

Northleach with Eastington Annual Town Meeting on Wednesday 19th April 2017

Present: Cllr Colton (Chair), Cllr Rayner (Vice Chair), Cllr Alan Wellman, Cllr Hewer, Cllr Brady, Cllr Hulcup, Cllr Andrew Wellman, Cllr Morley Blackwell, Clerk Cat Crompton and 23 members of the public.

Apologies were received from Cllr Rigby and Cllr Davies

Cllr Colton introduced the Council members and thanked the residents for attending

1.	Cllr Alan Wellman proposed, Cllr Hewer seconded and it was unanimously RESOLVED to accept the minutes from the last Annual Town Meeting held on 20th April 2016 and these were duly signed.
2.	<p>Annual report from Northleach with Eastington Town Council by Cllr Laurie Colton, Chairman and Mayor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most of our work is done by the three committees and these are supported by working groups such as the litter pick, the IT group and staff review• We were able to hold the council tax this year which is good news for residents• The NDP is driven by a Steering Group and a number of councillors sit on it along with residents and new volunteers are welcome• We have no control over planning, we are consulted and give every care that we can in giving an opinion but we are not always successful. For example, we failed on getting the Bassett Road access moved to a different point and the Chequers development went ahead with more homes than we asked for.• Speeding – we have agreed to start a Community Speed Watch in the Spring and the PCSO is coming to do training. Before that we will also be putting in speed strip s in order to get the evidence we need to move this forward.• Cllr Hulcup has reviewed the town’s road signs and those that need replacement have been passed to the District Council to sort. Gully clearance is done periodically but we often need additional blasts• Cllr Andrew Wellman - Other projects in hand include a multi sports wall which will go on the playing field and allow kids to play football, netball etc. We are waiting to hear about funding and are also planning a set of moveable goal posts• The play area is making progress – we started the process of raising the money to replace the equipment and discovered that the ownership of the play area was split. Although it has taken a long time, it is finally registered as the Town Council’s and we are now planning whether to do the replacement in one go or several stages as it depends on funding available.• The Pantomime went down very well so we are doing it again this year.• We liaise with the organisers of various events on across Town such as the International sheep dog trials, Amplified Music festival, Steam Show and Charter Fair. We are currently liaising with Highways and the Amplified organisers to produce a new traffic management plan.• As always everything comes down to money and volunteers• Cllr Colton thanked the members of staff and acknowledged that they try to assist as many people as possible.• This is a fantastic community and if you get a chance to look at the Facebook page please do as there are great examples of community spirit
3.	<p>Richard Watson updated the meeting about The Discovery Centre’s Lottery Bid on behalf of the Cotswold Conservation Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Richard Watson works at the Cotswolds Conservation Board. They applied previously and were not successful so have scaled back this new application• Looking to appoint a Trails and Access manager and also improve visitor events and interpretation. Applying to “Our Heritage” programme for £36,000• There are five different areas to focus on for the bid:

- 1) Recruitment of volunteers, looking to develop an onsite volunteering programme,
- 2) Develop an Oral history programme
- 3) Focus on the Rural life collection and allow people to move around the collection and see the items on display
- 4) Self- guided tour programme which is being developed by an outside company
- 5) A focus on schools and educational programmes
 - Friends of the Cotswolds (FOTC) are offering match funding of 5% and they are looking for letters of support from local area including the Town Council. Friends of The Cotswolds are not responsible for the fabric of the building.
 - It was suggested that as the Conservation Board are only the tenants it would be good to include the town of Northleach within this tour and improvements.
 - The bid will be submitted in the next week, the National Lottery will take about 8 weeks to make a decision
 - Cllr Hancock explained that the Conservation Board are supported by the FOTC and also going to put a Hare in the Old Prison. Storage is a real issue and so there is a new application for a storage unit as well to improve this. Trying to improve the general appearance of the building and currently applying for money for this too. They will be looking for a letter of support for that too. Also looking for £300 – 400k to replace the glazed area. This is just one of a number of places looking for investment so it is difficult.

