

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting of  
Didmarton Parish Council  
Held 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018 Village Hall Didmarton

Members present: - Cllrs J Hammond, J Pearce, A Nightingale, C Rogers, R Goodwill  
Officer:-Clerk Fiona Thornton.  
Members of the Public: - 4  
Glos CC Cllr S Hirst

**1.Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting  
Apologies received from Cllr C Hathaway, CDC Cllr R Morgan

**2.Confirm minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting hold 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

**Decision:** Proposed by Cllr R Goodwill and seconded by Cllr A Nightingale, agreed by all, the minutes were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting

**3.Chairman's Report**

**Cllr J Hammond reported: -**

As in previous years, I will reflect on some of the main aspects of the year's activities.

Planning

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications submitted to CDC. Each of these is considered on its merits regarding planning criteria and in the past year a total of 20 applications have been lodged and a considered response provided to CDC.

The Street/Highways/Traffic

General highway matters and dealing with the GCC Highways contractor (Amey) regarding potholes, street lighting outages and overhanging hedges continues to be difficult and frustrating. This is mainly due to the time and effort it takes to chase up the contractor who then take their own time in dealing with matters.

The issues raised with Amey Contracting throughout the year, with varying success, include filling rather than patching potholes in Beech Lane, Oldbury Lane and Creephole Lane, maintenance of moss covered footpaths, and action to deal with overhanging hedges on The Street and in St Arild's Road.

Fly tipping in the layby continues to be an occasional problem, although CDC do deal with this promptly when notified.

Western Power completed a project to put the electric supply underground in The Street Conservation Area which gave GCC the early opportunity to replace the street lights in the village with LED lighting. Several new columns were required and their locations were discussed and agreed in advance with GCC's Street Lighting Manager, who was also able to re-connect the street light in Slim Slam. BT now need to be lobbied to put their phone cables in the Conservation underground.

Footpaths

During the year a comprehensive report on the condition of the footpaths was also completed and there have been several meetings with the County's Public Rights of Way Officer and our Footpaths Warden about maintenance, repair and improvement to several the village's footpaths.

The intent was to involve the Cotswold Volunteer Warden Service (CVWS), but progress was extremely slow, so a schedule of works for five sites in the main body of the village was prepared and it was agreed to use the Iddols Charity windfall money to fund a local contractor to do the work.

Work commenced in January, but issues over property boundary and access rights in Chapel Walk delayed progress necessitating the kissing gate to be re-sited onto public ground. Work was completed in April.

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There has been positive response from villagers on the improvement access, especially in Chapel Walk. In response to queries from guests staying at the Kings Arms and to better publicise the footpath network around the parish and encourage greater use our Footpaths Warden has compiled a visitor guidebook describing twelve walks in and around the village.

Village Hall

Whilst the DVHCC has overall responsibility for the day to day management of the Village Hall, Council remains committed to continue to work collaboratively with the DVHCC towards enhancing the Village Hall and its facilities. Council will continue to use the £3,000 mandated by the village to provide financial support to the Hall to directly fund more major cost items, this being consistent with HMRC advice on the reclaiming of VAT. DVHCC are currently considering future projects.

Joyce's Pool and Village Maintenance

Council continues, through a local contract, to maintain the area around the Pool as well as keeping the general appearance of the village tidy. This work now includes maintaining St Michael's churchyard and a number of footpaths in the main body of the village.

War Memorial

Work on cleaning and refurbishing the memorial is dependent on obtaining grants from the War Memorial Trust and this continues to be work in progress. It is still Council's intent to include the names of the fallen on a plaque, so providing a lasting memory.

Thanks

Finally, I would like to thank my Clerk and fellow Councillors for their support and contribution to the work of the Council during the past year.

