

# Upper Rissington Parish Council

## Minutes of Parish Council Meeting

held on 10 January 2018, 7:30pm at Upper Rissington Village Hall

Councillors present: Matt Barley (MBa), Marc Buffery (MBu), Brian Hanks (Chairman) (BH), Martin Johnstone (MJ) and Dawn Laird (DL).

In attendance: County Councillor Nigel Moor, District Councillor Mark MacKenzie-Charrington, Pauline Rigby (Clerk) and 4 members of the public.

### **Kevin Dower, GRCC, gave a short talk to introduce the new Community Wellbeing Service**

Village Agents have been amalgamated with social prescribing, which operates within local GP surgeries, to create a new service. Originally called Community Connectors, the service is now called the Community Wellbeing Service, and has been jointly commissioned by GCC and the Clinical Commissioning Council. GRCC bid and were awarded the Cotswold Area, and will be able to now concentrate on a smaller area, bringing all their knowledge and expertise to deliver and work with local communities. Village Agents are still in place, so the local connection isn't lost, and the retained social prescribing staff are still in GP surgeries. The difference is that now both groups can work together. Previously Village Agents worked with age 50+; the scope of the new scheme has been widened so they can work with anyone age 16+. The contract is for 5 years with the potential for a further 2 years, so it is a long-term provision. Kevin urged those who need the service to make use of it. If you live in Gloucestershire or have a GP in Gloucestershire, then you can access the service. Contact GRCC on info@grcc.org.uk or call 01452 528491.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Amos Peek sent his apologies.
2. **Declarations of Interest and Applications for Dispensation:** None received.
3. **Public Session:** The following comments and questions were received.
  - The footpath from Harris Gardens to Lancaster Drive that links the old village to the new is still in the name of dissolved companies; the resident had previously advised the Parish Council about this in March 2016. Cllr Moor suggested applying for a definitive footpath order, which creates right of way after 20 years' use has been established, though it doesn't resolve ownership issues. Cllr Moor agreed to provide details.
  - Is there any progress on filling the councillor vacancy?
  - Is there any recourse for the boarded-up building opposite the shops? It is unsightly and dangerous.
4. **To Elect a Vice Chairman.** Cllr Marc Buffery was put forward as Vice Chairman. Proposed by MBa, seconded by MJ, **motion carried** (Cllr Buffery abstained). The declaration was not available to sign at the meeting; the Vice Chairman will sign the declaration of office before performing his duties.
5. **Police Report:** None received. The lack of police attendance was noted with regret as councillors would like to receive a police report. Cllr Moor observed that Upper Rissington is now the third largest village in North Cotswolds, and the police have a presence in other larger villages/towns.

**6. County Councillors Report:** Cllr Moor reported the following:

- Cllr Moor shared the County Council draft budget for the coming year, which will go to full council in February. He was pleased to report that total budget will see little change from last year, £407 million, and will protect three principal areas of County Council activity: adult services (vulnerable and disabled), £132 million; children and families £97 million; communities and infrastructure has a revenue budget of £80 million, in addition to a capital budget of £250 million. The County is also seeking funding from central government for specific schemes. In addition, £150 million is being allocated for road resurfacing over the next five years, which will double the amount of road resurfacing they are able to do. Three new contracts are in progress, for large road resurfacing projects and day-to-day highways management. The contract with Amey expires in March 2019, but additional capacity should be up and running before then.
- The A417 Missing Link has been allocated £2.74 million in the budget for the coming year. Once in place, it will take pressure off the Fosse Way by creating a good, fast route through the county to the motorway.
- Funds that individual councillors will have at their disposal to help communities were discussed. The Children's' Activity Fund is coming to an end. Over the next 3 years, each County Councillor will have fund of £30,000 called 'Growing our Communities Fund', with quite a lot of discretion in how funding is used. In addition, each County Councillor on an annual basis will have a further £10,000 for highways work. The Lengthsman scheme will continue this year; they will look to continue it in the new highways contract
- Cllr Moor has read the Parish Council comments on the Sandy Lane planning application, and put in a supporting objection, backing the need for an additional pedestrian crossing and 30mph limit. He also notes that the new scheme has 2 access roads, more than the original scheme, but he is encouraged that GCC is now seeking a safety audit.
- Stow Town Council put out a helpful statement about winter weather, making it clear where responsibilities lie in keeping roads clear, between GCC, Parish Council and villages. This has been forwarded to the Clerk for information.
- Rather than phoning about potholes, residents are encouraged to use the "Road Safety Hub", where they can put in a query and are guaranteed a response within 48 hours. The Clerk was asked to add the link to the Road Safety Hub on the website. [Note: it can be found at: <https://roadsafety-gloucestershire.org.uk/communityhub/>]
- A resident asked why Barrington Road is not ploughed or gritted. Cllr Moor said he would raise with Highways again; it was also raised last winter.