4. **To receive a report from Cotswold District Council by District Councillor Chris Hancock and an update on the Neighbourhood Development Plan**
- The District Council’s council tax has been cut by 13% since 2010 and this is largely due to joint working called the 20/20 partnership between West Oxon, Cheltenham and Forest of Dean. This enables them to continue delivering services with less central cost. In time the staff will come under one employer like a business and this will allow trading benefits.
 - Free parking after 3pm will continue across the District and it works by supporting businesses and allowing people to spread their shopping across the day. There are plans to improve Waterloo car park which is underused.
 - Leader Lynden Stowe has now stepped down and Cllr Mark Annett is taking over.
 - Defibrillator - a new fund is coming up and although Northleach has 2 defibrillators this could benefit the Market Place or Playing Field
 - New fund to help communities celebrate the end of the war
 - NDP – we had consultation this time last year and feedback was taken on board. Lots of feedback from residents in certain areas on specific sites allocated. CDC like everything that we are doing but don’t know where to put everything that we want. They agree that we need car parks and school expansion but they want to promote, through the planning process, a criteria-based policy that when new developers come we can tell them what is needed. The consultants think this will work for the school but not the car parks.
 - The Design Statement has been approved by this Council and CDC and this has already improved the plans on 2 major developments across town. CDC said it was one of the best design statements they have received
 - Resident asked why when CDC share their Chief Executive why Witney which is an excellent example of a small town can offer free parking and Cirencester can’t? Cllr Hancock believes that Witney’s car parks were provided by development money and encompasses toilets and other services.
 - Cllr Alan Wellman – Cirencester parking is difficult for people with limited walking ability to park and walk as far as possible. Resident said the new central area is a disaster and is not clearly marked out.
 - Cllr Morley Blackwell said that there are insufficient markings for children, visually impaired and wheelchair users.
 - The only way that Northleach will get additional parking is if people bite the bullet and accept that the

	<p>specific areas identified are allowed to be used for car parking. In addition, some time limit restrictions might work in the central area. CDC recognise that additional parking is needed in Northleach and need to support us doing that.</p>
5.	<p>County Councillor Paul Hodgkinson gave a report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of the County Council shows that social services is the biggest cost with a large percentage of their budget going on that and it is a service under a lot of pressure. Other services therefore get squeezed like roads. • Currently involved in several areas that affect this parish: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Roads and road safety – people talk to him about this a lot so have been pleased to work with the Town Council on this. This time last year the white gates went in at East End to alert drivers that they are entering a residential zone. 2) Community Speed Watch which has been talked about and I will be covering the cost of speed strips to help gather information in 3 locations across Town. 3) The Old A40 has been closed for 18 months. The petition got 500 names and I presented it to the County Council. As a result, a full geotechnical survey was undertaken and the results are promised soon. 4) Also working with the Town Council to improve new lining and double yellows at West End and the Market Place. A second consultation has just taken place and then the work should happen imminently. Cllr Rayner explained that there will be no reduction in the number of spaces but lines will be moved to improve passing and parking opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband and phone lines – we were at the start of the rollout out but speeds are variable and he has been working with a lot of individuals to resolve issues. Gigaclear are providing an exceptional service especially in the rural areas though some parts of Northleach were missed out and they will get this in the next sweep by the Summer • Helping the community – working with the Town Council and community groups. Spent some of the Active Together funding on a fitness class for those with mobility issues. Money was also given to the swimming pool to help keep the pool going, funding for youth activities in Town over the Summer and there are also mobile goal posts coming in plus both Scout groups will benefit soon. • Resident asked if there is a possibility of a “20 is plenty” programme? • Cllr Hodgkinson explained that this can be implemented quite easily through the Town Council by working with the Road Safety Partnership. This is different to an actual 20mph speed limit where a traffic order is needed
6.	<p>Annual report from The Westwoods Centre Committee by Cllr Alan Wellman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to thank the Supervisor Brian who is the main lynchpin of the centre and keeps the guests happy and well cared for. Sadly this year we lost two people who were very important to the Centre. Roy Mustoe who was one of the main founders of this centre and Phil Mustoe who was the supervisor here. • The Centre is the Town Council’s biggest asset and very well used by a wide range of groups. • We applied for and received Discretionary rate Relief and small business relief which enables us to continue supporting community groups. • The Pantomime was our first attempt as putting on entertainment and was well attended. • The general maintenance is high as the building is almost 20 years old and this year the heating system needed to be renewed • The Fortey Hall floor has been re-sanded and we are going out to tender to get the outside windows painted. We just replaced all the bulbs in the main hall and a new carpet was laid in the Tayler Room. The remaining carpets have been cleaned and these have been in situ for 20 years • Resident asked if there are still plans to replace the chairs in the hall as many are bowing. Cllr Wellman explained that we are looking at doing this in sections otherwise it will be very costly

