

## **Parish of Bourton-on-the-Water**

### **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**

**held at 7pm on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**in the Windrush Room, The George Moore Community Centre**

**Those Present:** Cllr A Roberts (Parish Council Chairman), Parish Councillors B Hadley, A Davis, J Wareing, M Samuel, L Hicks, L Wilkins, M Macklin, S Coventry, B Wragge, L Launchbury, County Cllr P Hodgkinson, PC A Palfrey, S Roberts (Litter Picking Group), J Foster (Cotswold Wardens), R Marsden (Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust), J Mitchell (North Cotswold Rotary/Moore Friends), S Cotton (Village Warden), N Hawke (Cubs), S Pacini (Tree Warden) and 13 additional members of the public.

**In Attendance:** S Henley (Clerk to the Parish Council & minute taker), J Herbert (Assistant Clerk), V Oliveri (Committee Clerk).

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr S Tapper, W Morgan (Headteacher, The Cotswold School), K Taylor (North Cotswold Rotary and Moore Friends), Inspector S Ellson (Gloucestershire Police), M Samuel (Member of Youth Parliament for Cotswold and Stroud), A Lund-Yates (Bourton Business Network).
2. **To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 22nd March 2023:** APPROVED by those present at the meeting in 2023.
3. **The following reports were received:**
  - a. **County Councillor Paul Hodgkinson Bourton-on-the-Water and Northleach division:**

Difficulties with county council finances were highlighted. Cllr Hodgkinson spoke about the current issues with parking on residential streets and highlighted that he had £10,000 for a Traffic Regulation Order which he hoped could be progressed. There was still no solution on coach parking. Resurfacing works were taking place on the Fosse Way and the A417 'missing link' work was progressing. The Robin on-demand bus service two-year pilot was extended. As CDC's Cabinet Member for Leisure he reported that the new provider at Bourton Leisure Centre was working to improve their service. Waiting times for NHS services had increased. Thames Water were spending money on upgrading the sewage system in the village by the end of the year.
  - b. **Police – PC Alison Palfrey, Neighbourhood Community Team, Stow Police:**

The team includes PCSOs John Allen and Kim Graham who visit the Cotswold School weekly, hold the mobile police station at the Co-Op every 5 weeks and the Police Point at the Community Centre once a month. Issues highlighted were cold callers, possible sanctions following ANPR camera detection of poor driving and car theft.
  - c. **Ward District Councillors**

**Cllr Jon Wareing (Bourton Village)**

Cllr Wareing spoke about the current difficulties with finding a solution for coach parking and that GCC Highways input was required. He was keen to promote visits to Bourton via rail and suggested other solutions such as a park and ride off the A40 at Northleach. CDC were introducing a 100% Council Tax premium on second homes and reduced time for applying premiums on empty properties, aiming to boost property usage and generate revenue for local infrastructure. Additionally, successful mediation between Hawkstone Brewery and residents resolved noise pollution concerns, with a withdrawn licence extension application indicating positive community engagement. Cllr Wareing emphasised community cohesion, the importance of social interactions, and upcoming events promoting youth and wellbeing were discussed.

**Cllr Len Wilkins (Bourton Vale)**

Two years ago, the Electoral Commission moved the eastern end of Bourton into the Bourton Vale ward. There were planning problems with large houses being turned into AirBNBs. Visitor Parking in Rye Close was causing problems.

d. **Chairman and Committee Chairmen of the Parish Council**

**i. Chairman's Report by Cllr Andy Roberts**

Cllr Andy Roberts, Chairman of the Parish Council since May 2023, highlighted key developments, including an increase in council members to 13 due to parish population growth. He acknowledged the challenges faced, such as the closure of the Village Information Centre and Coach Park, and efforts to find solutions, including potential restrictions on coach access pending discussion. He noted progress in discussions on coach drop-off solutions and successful community engagement, such as a workshop on traffic flow and parking. Income from the tourist levy continues to fund village projects. Cllr Roberts expressed gratitude to volunteers and council members for their dedication and support staff for their contributions. Additionally, he provided an update on the George Moore Community Centre, noting maintenance issues and fire safety recommendations.

**ii. Finance & Governance Committee Report by Cllr Andy Roberts:**

The committee's main role is to monitor, manage and make recommendations to council. For the first time there was a breakdown of projected spending for next year via the Annual Parish Council Action Plan.

**iii. Planning Committee by Cllr Bob Hadley**

The Planning Committee considers various policies, including those related to Listed Buildings, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Biodiversity, and Dark Skies, as well as impacts on neighbouring properties and the surrounding area. CDC has launched a new portal on their planning website for reporting breaches to the Enforcement Officer. Tree maintenance follows CDC's Tree Officer's guidance, with many trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). The government plans to introduce legislation requiring holiday lets to undergo the planning process, with a formal register to be established. CDC are looking at introducing double Council Tax for second homes and holiday lets.