**7. District Councillors Report:** Cllr MacKenzie-Charrington reported the following:

- Liaison Committee nominations close on 13 January. The Clerk has received 3 nominations to date. There are ongoing discussions with planning and developers, that where the District Councillor has pushed the point about whether there are significant deviations from the S106 agreement. The developer is keen to finish, and doesn't want to make changes, but clearly there will be some tweaks compared to when the

development was envisaged in 2013 as that was on paper, and now we have the reality, but the fundamental offerings in terms of landscaping and facilities should be provided. The Liaison Committee cannot address a host of other issues that are private matters. This committee is aiming to look at completion of the development, and landscaping. It hopes to meet soon to set parameters of what it wants to achieve.

- The County Council is promoting a think tank, the Gloucestershire 2050 Vision Project, that will try to understand how the community sees the future and how the county can prosper. The 'Big Conversation' will hold a launch event on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February at Cheltenham Race Course, when it will be presented to public. It is organised by the University of Gloucester and backed by the County Council. The Clerk was asked to add details to the website.
  - Cotswold District Council (CDC), as the local planning authority, has published a new enforcement policy, which explains what enforcement is, and what it can and cannot do. Briefly, it explains 'what is a breach of planning control', such as building works without relevant approval, and what action can be taken. The Clerk will add the document to the website. Records show there were 34 planning applications in Upper Rissington in 2017: 9 still to be determined, and some going back 6 months or more.
  - The Bathurst proposal for Chesterton, Cirencester, to build 2350 homes over a 10-15 year period was highlighted. The planning application will be discussed by CDC's Planning Committee this coming Thursday. CDC can't meet its Local Plan housing supply needs without this; otherwise additional houses would be spread out around the Cotswolds.
8. **Minutes:** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13 December 2017 were approved as a true record, with one alteration, and duly signed by the Chairman. Under Item 9, Clerk's report, deleted "as the resident who volunteered to lead the planting could not undertake the work" as the land transfer delay, rather than lack of support, was the main reason that spring bulbs had not been planted. Proposed by MJ, seconded by MBA; **motion carried** with two abstentions by those not present at the 13 December meeting.
9. **Clerk's Report:** The Clerk reported the following:
- The External Auditor's report has been received, and Notice of Conclusion of Audit published, along with Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the Annual Return. The External Auditor stated that the accounts were submitted late, which is factually correct. However, they went on to assert that the Parish Council did not have a process in place for the production of its accounts. Cllr Hanks said the process that the Council followed is well documented, and that councillors tried to ensure that accounts were produced on time. The auditor didn't ask the Parish Council about the process itself. The Clerk was asked to write to Grant Thornton asking them to identify the process failure, because if there is a failure then councillors need to understand what that is and put new procedures in place.
  - The Notice of Vacancy for the position of councillor, which arose due to the resignation of Rosie Webber, has been published. If 10 electors write to CDC before 30 January to request an election, then there will be an election, which will take place by 5 April. If no election is called, then the Parish Council can co-opt.

- GRCC is holding an opening event for a new affordable housing project in Churcham on 12 January. Cllr Buffery plans to attend.
- A resident has enquired about organising another litter pick. The Clerk has registered an interest with the Great British Spring Clean on behalf of the parish.

It was agreed to bring forward Items 18, 20 and 21, relating to Finance, Budget and Precept.

**18. Finance:**

- a) Councillors considered the payments due. Grant Thornton was removed from the draft payments list as the anticipated invoice had not been received; the other payments were authorised. Cllrs Hanks and Laird agreed to sign the cheques. Proposed by MBa, seconded by MBu; **motion unanimously carried**.

