue tickets, walking maps and books etc. They are fundraising for the Air Ambulance and request empty printer ink cartridges for recycling for donations.
- n. **Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust - Rhys Howell, Visitor Engagement Manager:** Greystones is their site in Bourton and they are planning to re-open the café (hopefully before the summer) and also the roundhouse, but this will depend on volunteer availability. The Cotswolds National Landscape team will be moving to Greystones from May. The Land Management team have a large programme of work including ash dieback. Please approach a member of the team if you are interested in further details.
- o. **Cubs Leader - Nick Hawke** thanked the parish council for the grant to provide tents. Cubs are available to help with community projects – please see details in the Browser.

The Chairman thanked Sue Pacini, Tree Warden and Sue Roberts from the litter picking group as well as the Parish Council staff for their work.

4. **Chairman's Report on Community Matters:** This was covered earlier in the meeting.

5. **Questions from the Electors:**

- a. A member of the public was interested to hear Cllr Hodgkinson's reported about traffic and parking but was concerned that they were unaware about coach park meetings taking place. They had done a small survey on parking and provided statistics on what was currently available and asked whether the Parish Council considered that the village had adequate parking and whether it was in compliance with the Local Plan. Would residents be consulted on plans funded by the precept?

The Chairman responded that those who visited the village would park anyway and it was difficult to control until a long-term solution was in place. There would be a need to monitor and try to control parking, but it would be difficult until an 'out-of-town' solution could be found. Cllr Davis added that, in terms of consultation, the Parish Council would consider creating a Neighbourhood Development Plan after the elections and this would require a lot of public consultation.

- b. A member of the public had concerns about speeding and asked whether the new Speedwatch group was working with the co-ordinators of the ANPR system. Cllr Roberts confirmed that they were, but the group could only go out for one hour at a time. This had an instant effect on speeding and the 8 volunteers were doing what they could to cover various locations around the village. The ANPR cameras were helping to bring speeds down, with a reduction in average speeds in those areas. Warning letters were routinely sent out, with a maximum of two warning letters per person, but the third offence should trigger a police home visit.
- c. A member of the public asked if there was a way of controlling parking in the wrong places. The footpath near the take-away in Station Road was a particular problem and motorised scooters could not get past. The Chairman advised that councillors have yellow stickers to highlight problem parking, but only traffic enforcement officers can give tickets and they cannot monitor parking 24/7. A member of the public has successfully reported vehicles parked on the footpath by photographing and sending this and the registration number to Police using the 101 reporting service, and this can trigger a police visit where possible.
- d. A member of the public raised concerns about litter in village, particularly the vast amount of chip shop litter. The Village Green had many large black litter bins which were unsightly. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council were working with CDC to try to remove the litter bins as a long-term plan. The new pub would not provide take-aways which should help the situation. A new pizza business was opening and the Parish Council would ask them and the chip shop to request from customers that boxes were returned to the establishments selling the food. Cllr Davis highlighted that the Parish Council has adopted a zero waste policy which they will work towards.
- e. A member of the public asked if the Parish Council wanted buses to come to the village. The Chairman advised that if no coaches are allowed then people will come by car, so more parking would be needed. It was important to get the balance right for local businesses. Currently, coaches must book in with Information Centre. There was already GCC Highways coach signage in the village but it was ignored, although Police do monitor and carry out enforcement.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.53 hours.

Appendix 1 – Report by District Cllr Richard Keeling

Bourton Vale Ward has approximately 2,200 Electors, 700 of which are residents in Bourton South East -the properties either side of Rissington Road leading east out of the village. The remaining 1500 electors comprising Bourton Vale are spread over a number of villages to the northwest.

Bourton Vale residents look towards Bourton village as its centre of facilities and infrastructure whilst the outlying villages are predominantly rural with farming the principal activity. Also notable is the concentration of nationally renowned racing yards – all of which featured prominently in the recent Cheltenham Festival.

Coincidentally this area is also the home of a concentration of active stone quarries. The 8 most active are all contained in a 2-mile radius area and are served by Buckle Street (north-south) and the B4077 (east-west).

The area is part of the AONB and has a long history of quarrying which helps maintain the architectural heritage of stone buildings and dry stone walls so characteristic of the district.

The commercial success of the quarry operators has, over time, led to a significant increase in the size and number of lorry movements. This is impacting in noise, dust and vibration from the lorries serving the quarries affecting the health and amenity of local residents and visitors and other road users.

The increases in activity are not the responsibility of any one quarry operator but are the rolled up effect of a succession of planning applications which have been made all of which have been reviewed in isolation ignoring the cumulative effect of all the previous applications.

The responsibility for the planning regime for mineral activity lies with Gloucestershire County Council and is set out in the Minerals Local Plan 2018-2032.

In response to the worsening effects of the quarrying activity and traffic movements the Parish Councils most affected - most significantly Temple Guiting – have worked tirelessly to draw attention to the situation and try and encourage an integrated and coherent approach to assessing the cumulative effects of continuing quarrying planning consents.

The immediate priority of these Parish Councils is to request the Mineral Planning Authority to formally recognise and manage the cluster of quarries as a coherent entity which together cumulatively impact on the AONB locally.

There is a large amount of background material which I can discuss with anyone who would like to know more. In the meantime I felt it would be helpful to inform this Parish Meeting of the ongoing activity concerning the cluster of quarries which impacts on the residents of Bourton Vale and to some extent to Bourton Village through the effects of the movement of HGVs passing through the area to and from the quarries.