**iv. Village Environment Committee by Cllr Bob Hadley**

The Parish Council will continue to support hanging baskets and contribute to the installation and removal of the Christmas tree. CDC's Tourist Levy will fund the regeneration of the paved area by the Cheltenham bus stop and behind the War Memorial, including footpaths and seating. Repairs, reseeding, and returfing of high-traffic areas will be funded from the Tourist Levy. Memorial testing has begun for health and safety compliance. Scribe Cemetery and Allotment packages have been introduced for system computerisation. The performance of the Village Maintenance contract holder is regularly monitored, with frequent meetings to address any issues.

**v. Youth & Wellbeing – Cllr Lynda Hicks**

Over the past year, the Youth and Wellbeing Committee has focused on refurbishing the Rye Crescent play area, catering for ages 2-7 with accessible equipment funded by the Parish Council and grants, aiming for completion before the school summer holidays. They have collaborated with Maya Samuel from the Cotswold School to establish a safe space for youth outside of school, with plans involving Headspace. The Youth Club will relaunch with a new provider, and volunteers are sought. Steve Cotton, the Village Warden, facilitated the delivery of food provided by local business to Melville playground for children attending Play Rangers sessions which are funded by

the Parish Council. Gratitude was expressed to all involved, including the council, volunteers, and support staff.

**vi. Len Wilkins – Highways Committee**

The Tourist Action Group, which evolved into the Bourton Business Network, discussed traffic and parking changes in a recent meeting.

GCC's Parking Enforcement Officers have increased hours this year, and a request for extended morning and afternoon parking times has been made. Other plans include purchasing an additional ANPR for monitoring speeding and car tax compliance on Station Road. New installations of dropped kerbs are currently under discussion. A Vehicle Activated Sign is forthcoming, funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Additional road lining, including for disabled spaces, is being arranged, along with Periwinkle Bank footpath resurfacing. Cllr Roberts was thanked for his previous role as Highways Chairman. Requests for speed monitoring and varied traffic warden times were noted. The ANPR camera's effectiveness in reducing speeds was discussed, with data sent to police for monitoring.

**e. Reports from representatives of local bodies and organisations:**

**i. John Foster – Cotswold Wardens**

The Cotswold Wardens, part of the Cotswold National Landscape, engage in various activities:

Leading public walks across the Cotswolds, varying in length and led by two wardens.

Walks are free, with donations supporting warden projects. The Cotswold Way and Diamond Way walks are also facilitated, with a charge for coach transportation.

Conducting an education project visiting schools to enhance children's understanding of the environment.

Establishing relationships with Parish Councils, landowners, and locals, and surveying rights of way for improvements.

Organising weekly work parties for path maintenance, installation, and repairs, often in response to requests from Gloucestershire Rights of Way team or local organisations.

Recent activities include assisting at Greystones and the National Trust, and repairing bridges, stiles, and gates. Reporting rights of way issues is encouraged through various channels.

**ii. Sue Roberts – Bourton Litter Picking Volunteers**

The litter picking group consists of 27 individuals who pick litter as part of their daily or weekly routine, often while walking around the village. They use a WhatsApp group to report problem areas or areas already cleaned. Hotspots for litter and antisocial behaviour include the churchyard, the Naight and Jubilee Orchard, with the removal of benches significantly improving the situation. Nitrous oxide bottles were found in car parks, prompting the installation of barriers and night-time locking in the British Legion car park. A proposed ban on single-use vapes may help reduce litter. Cigarette butts are a common issue due to inadequate litter bin design. Dog poo, often left unbagged, remains a problem despite numerous bins. Takeaway food and drink packaging, contributes significantly to litter, with bins often overwhelmed. A money-back scheme for drink cans and plastic bottles is suggested. Reporting litter and other issues is encouraged via the CDC website.

**iii. Rosalind Marsden – Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust Visitor Education Officer** works in collaboration with Cotswolds National Landscape and the Cotswold Wardens to facilitate education sessions at Greystones Farm. They cover topics including the Iron Age, habitats and river safaris for primary schools, the Cotswold School, and U3A. Open days are planned for May 30th and June 23rd. The Discovery Farm is now open more as

Cotswolds National Landscape's office base. Picnic benches are being pinned down to prevent movement by youths. Funding has been secured for a new pond to facilitate for pond dipping. Discussions continue regarding the café, with a new CEO at Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. Volunteers are sought.