Payee	Date of invoice	Details	Total	Authority
Bartlett Tree Experts	13-Dec	Emergency tree work, Harris Gardens	<b>£1,008.00</b>	HA 1980 s.96
Pauline Rigby	06-Dec	Expenditure (ad in Cotswold Journal)	<b>£157.08</b>	PHAA 1907 s.76 & LGA 1972 s.214
Pauline Rigby	03-Jan	Clerk's salary for Jan 2018	[REDACTED]	LGA 1972 s.112

- b) Income of £264 from Glos Care Services NHS for hall hire in 2017 was noted.
- c) The bank reconciliations were approved. The Parish Council has a transactions balance of £155,172. Proposed by MJ, seconded DL, **motion unanimously carried**.
- d) Payments for the year to date were noted as circa £61,000 against the budget of circa £132,000, as larger projects, such as the Neighbourhood Plan, have been delayed.

**20. Budget:** A working party met on 20 December to discuss projects that the Parish Council planned to undertake during the 3-year forecast period. The budget was reviewed again, line by line, and some minor adjustments made. Councillors then resolved to accept the 3-year forecast and budget for 2018-19. Total budgeted expenditure for 2018-19 is £135,431. This includes £25,000 towards renovation of the play park; £10,000 for a community shelter, and £10,000 towards a sinking fund towards an all-weather sports pitch. Proposed by MBu, seconded by MBa, **motion unanimously carried**. The budget for 2018-19 will be published on the Parish Council website.

**21. Precept Request for 2018-19:** Based on the agreed budget for 2018-19, a release of £35,000 from general reserves would create a precept requirement of £82,902, resulting in a charge of £122.17 per year for a band D property, an increase of 2.0% compared to the year prior. [Note: This equates to £2.45 per year, or 20 pence per week a band D property.] Proposed by MBu, seconded by MBa; **motion unanimously carried**.

INCREASE/DECREASE IN RESERVES	£ (35,000)
PRECEPT	£ 82,902
TAX BASE	678.6
BAND D PRECEPT	£ 122.17
CHANGE ON PRIOR YEAR	<b>2.0%</b>

The Chairman resumed the running order with Item 11.

**11. Liaison Committee:** Following a request for 2 councillors to join the committee, Cllr Buffery and Cllr Johnstone put their names forward. One lives in the old village, the other is a resident of Victory Fields. Proposed by DL, seconded by MBa, **motion unanimously carried**. Councillors requested a written report from Liaison Committee meetings.

**12. Neighbourhood Plan:**

- a) Councillors resolved to approve the Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. Proposed by MBu, seconded by MJ, **motion unanimously carried**.
- b) The public consultation on the designation of Upper Rissington's Neighbourhood Area, which runs to 31 January 2018, was noted. Details are online, via CDC or the Parish Council. Recent press coverage of this milestone was also noted.

**13. Governance Review:** When the Parish Council was created with 7 councillors, the village had about 600 electors. It has more than doubled in size since then. CDC has confirmed that 11 would be an appropriate size of Council for this electorate. To start the review process, either 250 electors can ask CDC to review the size of the Parish Council, or the Parish Council can request it. Councillors would like CDC to consider whether wards would be appropriate, as there are distinct areas of the village with different priorities. Currently there is no mechanism to ensure that different areas of the village are proportionately represented on the Parish Council. Councillors resolved to formally request that CDC carry out a Community Governance Review to increase the number of councillors to be elected in the Parish and consider warding the parish. Proposed by BH, seconded by MBu; **motion unanimously carried**.

Agenda item 10 was picked up at this point.

**10. Planning:**

- a) 17/04151/FUL, Variation of Condition 1 (Open Spaces), was discussed. Following the November 2017 meeting, Cllr Barley volunteered to compile a list of objections, but was not able to complete the task and to date the Parish Council has not submitted a comment. Cllr Barley said the task was too complex: the application had received 120 comments from residents and it was difficult to track between documents to see the differences. Cllr Hanks pointed out that since the Parish Council hadn't yet made a comment, it couldn't request that the application be escalated to the planning committee at CDC. Cllr MacKenzie-Charrington explained that the planning officer will write to the Ward Councillor to ask for delegated powers to accept or refuse the application, and if not granted, will call it into committee. Because the application is controversial and wide ranging, he has already advised the planning officer that the application must be considered by committee. The Parish Council should still submit its objection; otherwise, the committee will assume that the Parish Council is content with the planning officer's recommendation, and it currently appears that the Parish Council is in favour of the application. Cllr Barley agreed to revisit the list of objections. Proposed by BH, seconded by MJ; **motion unanimously carried**.
- b) The decision to consent to 17/04489/FUL, on Avro Road, was noted.

c) Councillors considered new planning applications received...

