

Annual Parish Meeting Minutes

Held in the Village Hall on Monday 17th May 2021, 18:00.

Councillors present: Cllrs Chapman (Chair), Thomas, Classen and Papadakis.
In attendance: 7 members of the public

- 210517/1** **Welcome and Introductions:** Cllr Chapman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Richard Keeling.
- 210517/2** **Apologies:** Apologies have been received from Cllr Nigel Moore, Colin and Christine Edwin, Rev. Katrina Scott, and Karen Randles.
- 210517/3** **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** Approved. These accurately represent the last meeting held on 20th May 2019.
- 210517/4** **Annual Report of the Chairman of LSPC:** Chair, Cllr Chapman delivered his Annual Report. This can be found as Appendix 1.
- 210517/5** **Reports from County and District Councillors:** Cllr Richard Keeling delivered his report and a copy of this can be found as Appendix 2. Cllr Nigel Moore's report was summarised by Cllr Chapman and the full version can be found as Appendix 3.
- 210517/6** **Local Community Reports:** Please refer to the Appendices to see these reports.
6.1 St Mary's Church
6.2 Village Hall
6.3 LSVN
6.4 Village Fete Mr S. Randles confirmed that due to Covid and preserving safety in the Village, the Fete would not take place in 2021, but resume in 2022.
- 210517/7** **Open Forum/ Questions from the Floor:**
7.1 A resident requested that LSPC write to all allotment holders about the imminent ban on using metaldehyde slug pellets. Cllr Chapman confirmed that the Council still supported this ban. LSPC agreed to remind all allotment holders of this initiative.
7.2 LSPC were asked to confirm when bonfires could resume. The Parish Clerk will advise in due course.
7.3 A resident requested that the March Meeting Minutes were updated asap. The Parish Clerk agreed to do this.
7.4 Double yellow lines were raised to replace the single yellow lines. The Parish Clerk will investigate this.
7.5 Residents are concerned about the use of drones in the Village. It was agreed that a general notice on the Village noticeboard discouraging these should be erected.
- 210517/8** **Closing Comments from the Chairman:** Cllr Chapman thanked everyone for attending and for the support shown.
- 210517/9** **Date of the next meeting:** Monday 16th May 2022 **Meeting ended at:** 18:46

I would like to begin my annual report with some words of thanks.

I would like to express my most sincere appreciation to my fellow Councillors and our Parish Clerk for their valued and continued support and for ensuring the Parish Council has remained functional during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

The adoption of virtual meeting technology combined with some minor changes to our procedures have ensured the Council have been able to respond well to a number of significant challenges over the last 12 months.

Hopefully, we will soon be able to emerge from this very difficult period in our lives, and hopefully as a Parish Council and as a Community we shall be stronger as a result.

Before summarising the events of the year, I would also like to place on record our appreciation to some former colleagues whose service to the Parish Council is acknowledged and appreciated. These being our former Chairman, Mr Paul Sinclair, former Councillor Julie Roche, and former minute secretary and Councillor Karen Randles who is deserved of a special acknowledgement for providing invaluable service to the Parish Council for over 13 years. Karen's extensive and in-depth knowledge of the community, combined with her ability to add balance to the decisions of the Council are facets that have been greatly appreciated and will be missed moving forwards.

During the last 12 months, the Parish Council were faced with a number of challenges beginning with the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic, followed by the inundation of the Village with staycation tourists, and ending with the inundation of the Village with water, all neatly wrapped up in a constant effort to try and prevent further erosion of the charms of an AONB by challenging unwelcomed Planning Applications including one to build Europe's 's largest Electric Vehicle Charging Station on the A429!!

As you all know, whilst the Planning Application to build an EV Charging Station was initially refused by the Local Planning Authority, this decision was Appealed and overturned by the Planning Inspectorate. I am very pleased in the role that Lower Slaughter Parish Council undertook in the Planning Appeal process, and I believe we managed to secure a number of important conditions applied to the approval decision to improve its safety and reduce its impact on the local community. Equally and for the record, the Council remain very disappointed with the Local Planning Authority, Cotswold District Council, for lacking the courage to defend their initial decision to refuse the application.

Our response to the COVID-19 outbreak and the introduction of a nationwide lockdown, was to set up a facility on the Parish Council website to link volunteers to requests for assistance and I pleased to report that the numbers of volunteers greatly exceeded the requests for support and in truth, there was very little need for this service.

Social distancing signs were posted around the village throughout the year which were generally successful, although they were no defence against the sheer numbers of visitors encouraged by our Government to travel to the Cotswolds with the first relaxation of lockdown last summer. There were times when the village was overwhelmed with the sheer number of visitors during the summer, and although the vast majority of them were considerate, it is acknowledged that the behaviour of a small minority created a significant level of frustration particularly amongst the riverside residents of the village.

In addition to the problems created by the inundation of tourists, the village also was presented with a water inundation challenge over Christmas where a combination of heavy rainfall and abnormal levels of ground water saturation created the most significant flooding event since 2007.

In total some 15 properties were flooded including several which experienced internal flooding from the combined sewerage system creating great inconvenience and distress to those affected.

LSPC responded to this event in a number of ways, including the purchase of electric and petrol water pumps that we deployed in a further flooding event in January 2021.

More importantly, the Parish Council collated very accurate records of the level of flooding that took place. This information has been communicated to the relevant authorities and has resulted in the flooding risk profile of the village being raised from low to high.

The Parish Council also established extensive dialogue with Thames Water as a consequence of the flooding event and these discussions continue, as do a range of activities to try and improve the resilience of the village to the higher levels of rainfall that are to be expected in the future as a consequence of global warming.

The Council has undertaken further improvements to the Allotment Area and is attempting to enlist the support in the further development of this area through the establishment of an Allotment Representative Group as well as the development of a Community Orchard for the benefit of all of the village.

And finally, we have established a river maintenance task force in order to catch up on a number of overdue maintenance activities that are required to ensure the smooth and unobstructed flow of water through the village.

Moving forward, our activities will remain focussed on developing long-term flood alleviation strategies, addressing the challenges caused by increasing visitor numbers to the village and doing our very best to try and prevent unsustainable and inappropriate planning applications.

Kevin Chapman
Chairman
15 May 2021.

Ward Member Report to Lower Slaughter Parish Council

APRIL 2020 TO APRIL 2021

The year has of course been dominated by the Covid Pandemic, and I would like to record and thank all involved for the exceptional way all our villages have pulled together to ensure that everyone was looked after, and help volunteered to all who were in need.

There have been some high-profile planning issues during the year (and some more to come) and I would particularly like to commend all those who worked so hard to shine light on the detail of the Electric Charging Station appeal to ensure the impact on the Parish is minimised.

March 2020 saw a change in the refuse and recycling operations with the roll-out of new bins, a weekly food waste collection and a reduction of garden waste collection to every other week. The permit is increasing by 33 per cent (£30 to £40). Replacement bins/bags will also be chargeable at £5 per container from now on.

Following on from the previous year's increase in parking charges (+30%), this year brought the news that the option to pay cash at Cotswolds car parks was to be removed (in stages through this coming year) and payment could only be made through an 'app' on a smart phone or by card. It is estimated that some 9,000 adults in the Cotswolds do not have a smart phone and 72% of all payments in 2019 were cash, so the impact of this change will need to be monitored to ensure none of our residents are not disadvantaged.

During the year there have been major changes in the senior management at the Council, with Nigel Adams (Head of Paid Service with 28 years in post) and Bhavna Patel (Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services) both leaving (at a cost of £330,000) to be replaced with a new Chief Executive – Robert Weaver and an interim Monitoring Officer. An additional 8 people have been recruited to fill various positions to deliver manifesto promises.

A number of Strategies and Reports have been proposed at Council, covering: -

- Ecological Emergency declared (July 2020)
- The Climate Emergency (Sept 2020)
- Corporate Strategy and Plan (Sept 2020)

In addition, there have been several other changes: -

- Amendments have been made to the Council's Constitution.
- The Community Grant scheme has been replaced by 'Spacehive', a crowd funding platform (costing £30,000 p.a.).
- Removal of the Ward Member's ability to automatically refer planning applications to the Planning Committee where considered appropriate. (This decision is causing some annoyance to effected Parishes and is the subject of ongoing discussion.)
- A new additional crest for the Council, designed for use on social media and new road signage including the crest and the parish name. These being part of a £200,000 'Civic Pride' scheme.
- A new fly-tipping reporting tool has made this a much easier process and there

has been a substantive increase in the numbers being reported.

In February, the revised budget for 2021/2 was presented to and approved by Council.

It has been necessary to support financially the CDC Leisure Centres during the pandemic (circa £650k), some of which will be recovered as and when normality resumes.

The Planning and Enforcement Department is currently suffering from large workloads and a lack of Officers – recruitment is currently taking place.

Cllr Richard Keeling
May 2021

APPENDIX 3

Gloucestershire County Council Report for the Stow Division - Lower Slaughter Parish Council 2020 - 21

This report initially describes the work of the council as a whole, and then deals with issues and matters relating to Lower Slaughter.

The county council is proud of Gloucestershire's fight against coronavirus. From our wonderful NHS, to council staff, to everyone who followed the rules – you've been remarkable.

We've delivered tens of thousands of vouchers as part of our Free school meals holiday programme, (at an estimated value of £1.3 million) provided over 4,000 laptops to school children across Gloucestershire and helped thousands of people shielding through lockdown with food deliveries and help collecting prescriptions.

With the vaccine, now is the time to build back better. That means protecting local jobs, cutting carbon and protecting our environment, upgrading our roads, our cycle paths and our footpaths. Investing in our children and their future.

We have a plan to deliver £1bn of infrastructure, including the A417 missing link, and junction improvements to M5. Delivering the single largest investment into our economy for a generation and helping to create local jobs.

We have a plan to invest £145m in local schools, both new build and refurbishment of existing facilities including the county's first ever carbon neutral secondary school.

On the environment, we believe in real action – like bidding for the UK's first fusion power station to be based in Gloucestershire, like investing £34m in cycle lanes, or installing 1,000 electric vehicle charging points and in delivering a massive tree planting programme over the coming years. By the time of COP26 at Glasgow later this year, we will be a carbon zero council, one of the first to do so.

And on roads, we are committing to extra money into resurfacing. Another £100m over the next 4 years, covering over 500 miles of our county's roads.

Finally, we are investing in our communities. We are completing the roll-out of Full Fibre broadband across the county and investing £1m into our Covid restart fund, designed to help market towns and local businesses reopen after the pandemic.

Lower Slaughter

The Gloucestershire County Council's Primary and Secondary Schools Place Strategy 2021 – 2026 was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on the 24th March and is available online on the GCC web site. The strategy for the Bourton on the Water planning area which includes Lower Slaughter can be found at pages 92-95 of the document. Information on The Cotswolds School is also provided.

Grants

Gloucestershire is unusual as a council in giving considerable discretion to councillors to provide financial support for their communities. The Growing Our Communities Fund has been able to award £2000 to the Slaughters United Cricket Club and £3500 to Cotswolds Friends who provide community transport in the North Cotswolds. In addition a grant was paid to Cotswold Voluntary Wardens to assist the replacement of the Langley Drover carved out of cedar. The Local Highways Budget has contributed to VAS signs at Buckle Street

Upper Slaughter and Temple Guiting. The budget for each county councillor has been increased to £30k for 2021/22.

Rural Mobility Fund

GCC was shortlisted out of 56 bids submitted to the DfT's Rural Mobility Fund and secured £1.3m to pilot a demand responsive public transport project in the North Cotswolds and the South Forest of Dean. The pilot area for the North Cotswolds extends from Winchcombe to Moreton -in- Marsh and southwards to Northleach including the Guitings and Slaughters. The scheme will offer two fully accessible minibuses who will respond to demands for journeys that cannot be undertaken by existing public transport routes. The services will operate from 7am to 7 pm weekdays and 8am to 4pm on Saturdays between designated pick -up points, such as existing bus stops or village centres. Feeder journeys will link to local interchange Hubs and train stations. Bookings will be possible either by phone or on-line via a ThinkTravel Journey Planner. The scheme will work in conjunction with existing community and public transport providers and should be operational later this year.

Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan 2020-2041.

This plan sets out the transport strategy for the county and demonstrates our commitment to climate change, brings forward the LTP target to 2045 for reducing transport carbon emissions, which supports GCC's decision to sign up to the UK100 Pledge and adopt the pledge guidance to be a net zero county by 2045. The plan was approved by Council on the 17th March and the document is available online on the GCC web site.

Quarrying in the North Cotswolds.

Increased quarrying in the North Cotswolds, particularly the output of aggregates, and the adverse impact on the area's environment of increased HGV traffic is causing considerable concern. Planning permission has been granted for the southern extension of Naunton Quarry but there are outstanding applications at Oathill Quarry, Fiddlers Green and Guiting Quarry, Upper Coscombe. Cotswolds National Landscapes have objected. The Board are seeking to re-start the North Cotswolds Quarries Stakeholder Liaison Meetings, the first held in January 2020, but subsequent meetings have been frustrated by the pandemic.