**4. Any other Parish Business**

**a) Report by County Councillor – Cllr S Hirst**

- Glos CC increased their Council Tax by 2.5% and were able to add a 2% increase specifically to fund Adult Social Care. This was the lowest increase of any top tier council in England
- Demand for Adult Social Care is rising between 4-5% per year. We have good success in providing services to allow more people to remain in their homes, reducing the number in care homes
- There is also increasing demand to protect vulnerable children. The number of children in care has risen by about a third in the last two years to 700 and Children's Services are budgeted to cost £103m, £16m more than a year ago
- An extra £220,000 is being ringfenced for people with mental health problems as part of a £24m funding for public health
- This winter has been the worst since 2009. We have completed twice as many gritting runs as last year. Because of the constraints of low temperatures potholes have taken longer to repair as successful pothole repairs need higher temperatures than 5 degrees c
- From 1<sup>st</sup> April the £150m three year spend started to give our highways a once in a generation upgrade; across the county extensive resurfacing to cut down future potholes, as well as more white lining, more footway schemes and more drainage schemes
- The Government has committed to fund the 'missing link' on the A417 at a total cost of £500m. It has also agreed to undertake an appraisal of Junction 10 of the M5 (West Cheltenham) to increase the capacity and build a full junction so traffic can join and leave in both North and South directions.

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- We are planning to spend £470,000 on electric vehicle charging points across Gloucestershire
- A road safety hub has been relaunched for residents and parish councils to log online road safety concerns which are dealt with by a team comprising the Police, GCC Highways and Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue
- Each County Councillor has a budget of £20,000 to spend on local highways at their discretion together with a £30,000 pot over 3 years for wider community support whether that be highways, youth activities or other community needs [agreed that future hogging material to chapel walk footpath will come from this fund]
- Plans are in place for 97% of Gloucestershire residents/businesses to have access to faster broadband. The percentage is rising all the time. Tetbury now has access to faster broadband, and solutions for smaller settlements and more remote properties are being worked out
- The Council are playing an important role in providing 5000 apprenticeships across the county
- Refer to Glos CC budget data 2018/19

Cllr Hirst took questions from parishioners who attended the meeting, especially relating to health care provision.

**b) Report by CDC Councillor – Cllr R Morgan**

(written report submitted)

- During the year Cllr J Parsons sadly passed away. He was dedicated to the local area and will be a hard act to follow.
- Publica – this is a company set up by Cotswold DC, Forest of Dean, Cheltenham and West Oxfordshire Councils. Its main purpose is to share services and to give good value to the tax payer. Examples are data protection legislation and taxi licensing. Councils can share services, but they can also opt out as well as in for services. The initial target savings have been achieved within the first three months. The long-term forecast will be a saving of millions. As this is the only area in which this is happening Publica will be able to sell its services to other councils.
- CDC share of Council Tax was frozen for the third year running.
- Car parking charges have also been frozen along with the extension of after 3pm free parking
- £300,000 is to be spent on electrical charging points for car parks
- £1k to each ward councillor to allocate to youth facilities
- Green Bin charges have been frozen
- Up to £15m has been allocated to build a multi-story car park in Cirencester
- Efficiency matrix – CDC scored the highest in the Country
- Kerbside recycling was 59.6% which is 13<sup>th</sup> highest in the Country
- CDC has a target of achieving 8400 new homes by 2031. With build already taking place in areas such as Tetbury and the strategic development of Chesterton area of Cirencester of 2300 homes, CDC has already hit its target
- CDC have commissioned a report to investigate the Cotswolds becoming a national park.

**c) Finance report by Clerk**

During the financial year Council had an income of £14,976 and an expenditure of £10,192. Considering balances brought forward from the previous year, Council held funds of £23,394 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. This fund is made up of £8,210 as

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general reserves and the remaining sum of £15,184 being held for specific projects. Full details can be found on the income and expenditure statement of the Council and can be viewed on the website

**d) M Greenwood (Footpath Warden)**

- Will attend the parish council meeting in the autumn to give an annual report
- Overall there is a positive improvement in footpaths largely due to recent parish council works
- Often restrictions can occur for legitimate reasons but initiatives to works on are trespass and dog mess
- Recent improvements are not just specific to the central village; they are wider spread
- A few issues remain for example electric fencing blocking footpaths
- Stiles and gates have been replaced with horse jumps with no provision for footpath access. Progressing this with Estate

Signed .....

Dated.....