7.	<p>Annual report from Finance, Funding and Grants Committee by Cllr Mrs Rigby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The precept is the money collected from taxpayers through the council tax bill to fund all the activities that the Town Council carries out on behalf of local residents, including managing the allotments, cemetery, playing fields, and community centre here at the Westwoods. • Staff salaries constitute a major part of our expenditure, and those costs have increased through the introduction of the workplace pensions. The council now offers a pension to all our employees. • Though this and many other items of expenditure continue to increase in price, the Town Council has engaged a new contractor for the grass cutting, which has resulted in substantial savings. • Overall, this has allowed us to freeze the amount that we charge to local residents through their council tax bills. The precept for 2017-2018 has been set to show as a 0% increase on council tax bills. • We offer a community grant scheme, details of which are available from the clerk. Last year, we supported the Friends of Northleach Swimming Pool with a grant of £240 for a new chemical shed.
8.	<p>Annual report from the Property & Premises Maintenance Committee by Cllr Vicki Hewer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I took on the Chairmanship of this Committee only a couple of months ago so that any success we have had is shared with Alan Wellman who was the earlier Chairman. • This Committee deals with most of what can be seen around Northleach except for the King George V property. It includes the Church Yard and Cemetery where trees, benches and lighting are maintained. There has been a new flower bed planted in the Market Place and of course the Chris Fothergill Town Sign has been recently renovated by Penelope Coghlan. • The Christmas Tree this year produced a few difficulties getting it to stand well and Mary Cassidy and Dave Payne eventually successfully erected it and it was greatly admired this year even though its multicoloured lights were the result of a mistaken delivery! • Our largest task is always the grass cutting around Northleach. For the last three years we have employed Bibury Garden Services but this year we have been able to give the contract to McCrackens. They were the cheapest by far and will save us £7000 this year. This saving together with the fact that there was no appreciable snow this Winter enabled the Town Council to hold the precept at the same level as last year. But I bow to the Finance Committee for that achievement. • The Allotments are functioning well and the waiting list for an allotment is reducing well possibly aided by the additional facility offered by the Cotswold Hall. • It has taken well over a year to get all the legal work done to enable new road line markings to be introduced in West End which should make the traffic a little safer getting through this rather congested area of Northleach. New markings have also been put down at the bus stop in East End in order to prevent cars parking there. So far this appears to be successful. Work on the bus shelters themselves is to be undertaken shortly. • For many years we have tried to get permission to have a path from the Surgery through to the water meadow but again legalities have been problematic but work has restarted in an effort to get this done. • In all financial matters we must thank Catriona Crompton, our Town Clerk, who diligently seeks the lowest price for everything that all the Committees purchase. • Cllr Rayner gave an update on the surgery path, this was looked at several years ago but not progressed. The idea is to give a clear path from the school across the playing fields and Water Meadow, need to liaise with the surgery landlords and Highways, its looking positive at the moment • Cllr Hewer gave an update on the Active and Able class which has received financial support from Cllr Hodgkinson so it can continue to offer this support to those needing these specific exercise classes
9.	<p>Annual report from the King George V Trust by Cllr Alan Wellman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The KGV Trust responsibilities run from the entrance of the school to the bridge under the bottom of Eastington Road. Money has been spent on the cricket club store room roof and we are investigating a path between the tennis courts and play area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pavilion is leased by Northleach Club and ably run by Kate and Marj who are with us tonight. The school have exclusive use of the field, and in addition the Charter Fair, the Northleach Run and Summer Youth Festival all use the field. • The Play area project group is moving at pace. Although there is a lot of equipment which is still fine it is quite old fashioned and needs updating
10.	<p>The Annual Police report for the Parish was reviewed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report compares April 2016 – March 2017 figures of 45 incidents with the same period the previous year which saw 43 incidents. • Although this is not a significant increase the following details were noted: The increase in Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents over this twelve-month period relates primarily to “Neighbour disputes”. • Although the higher level of Road/Traffic related incidents over this twelve-month period appears concerning, closer examination of these figures suggests this relates to Road Works, rather than Road Traffic Collisions.
11.	<p>Clr Brady gave an update on the litter pick.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many thanks to all the businesses who offered free refreshments to the volunteers, eighty-seven volunteers including 21 children turned out and over 40 bags of rubbish were collected. • It was a great turnout and well supported across Town. • Thank you to the working group especially Mark from the Northleach and Fosse Lions who helped to organise the event
11.	<p>Annual report from the Town Council office by Mrs Cat Crompton, Town Clerk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have been hearing tonight about the work of the Town Council and I am sure you have gathered that we operate on a really local level. Our responsibility covers the parish of Northleach so the town itself, hamlet Eastington and some outlying homes – about 1850 and 800 homes. • The council office consists of myself and Mary our administrative assistant and we work alongside Brian who runs the WW’s centre. We work part time alongside the councillors who are all volunteers plus we have a small number of other residents who assist us in our workload with their specialist knowledge. • Every town council is different depending on their responsibilities and in Northleach we are lucky to have a lot of facilities including the Westwoods Centre, the Playing field and Water Meadow, the Pavilion and 2 sports huts, allotments, play areas, cemetery and Churchyard. Across the town as a whole we are also responsible for the maintenance of most of the grass verges, a number of trees, grit supplies, the bus stops, bins, war memorial, notice boards, some signage, fences, town website and a number of benches. As you can imagine the council and office workload is therefore very varied. We get asked all sorts of question so if you need help and are not sure where to go first please ask us. If its not our responsibility we should be able to point you in the right direction! • Our work comes from a few different sources: Firstly issues are highlighted to us daily by residents, councillors or the district and county councillors. Depending on the nature of these we can either deal with them straight away for example reporting overflowing bins or giving an answer on a memorial enquiry or I feed these into the relevant meetings. • We had 27 council and committee meetings last year where a number of decisions affecting the environment and facilities of Northleach were discussed. In addition, there were a number of meetings with the Neighbourhood Development Plan, suppliers and working groups. I am responsible for drawing up the Agendas along with the Chairs and ensuring that the meetings have as much material as possible including quotes, advice and budget information in order to make informed decisions. The issues are then discussed and decisions made on any future actions. • The majority of our funds come from local tax payer’s money and so we very conscious about giving the parish good value for money and making informed decisions. • In addition to community issues I have a number of weekly and monthly administrative jobs to complete

	<p>as the Responsible Financial Officer. These include all the financial transactions and recording of these plus budget planning. Last year I processed over 330 payments but on a positive note also recorded over 320 receipts of money coming into the Town Council. At the moment I am prepping for the internal and external audits which are due shortly. In addition, pension auto enrolment started for us this year and this has been a huge learning curve along with all the statutory requirements we need to adhere to. In addition, there are often grant applications to complete, general good housekeeping like utility comparisons and Vat returns to process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our communication to the community is via the town website, Facebook pages, parish magazine and the Standard newspaper. I also have a community email list so if you want to be kept up to date with local information or be able to feed queries in quickly please ask to be added onto this. • Thank you for your time tonight and interest in the Town Council's work.
12.	<p>Public questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident said that residents really appreciate all your efforts and there is a real sense of town spirit. • Resident asked for the council to consider how we can deliver Men in Sheds. • Cllr Colton explained that the Men in Sheds came from the Town Council who were approached by the group in Bourton. Although the initiative was taken on and various locations were considered, we were unable to get full costing information and so we were unable to commit to anything. The council would definitely support the initiative but need to have more information.

There being no further questions, the meeting finished at 9.05 pm