Application no.	Details	Decision
17/05102/TPO	T.1 - Beech in front garden - Reduce crown by approx 20%, 8 Smith Barry Road Upper Rissington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 2QT	Defer to tree officer Proposed by BH, seconded by DL, <b>motion carried.</b>

d) ... including planning applications received since publication of the agenda.

Application no.	Details	Decision
17/05048/FUL	Proposed single storey pitched roof rear extension together with flat roof link - 15 De Havilland Road Upper Rissington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 2NZ	No objections, Proposed by MJ, seconded by MBu; <b>motion carried.</b>

The running order was resumed at item 14.

**14. Winter Resilience:** The Clerk explained that there were two elements to the winter action plan: snow clearance, and the provision of grit bins.

The Clerk has spoken to a local snow plough operator registered with Highways, who would be willing to clear the adopted roads, but the Parish Council needs to appoint a snow warden in the village to call him out when required. Cllr Buffery volunteered to be the snow warden and will liaise with the snow plough operator to discuss and agree what he can do.

In terms of grit bins, there are just four in use across the adopted roads in the village. These were filled by Highways at the start of the season and are now running low. The Parish Council can buy additional grit bins, but has to agree their locations with Highways. Residents have already sent in suggestions for locations where bins are needed; a grit bin was also requested for the Siskin-Barrington Road junction. The Clerk was asked to collate requests, reach agreement with Highways on locations, then bring the information back to councillors for consideration.

It was highlighted again that the Barrington Road was not on the County's gritting or snow clearance routes. The Clerk was asked to raise the issues with Highways. The County Councillor offered to draft the request.

Councillors and residents expressed concern that the shop and school are presently on unadopted roads, and the Village Hall is on a road that is not currently planned for adoption. A resident reported that it has been requested and agreed that 3 grit bins will be put onto Mitchell Way, and that Linden / Bovis will supply and fill them.

**15. Tree management:**

- a) The Clerk reported expenditure of £1,008 inc. VAT to remove snow damaged branches from 7 trees outside properties on Harris Gardens, carried out under emergency powers.
- b) The Clerk further reported that the tree surgeon had advised on further work to the trees in this group, as they were now lopsided, and to avoid similar problems in future. In

addition, a resident had expressed concern about suspended branches in another tree in this group that had been a problem prior to the snow. The Clerk was asked to deal with this tree under emergency powers. Proposed by MBu; seconded by MBA; **motion unanimously carried**. For the other trees, the Clerk was asked to pursue 3 estimates for the next meeting. Proposed by MBu; seconded by MJ; **motion unanimously carried**.

- c) Councillors considered works to trees identified as needing 'immediate attention' (category C) in the tree survey for GR188628 (the 'Grainger land') and asked the Clerk to obtain 3 estimates and for the survey to be circulated in advance of the next meeting.

19. **Pension:** The Clerk explained the Parish Council's responsibilities under pensions legislation to assess employees to see whether they should be enrolled in a workplace pension scheme and provide information to explain how automatic enrolment applies to them. The Clerk has been assessed and is currently earning less than the lower earnings threshold, so the Parish Council is not required to offer a workplace pension. On behalf of the Council, Cllr Hanks signed a letter to the Clerk providing the necessary information. It was noted that employee earnings must be monitored in case the situation changes. Proposed by DL, seconded by MBu; **motion unanimously carried**.

As it was 10pm, items 16, 17 and 22 were deferred, and the Chairman moved the final few items.

23. **Correspondence:** The Clerk was asked to circulate the correspondence list by email.
24. **Items for Future Meetings:** Disciplinary and grievance policy, Youth Council noted. Councillors were asked to email the Clerk with details of future items.
25. **Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 7th February 2018, at 7:30pm

The meeting closed at 10:10pm

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the Minutes ..... 7 February 2018

Copies to:

County Councillor Nigel Moor

District Councillor Mark Mackenzie-Charrington