**iv. Julie Mitchell – North Cotswold Rotary/Moore Friends**

Moore Friends mourns the passing of Chair Lady Wendy Sterling. The organisation will cease operations at the end of the year. Following the closure of Moore Cottage Hospital, £700k was donated towards the Community Centre, with £69k remaining. The last AGM will be held in June, with remaining funds distributed to the main benefactors. Approximately £450k was given by Moore Friends to local organisations over 12 years, supporting healthcare and wellbeing projects. Julie is now the chairman. Services like the Lunch Club and Men in Sheds, initiated by Moore Friends, will be affected by the closure, impacting valuable community support.

**President in waiting 2026-27 for North Cotswold Rotary**

North Cotswold Rotary, with only four female members, raises funds through events like the Cotswold Festival of Motoring, supporting projects including a hospital generator in Ukraine. They raised £700 for Headspace through an auction and seek donations for future events. They receive sponsorships from Brio and support various programmes, including international projects like polio eradication. A film night on April 13th will raise funds for polio.

**v. Steve Cotton – Village Warden** thanked all groups and businesses who have helped the village including Fosseway Tool Hire, the WI, Co-Op, Dial House, Londis, Hacklings and, The Chestnut Tree Café who give food every Wednesday for Play Rangers.

**vi. Nick Hawke – Cubs Leader and lead scouter**

Bourton Scouts restarted in 2021 with Squirrels and Scouts, now with over 20 Beavers. Cubs merged with the Northleach group due to lack of Scouts at age 11. Grants from the Parish Council have funded updated camping and cooking equipment, with plans to improve further. A Rotary grant supports events like air tattoo transport and a day out at Cranham Scouts Centre. In 2023, they conducted a big clean-up and hosted activities like Dogs for Good and Chinese dragon sessions at Baden Powell Hall.

**vii. Helen Sharman-Jones, Wellbeing Lead at Headspace**

The charity funds a counsellor at the Cotswold School for 15 hours weekly, offering wellbeing services and bushcraft sessions. Referrals come from parents, students, or the school, addressing various mental health issues like anxiety and eating disorders. They have conducted successful parent sessions and aim to expand their services, currently serving 24 young people weekly. They plan to employ a second counsellor and have recently hired a youth worker. They are always seeking volunteers.

**viii. Bill Wragge – Dementia-Friendly North Cotswolds**

The group started before Christmas as there are nearly 10k cases of dementia in Gloucestershire, all of whom need specialised help. Carers need help too. There are groups in Stow and Bourton on the second and fourth Friday of the month at St Lawrence Church with information, teas and coffees, games, talks. The primary school and U3A have assisted with sessions.

**ix. Heather from St Lawrence Church**

The Tuesday group offers soup and chat to the community, initiated during COVID as Warm Space and is ongoing. On Thursdays the church hosts Bumble Beez, a mother/baby/toddler group. April features a barn dance, May a quiz with Ploughman's supper, and a Quiz Night for Christian Aid. They also engage with the Primary School fortnightly for Open the Book sessions.

- x. **Richard Blundell-Paethorpe – Bourton Rovers under 12 football manager, head of youth development and coach development, grants and funding officer.** With over 300 youth players and membership fees starting at £95 (lower fees or free for low-income families), the club provides kits and equipment. They received grants from the Football Foundation for goals and from the Parish Council for bibs, balls, and goal support. These resources are utilised by visiting teams as well. They aim to further develop the club and clubhouse to cater to kids of all abilities, focusing on player and coach development.

The following two reports were read by the Chairman:

xi. **Andrew Lund-Yates, Bourton Business**

The Bourton Business Network (BBN) continues to grow, representing over 50 businesses, focusing on supporting village businesses and addressing coach parking challenges. BBN successfully participated in the Chipping Campden Business Awards and will collaborate on the North Cotswolds Business Awards. They are progressing towards becoming a legal entity, aiming to promote local businesses and fund community events. They have taken over the Bourton Village website and are supporting the first Bikers Night in May to raise funds for the Air Ambulance.

xii. **Will Morgan, Headteacher at the Cotswold School**

Year 11 students achieved exceptional exam results, ranking in the top 8% nationally. The school received recognition in The Sunday Times Parent Power Guide and celebrated six students receiving offers from Oxford and Cambridge. The school has also been named one of the top three schools in the Southwest.

Various events and performances took place, showcasing students' talents in music, arts, and sports. The school's community engagement includes environmental competitions, writing competitions, and career talks. Pupil leadership groups focus on student development and improvement of school life. Trips, charitable activities, and sports successes have been highlights of the school year. The school has met its fundraising target for the Astroturf project, thanks to the support of the local community.

f. **Questions from the Electors**

There were none.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm.