

DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Held in the Village Hall on Monday 8th May 2023, 18.35

Please note this meeting followed the statutory Annual Meeting of the Parish Council where a new Chairman and Vice Chair were elected. As with the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, agenda items were kept to a minimum due to the Bank Holiday.

Councillors present: Cllrs Sinclair (Chair), Classen, Papadakis, Jordison and O’Driscoll
In attendance: 6 members of the public

- 230508/1 **Welcome and Introductions:** Cllr Sinclair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 230508/2 **Apologies:** Apologies had been received from PROW Warden, Steve Randles.
- 230508/3 **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** Approved. These accurately represent the last meeting held on 30th May 2022.
- 230508/4 **Annual Report of the Chairman of LSPC:** New Chair, Cllr Sinclair delivered the Annual Report prepared by the outgoing Chair, Kevin Chapman. This can be found as Appendix 1.
- 230508/5 **Open Forum / Questions from the Floor:**
5.1 Further to the debate to reduce the frequency of PC meetings in the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, a resident suggested that after the success of the River Watch WhatsApp Group, it might be beneficial to set up a Village WhatsApp Group. This would allow residents to be updated with PC business in between meetings although it was recognised that content must be limited to genuine council business. LSPC agreed to explore this suggestion further and Cllr Jordison was tasked with this initiative.
No other questions from the floor were raised.
- 230508/6 **Closing Comments from the Chairman:**
Cllr Sinclair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and said it was ‘good to be back’. Cllr Sinclair expressed how much he considered the Village benefits from work undertaken by the Parish Council and advised that the new regime of 4 meetings was intended to be a temporary measure whilst Council recruited a new Parish Clerk. Finally, Cllr Sinclair notified Council that there was now a new Ward Councillor, Les Wilkins for Bourton Vale after Richard Keeling stepped down from re-election.
- 230508/7 **Date of next meeting:** Monday 20th May 2024 at 18.00 (TBC). **Meeting ended at:** 18.55
- Signed:** **Date:**

APPENDIX 1 **Report from the Outgoing Chairman of Lower Slaughter Parish Council.**

Having been involved with the Parish Council for nearly ten years, it is my pleasure to be asked to put together what will be my final report for submission to the Annual Parish Meeting.

I shall begin by offering my sincere thanks to those Councillors past, and present, who have volunteered to serve on the Parish Council and who have been of great assistance to me in my role as both Chair and Responsible Financial Officer. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the current Clerk, Hazel McKinna, for her support to the Council over the last few years. She has been a very diligent Clerk, keeping the show on the road with professionalism and great patience.

Serving on the Council can be a challenging experience and one in which the responses to your well-meaning decisions and actions often results in criticism from the vocal minority. However, during my time in office, I received very many more “off the record” votes of thanks from Residents for the positive work that the Parish Council undertakes on behalf of the Residents of Lower Slaughter.

On reflection, it has been a positive experience overall, and I shall be leaving the village with a genuine belief that my involvement on the Parish Council has allowed me to provide service and benefit to the community in which I have been part of for the last ten years.

Planning:

During the last twelve months, the Parish Council have continued to deal with the alleged development of Europe’s Largest Electric Vehicle Charging Station and the continued attempts to overturn some of the very relevant Conditions that were applied to the Development by the Planning Inspector when he granted permission for the Development on Appeal. The PC remains of the view that the development of this site is inconsistent with CDC’s planning policies whilst there remain sites closer to the permitted development areas of Bourton on the Water where the needs of the wider community would be better served.

As a Council, we are aware of the need to provide infrastructure to support the uptake of electric vehicle technology as this will be vital to the Net Zero Carbon Emissions targets set by the Government. Indeed, this is evidenced by our qualified support of the recent application from the Fosse Way Petrol Station for the development of EV charging bays at that particular site.

Unfortunately, we were not successful in respect of preventing the relocation of the Scrap Yard into the former gravel pits site, and although the deliberate “eyesore” of the old Scrap Yard has been removed, the activities in the new location are now very much “out of sight - out of mind” and we urge CDC and the Environmental Agencies to ensure that the ongoing operations are monitored such that any further damage to the environment is mitigated.

In the majority of the domestic planning applications that we considered, we found no basis to raise specific objections, although we remain concerned that increasing prevalence of non-resident property owners continues to impact on the sense of community within the village. In the case of the application to develop the Lavandula residence, the PC raised objections based on the scale of the development initially proposed and are pleased that the more sympathetic development that has now been permitted preserves the character of what we consider to be a building of significant iconic character within the village.

As a Parish Council, we recognise the benefits and necessity of development, but this must take cognisance of the fact that we are privileged to live in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

In respect of planning matters, I would like to place on record the thanks of LSPC for the significant contribution of former Councillor Stuart Thomas, whose expertise and diligence has been invaluable in helping the Council to formulate its understanding and responses to many of the complex issues faced over recent years.

Flooding:

The Parish Council continues to raise the risk profile of the village with the various agencies responsible for the management of flood risk and continues to liaise actively with Thames Water in respect of their drain lining project to address the issue of water inundation, and to ensure operational management of the pumping station is as effective as it can be.

River clearance activities have continued over the last 12 months and the appointment of Cllr Papadakis as a Flood Warden, has ensured ongoing liaison with other relevant parties associated with the management of flood risk. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Cllr Papadakis for the valuable role that he is undertaking on all of the above matters.

The output of the options study provided by the Consultant, H R Wallingford, continue to be discussed and the focus remains on the enhancement of the swale bypassing the weir, a project which requires the support of the Slaughters Inn.

In respect of the upstream activities that would reduce the susceptibility of the village to flooding, these are initiatives that need to be developed on a multi-party basis under the direction of a higher authority than the Parish Council.

Footpaths:

Improving the condition of two main footpaths of the village has been an ambition of the Parish Council for many years and the resurfacing of the Scare Lane footpath has provided a major improvement for those walking between Lower Slaughter and Bourton on the Water. We remain committed to ensuring that this footpath is included in the maintenance activities of GCC, such that the investment is maintained to a high standard for many years.

Funds from the Village Project fund remain earmarked for further footpath improvement, and the PC will be hoping for a similarly positive outcome in respect of the Mill Dam footpath.

Allotments:

Although attempts to establish an Allotment Committee were unsuccessful, the PC has successfully attracted new allotment tenants from outside the village and remains committed to developing the allotment space into an amenity that can be enjoyed by all the residents of Lower Slaughter. Utilising funding available from the Campaign for the protection of Rural England (CPRE), the Council recently planted a number of fruit trees to further enhance the area.

I would like to express my gratitude to Cllr Ann Classen for the invaluable role that she continues to perform in respect of the management of the Allotment environment.

Final Thoughts:

I would note that grass maintenance regime for the village remains based on the “naturally managed” look, and the contract to undertake these works has recently been retendered with a more local service provider being appointed to provide a more sustainable approach to these activities. I would like to thank Bibury for the high standard to which they undertook this work over the last six years.

Please look after the commemorative troughs outside the village hall that the PC provided financial support for.

Welcome back, Mr Paul Sinclair: Your decision to reengage with the Parish Council at a time when a significant level of experience has been lost, is deeply appreciated.

Kevin Chapman

Former Chairman and Acting Responsible Financial Officer

May 2023