Thank you

I would like to wish my successor Cllr Mark Mackenzie - Charrington the very best of luck and to say what a privilege it has been to represent the communities of the North Cotswolds. I will miss them very much.

Dr Nigel Moore

APPENDIX 4 – St Mary's Church

As we look back over this last year, for the church, as for us all, it has been complex and difficult. During each of the lockdowns, our church buildings and gatherings have had to be closed in various ways, and it has been hard not to meet together.

However, church life has continued, through Zoom worship, email and phone contacts and being community supporting one another. We have continued to meet for worship each week (on Zoom, as well as in our buildings when possible), and have offered as many creative opportunities for reflection and gathering safely as possible – for example Drive-In Services, Forest Church (outdoors) and reflective spaces for individuals to meet, like the Stations of the Cross around our churchyards.

Although it has been a tough year, our Benefice Churchwardens and churches have worked well together, and it has been so impressive to see how each village have responded by supporting and caring for each other. We have also sought to support the local Foodbank and have set up the North Cotswold Long Table (with thanks to the Village Hall for their space and support) – helping people in need through offering meals.

Thanks to those in our community who have continued to support the church financially during this time – as for many charities, it is a bit of a struggle at the moment.

In May 2021, St. Mary's is back to being open once a week (on Sundays) for prayer and visits, and we are beginning a rota of services again around all of our churches. We look forward to this building up as the summer continues.

Katrina Scott

APPENDIX 5 Annual Report from The Village Hall Committee for the Annual Parish meeting May 17th 2021.

Since the national Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020, the Village Hall has been closed for public use. All scheduled events were cancelled. However, the Hall has been used by the Parish Church in association with The Long Table organisation to store and distribute ready meals to those in need. This is a permissible use under government guidelines and all Covid regulations have been followed to ensure people's safety, both volunteers and clients. This use is ongoing and, if deemed necessary, will continue alongside regular activities once lockdown has been lifted in June 2021.

During the period of lockdown, the Village Hall has been regularly maintained and appliances serviced, again following Covid guidelines for safety. The Hall has been cleaned regularly by our new cleaner, Mr Nick Taylor, appointed to replace Mrs Jan Smith in early 2020. During the lockdown, unfortunately the W.I. decided it could no longer continue to hold meetings in our Village Hall due to declining membership and the Lower Slaughter branch has now regrettably closed.

Because of the cancellation of events, the Village Hall has received no income during the last 12 months. Fortunately, we have had sufficient reserves to cover essential maintenance and service costs. Usual submissions for audit and Charity Commission purposes have been made and full accounts kept by the Treasurer.

We look forward to being able to open the Village Hall for public use from June 23rd 2021, when artists' exhibitions are scheduled to begin, but still following whatever government guidelines may be in place at that time. We are also hopeful that the present Committee will be augmented by other interested villagers so that this facility can continue to be part of our village community.

Christine Edwin (Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee)

APPENDIX 6

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LOWER SLAUGHTER VILLAGE NEWS FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 17TH MAY 2021

The Team consisting of, David Alderman, Jeannette Wheeler, Christine Edwin and myself, continue to be the Team who have produced the LSVN over the last year.

Villagers appear to appreciate this monthly production.

During the last two years the number of villagers who wanted paper copies has reduced as they moved on to receiving electronic copies via email. As a result of this, the printing cost per copy became unviable. Therefore, after receiving an excellent service from our printing company, Vale Press, in Willersey, over a number of years, we took the decision to cease using them.

We now print off the required number of paper copies, in house. This reduces the cost per month considerably.

Paper copies are generally now only issued to those, mainly long standing, villagers, who do not have access to a computer. In future all new requests for copies of the LSVN will only be issued via the electronic method unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Thanks here are extended to those villagers who had volunteered to deliver the paper copies around the village over the last few years.

As our only funding comes from the annual village fete, we were grateful to receive a contribution to assist our funding, earlier this year from the Parish Council.

It looks likely that for the second year we will not be having a village fete, we may not have sufficient funds available to continue the paper copies. (paper, cartridge ink etc) We will need to keep this under review.

Finally, with the move to in house production of the paper copies, we had hoped to be able to extend the deadline for receipt of articles to later in the month. We experimented with this proposal in April, but regrettably, most of the contributors did not submit their articles until the last minute, which put too much pressure on the Team, in particular Christine, who undertakes the bulk of this work. Sadly therefore, we have had to revert to the deadline of the 12th of each month.

Colin T. Edwin

On behalf of the LSVN -Team

6th May 2021